

# IRAQ POST MAGAZINE



**My Wonderful Neighborhood in Baghdad  
Untold Story of Baghdadi Handcart Drivers**

**Brass Bazaar Tunes on the Way to die out**

**Iraqi Women Behind Bars owned up**

**Unveil a hidden underworld of a Baghdadi  
neighborhood**

**The Legend of the Sun Behind the Clouds**

**Nosing about Jews in Baghdad**



So spontaneously she talked about the inmates lives, as if the prison site seemed to be her particular world, a world of her own, speaking to all, in a repeated word, Habibi “my beloved”.

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# Why Iraq Post Magazine?

By Mufeed Waheed Al-Safi

**I**n principio probably from the first steps I made up my mind to commence such an ambitious project. I have faced some friends' questions: Why do want to publish a magazine in English? And to whom you are supposed to address?

Dear friends: First of all, it is really a long time passed, in it I have been ambitiously dreaming of letting my voice be heard. As if , writing for me, turned to be , searching for immortality. Being as stubborn as Gilgamesh who hunted for the everlasting herb, I have a desire, which time after time, has overwhelmed me under various vita courses in the same arena , of the same slogan: Scripto ergo sum.

Really, I am not hiding a skeleton in my closet, in telling you, I have been actually inspired personally and still by some professional characters. I was so lucky to work with. Persons, Iraqis and foreigners, of them were old hands being still formed a good impression in memory.

How many newspapers and magazines have been produced in Iraq since the ex-fallen regime? Numerous ,but most of them undergone to similar fate! It disappears sooner or later. Which I hope determinedly not be in the same case.

From the first day ,of our bureau, al-Mufeed for translation and media was inaugurated , before seven years ago, my goal was clearly seen for me. Yes, Our services in al-Nasiriyah city were concerned of making translations to legal documents, official papers and letters, but the mind was always circulating around the large media world.

But, as long as my dream hunting me, like my shadow ,intending to say what I have been thinking , but in higher voice. But it let me finally realize this business was not a piece of cake.

In this extraordinary world, I have more opportunities to work with many journalists; like that American girl I guided for almost one month, I still remember her, so active and enthusiastic , covering news day and night in our provinces .

Or that old journalist whose passport, has no additional space for another stamp. While we were living in an isolated island, and darkness

and oblivion.

Really special days I have spent yonder, in which I hope I am going to write about in series named “ memoir of mute man” . I wish you will find it interesting.

Well, I think my initial step really started by having a chance in the press centre. An office which was at that time, related to the so-called ministry of information. In that bizarre place, I have really seen an area out of this world , with all its defects and perfections. And from there, my story with journalism world started as I thought, and still mixed up with blood and sweat and tears.

In the very spot I have a view to the journalism world ,through a translation window as a guide or “ a minder” as some journalists called us, when they have been annoyed by our close presence to them!!

After the regime being fallen apart, there was an accident which took place before me. Really it affected me so much. While I was guiding a south Korean journalist in al-Amiriya orphanage, which we do often in those days. I found out by chance some hidden pictures of chemical Ali, the ex-regime ministry of defence, with some girls in shameful attitudes.

One of these pictures amid all these sexually abused girls. I would not forget. It was a picture of a little kid, dressed in a red bikini, whose age certainly no more than eight years old! While Chemical Ali was holding her and smiled in so mean and idiot face!!.

Who could show up all this to the world what abnormal conditions we were in? How much miseries that never been written or heard by others. I am sure definitely it would be written down in huge volumes

Dealing with these foreign journalists, made me realize, we must have paved our roads by ourselves. . And from that instance I determine



to be close to journalism world. So I carp diem the first opportunity I was given, and dashed in with all my willing. Yes, little by little I have indulged on voluntarily upon this disturbed course!

In an important daily newspaper I have tried my luck. Accepting that offer, I worked in firstly as a translator, then as an editor in feature department. During that in every week we have to deliver of producing two features and two columns and one questionnaire!! For nearly three years I have by writing been in the middle of some uncommon Iraqi walks of life. In it necessarily I did unveil a lot of unexplored issues, most of these features concentrated on Baghdad.

According to my work in this daily newspaper, I have been a living witness to many disasters which breaking out from time to time, as I used to wander through Baghdad streets and suburbs. From Al-Ayima bridge, where more than thousand Iraqis souls lost their lives. Or how I covered reportedly on the black Wednesdays and Fridays. Unhappy days I would not forget easily, and more other stories I saw of heart breaking scenes and accidents.

Unfortunately, in such a career, life was not a bed of roses with me. So my experience in working in that daily newspaper ended up dramatically, and been destroyed by some routinely and hypocritically negligent procedures and characters. Thus I dipped out that arena and all efforts gone with the wind suddenly and returned back to be in limbo again.

And I found myself, displaced and unemployed for three years after I have bee fighting back the wind mill fans like Don Quichotte

After all these years I came back again with truly real desire and unconcerned obligation to limitations and red zones which usually being imposed on a journalist.

Working in the streets, contacting with ordinary people, listening to their suffering, I really had them smelling them, now their drams and hopes and fear, for this is the real journalist and the great one. and magazine feature in the world

Dear readers, you will find in this monthly magazine stories which are written in featured style. Stories from real Iraqi life, depicting the lives of persons who still fighting back all difficulties life put on before them , but amazingly

done they still having hope and enthusiasm. In this narrative style of featured stories, I hope it will be more close to people affairs and ordinary life.

And you know well in my country despite all these English departments, which are being opened and still opened all over Iraq but unfortunately we do not have one English newspaper or even a magazine. While if you look to any other neighbour countries, you will find them, covering news successfully in releasing several magazines and newspaper in English.

To cover some side social Iraqi life and problematic issues. I wish hereby Iraq Post magazine would navigate its journey safely and properly. And the most important thing is to be continuous publication and not like many others newspapers who showed for a little bit time and soon it will be disappeared for good.

As we are desperately in need to such newspapers and magazines printed in English, to let other societies who are speaking in English got some view of Iraqi people lives. And I certainly know, such a project could not be implemented but by a potential institutions or influential governmental associations. But a mile-long distance journey, has to be started with one step.

In this first edition, you will find, for example, various prospect of Iraq life; stories from neighborhood, women talked from prison, handcart drivers suffering, some glimpse of old archeological sites in Iraq. Sounds of persons coming from our forgotten neighbours, persons you might pass nearby, but do not look at them carefully.

So much I wish you would spend a good and profitable time in reading our magazine. And I hope this English monthly magazine worth reading and arresting of what are going on around us in a world running so fast and everlasting on the go. ■

# My Wonderful Neighbourhood in Baghdad

By Ahmed Al-Aghras

Mr. Mohammed, hang on few minutes, at the north wall to Abdul-Kadir al-Ghilani mosque. He knew well his old residence, so he set off in that day to return back to his neighbourhood, where he was brought up and spent his early years. Now he brought himself back where he used to pass by these unforgettable scenes , with his mother long time ago, as they were walking through the old roads of Baghdadi alleys. Here was the black rubber urn laid on at that low corner, exactly closed to the great crowded mosque. And there was the black spoon- al-Minshal- where he used to satisfy his thirsty with. Through the dusty alleys of Bab-al-Sheikh neighbourhood, with his mother he was passing into al-Sadriyah souk. Now he smiled and said gently : “ The memory of that pure water taste still fresh in my mouth.”

Mohammed Fatah got down from the public bus in that Baghdadi morning. His inner impulse now pushed him back to his childhood neighbourhood. Now as if all olden ports of his memories wide open, began to pour out secret pictures in his mind.

People crowd in this hour, would never stop in Bab-al-Sharqi. Mohammed's mixed feelings began to change suddenly as he now was trying to satisfy his aching for coming back to the first family house.

Not too far, from where he was walking on, garages and factories' noises would reach him up and down from time to time. Now Engine sounds getting at him directly, as he passed through that corner, accompanied with sounds of walkers and workers.

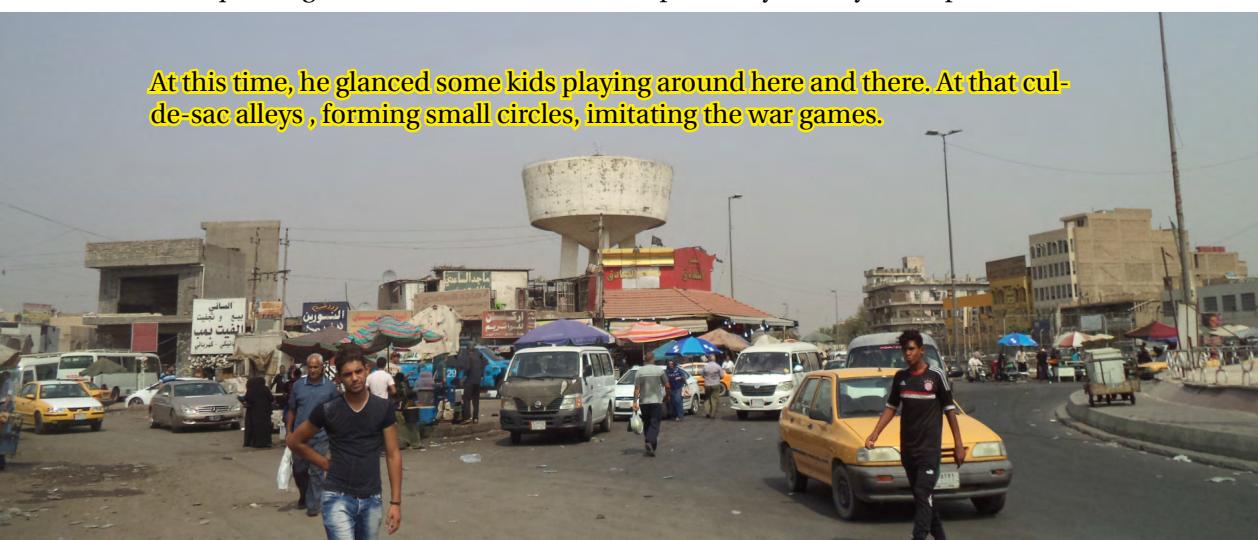
At this antique neighbourhood , he mem-

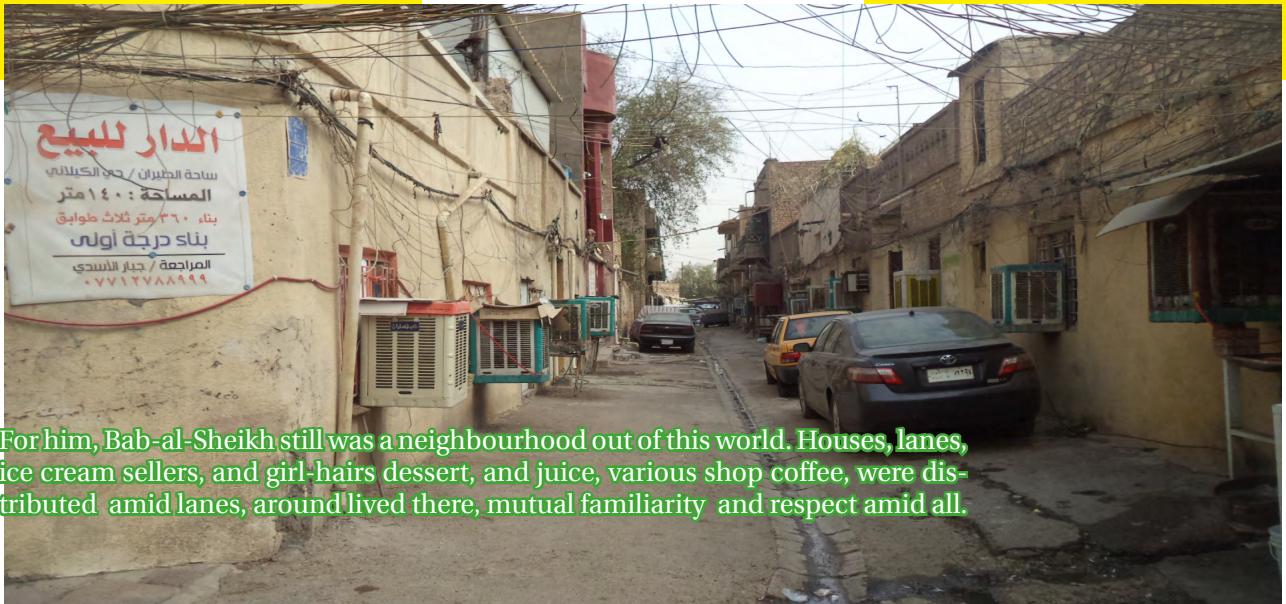
orized for the first time the unique Baghdadi words which were used by its people. As he walked on down. In here he really experienced the Baghdadi people kindness and noble hearted.

For him, Bab-al-Sheikh still was a neighbourhood out of this world. Houses, lanes, ice cream sellers, and local dessert named girls hair, and juice, where various shop coffee, were distributed amid alleys. He lived there, with mutual familiarity and respect amid all.

As he took some steps to the right, he passed by the garage of Salman Irhayif, there was a black sign, of his funeral. There a young man was standing at the alley head, and he said “ Salman Irhayif unfortunately passed away before two weeks, and his garage was sold to be soap factory. Really that professional known

At this time, he glanced some kids playing around here and there. At that cul-de-sac alleys , forming small circles, imitating the war games.





For him, Bab-al-Sheikh still was a neighbourhood out of this world. Houses, lanes, ice cream sellers, and girl-hairs dessert, and juice, various shop coffee, were distributed amid lanes, around lived there, mutual familiarity and respect amid all.

mechanician was a good Samaritan. As if he was a mayor to this area.

Mr. Mohammed gave a glance to that old Christian lady, who passed now beside him ,and he remembered how his mother liked Christian people and their style of living and how nice people they were.

Obviously he realized that a lot of these scenes completely changed, how old residents left their peaceful homes, as workplaces and factories which boosted and overwhelmed all area. There were but houses nearby sheikh Abdulqadir al-Ghailani great mosque.

His steps now were calm, but hesitated .He realized it won't be easy to retune back to his mother land. The nice smell coming mixed up with oily engine smells.

One of the books he once read, about this historical neighbourhood describe Bab-al-Sheikh . it was a small part of an older neighbourhood, was historically described as a semi city with multi functions. This neighbourhood had some establishments such as a school, a mosque, and a souk, and all the other required establishments.

All neighbourhoods which were established at that time were so close to a neighbourhood known al-Mamoniya. It was crowded with its residents as most neighbourhoods. Bab-al-Sheikh neighbourhood was at that time a part and still connected to other neighbourhoods.” At this corner

“ At the beginning of the twenty century. This neighbourhood was composed of al-Sadriyah

and al-Kubi road nearby some shops and Charbachi and Bustan Shaheen and Dokachiya and Awina and the new souk and Azat and Janabiyeen. Aweena alley now was replaced with the location of Baghdad municipal.

Mr. Mohammed stopped a little to give a glance to a new alley he was looking at. It was not so crowded at this time of day. People of this neighbourhood seemed going in into their small homes at this time of day.

” In 1969 this neighborhood, was the smallest part of bigger one called Bab Al-Azj. One of the Gates in historical Baghdad during Abbasid time.

It was a city with multi full functions . Sheik Abdul-Kadir al-Ghailani (may The Lord please him) succeeded his sheikh Abu-Saeed al-Muharabi, in his school which located at Bab al-Azj. So, this neighbourhood was extended in building and houses And at that time, the rich people helped him with money and the poor by work.”

When al-Ghailani passed away., His body was laid down in last location in this neighbourhood. His shrine used to be school and a mosque here. It was considered as one of the largest mosques of Baghdad, with its beautiful large, the greatest dome in Baghdad mosque.

This neighbourhood which surrounded the mosque, was named after the sheik's,neighbourhood of Bab-al-Sheikh”.

Mohammed said:” Of course, I have a lot of memories at this mosque. We were living in a rented house ,not too far from here, and usually when my mother wanted to go to al-Sadriyah

market we usually passed through these beautiful places.

At this time, he glanced two old men were sitting carefree in their shop while playing in dominions at the end of that cul-de-sac alley.

Now Mohammed Fatah went on upon his way, looking out to a new alley they crossed . he thought of a word " As you in Bab-al-Sheikh, you have to live in the same way people live . Here are roads, impasse like al-Charbachi and Bustan Shaheen and al-Sadiq.

" An old man once told him he won't forget the nice coffee shops there. Many shop coffee were there like al -Tasaheel and zainal and Ibrahim and al-Jam'ali. All these were well-known coffee shops. Here Mohammed Fatah recollected some pictures he had seen before.

It was said , after Ghazi street was opened ,the area was separated completely ,from Siraj al-Dean neighbourhood.

Sheikh Jalal al-Hanafi wrote once in al-Doghachia area people used to make clay ovens in Bab al-Sheikh at Bab-al-Tulism Gate . It came from Farsi language. Kurdish merchants resided by Kurd. But, It was one of al-Dogha residents. al-Dogachia that used to from a water well thus planting and vegetable, related to Shaheen house."

Dashing from the east, he wondered the huge changed which did happen during these years. How many houses were demolished and turned to be garages, and shops. Where is al-Ghazali cemetery now. Annoyed by the oiled engines some times spread on at the helpless roads he passed.

At that moment ,he spotted some kids playing around nearby old broken engines and neglected car parts. Their clothes were stained with oil, as if never been washed fro long time.

One of the kids was rather thin and the other with strong head. Some conversation they exchanged: " do you know, school teacher asked about you yesterday.

- I was with my brothers, in the Garage of Salman Irhaif, look at my hands, don't you see the grease?

- Let us go to Gharnata or al-Nijoom cinema

- No,I prefer we go the to al-Kheeyam cinema, there is a good film about Machisti, the Grecian hero. These words jumped unconsciously into his mind.

Old people told him during Ashura days, there people whether Sunnite or Shiites took the streets with various convoys to pay tribute and respect to these holy days. " There were a lot of convoys such as al-Aton's convoy and Ali bin Abi Talib and Mandili and convoy of Abu-Sai-fain neighbourhood."

" I remembered so much when the dervish men were beating their back with sticks, while Shiite were chopping their head with knives. There were used to establish a camp in the middle of al-Awina neighbourhood, now occupied by Baghdadi municipal."

Mohammed Fatah's face took a serious features as he recollected to some friends sayings" There still something which distinguished Bab-al-Sheikh neighbourhood. Its distinguished by constant solidarity and good spatiality characterize its people. We were like brothers .

And if there was dispute broke out amid two persons or families, sooner there will Samaritans to fix up between."During the prophet birth festival, you tell me, at nights of Abdulqadir people would not go to beds.

" You will see a lot of families were living in one house. Some houses may include seven families, each family lived in one room. And despite that , there was a kind familiarity amid its residents.

But albeit, all nice people you could see some bullies out there from some time to time. The character of a bully could not be forgotten. Mohammed thought his he would shed some lights on underworld of such a Baghdadi old neighbourhood.

" I remember some bullies of Bab al-Sheik. And those guy's illegal activities were unacceptable inside neighbourhood. But, their activity may took place normally at other neighbourhoods, like a gangster Alman, and Akram Kurdi and Salih Abul-Fiala, and Abbas al-Mandalwi who was accused by the intelligent men Nadhim Kizar, and khaleel Abulhoob who was shot by another bully name Muhaee Marhoon at Zina coffee shop nearby al-Sadoon stature.

Mohammed Fatah really owned up that blacksmith works and retail shops had been creeping little by little to their houses: "Most of its first residents had sold up their houses now. Some said it would not be proper residence. So most families departed their houses to factory

owners.

A house of five million now added up to seventy million and even to one hundred and thirty. That was taken placed for a period of time". there one meet a church in almost every alley in this neighbourhood."

Unfortunately the factories with its noise and waste materials were eating out its environment, and roads . In the houses the antique decoration simply lost its brightness. Walkers over there would see disturbed electric wires covered all around like thick bushes.

During the war of Baath regime, this neighbourhood was under the hammer and anvil. Several executions were carried out to young youths who deserted from the military duty.

Mr. Mohammed said as he was looking to a small but clean house. "Nowadays, some old names still used over days. There was a distinguished street which he never forgot. It was the road to his first school and al-Midan people and their buffaloes that do not like students who dressed in red.

Mohammed recollected the house scenes they live in. " In our house we rented a room and I remember there was he sheikh who practice magic or Mullah Hassan with his old wife and no kids with them."

At that time they were living with Um Kudhair family, and her blind first son who was so good in playing with his wooden flute . But all his troubles came on from, his wife Fadeela . She had only one eyed. Kudhair was Um Kudhair only boy and Risliya the nice neighbour who was so kind lady. All those faces for him were so hard to forget. With their a lot of brothers and big family they chose another house. Later a new family lived with the. The Kurdish family who would give them wherever he come back some of milk products from the factory he worked in

Al-Tahaluf elementary school it was in there where he was firstly registered. All things were so quiet, he like to see it near his childhood school where they showed the films of Egyptian one, at the celebration occasions, the house get so high, the factories must be and the roads black of what they produce. al-Rasheed street was near, but he did not desire to follow the flow or choose to enter one of the old cinemas. After one told him it has a very bad conditions

inside.

Then Mr. Mohammed tuned to new left alley. Still some hope to return in its old situation. Families there were forced to hung on pro government signs over the ex-regime and the Baath party over celebration days. There some execution did committed on lot of its youth, this neighbourhood still in weird no nearby or knowledge that in the churches.

Mr. Mohammed Fatah endeavoured to pass around all the corners he remembered. He read once Fuad al-Takerli in his famous novel, the far echo its events came. At last you found the sects here, you travel to Baghdad, and live in mixed society you have to live with their rules not like where you live.

He said as his features confirmed with his soft tone: Bab-al-Sheikh Arch, was built in the past, like tunnel, being overlooked by an old building, reached to ten-meter height, and five meters' width. This arch was leading to Fadhwat Arab neighbourhood with al-Ghailani street, and al-Kifah street to Sheikh Omer street.

"There are a lot of superstition fables and people tales, that made people feared to pass on at night. Ghosts and jennies may jump from the sound night and nights. Some thought it was the sounds of lunatic and poor who sheltered under.

The arch was built and may be counted to five hundred years. And it has an important scientific value. . It was the centre site to judges and judiciary, related to the sixth century of Islamic times. In this neighbourhood the first court in al-Risafa shore has been opened. Here Sayyid Hamdallah shrine. Mohammed remembered that so well.

" Look at my right forefinger, here is a sign of olden , little accident, when I have taken curiously a small candle of his shrine."

"It was uneasy to imagine its places and names as the residents movements on go. I can remember this neighbourhood was a place of a famous singer Qahtan al-Attar. I was told that when he used to get out of his house. Almost all beautiful girls overlooking him, while he left in his rather shy steps. Now this neighbourhood is surrounded by the car garages and workshops."

He walked around now through the roads of Bab al-Sheik and the Armenian camp. Those who resided in Baghdad after they had their

Mr Mohammed looked to that old Christian lady, and he remembered his school Christian teacher who used to come in his religious frock. Still his image could not disappeared, in his nice beard with white hair in it



own holocaust by Othman. There he kept looking to the old house and its people.

Those who kept service at the shrine, they were serving others with free soup for anyone who wanted, from the Muslim income volunteers to the shrine and to those who in charge, people were distributed around the building.

“Here I have spent my best days. Ahmed al-Hajji, Abu-Riyadh said “ my best years I have spent it in this neighbourhood, simplicity and kindness, where I used to sit at to shop coffee Abu-Sabah and playing domino with Hadi Qanber, not once I go on to al-Awina square or al-Shaikhli square to watch football games which used to be held there. Our tour were going round at the lanes and streets.”

At al-Firdos cinema, I used to watch the best films especially cowboys films and love affairs and others. Then he said with smile “ Even I have marred a girl from this neighbourhood and she born to me boys and girls”

“The neighbourhood was progressed in the fifteens and sixties at the twenties century? Later the capital municipal decided to establish and high way connected south of Baghdad to its north. It was Mohammed al-Qasim street, because that road a lot of families had to depart from the neighbourhood specially the houses which lied on nearby the dam and their houses were demolished in 1972, and all brotherly mu-

tual families had to leave each other which lived together for tens of years.

So in this way Abu-Saifain neighbourhood the public souk which liked at Hajji Mnayshid square which lined to textile market passing by sheikh Abdulqadir al-Ghailani soul till al-Sadriyah.

When they met with Hajj Bahlool ,textile shop owner said: Demolishing included a lot of old and folklore Baghdadi houses as a matter of fact. But al-Gahazali street branched to sheikh Omer in one kilometre and half, turned to be deserted after garages been built over there.

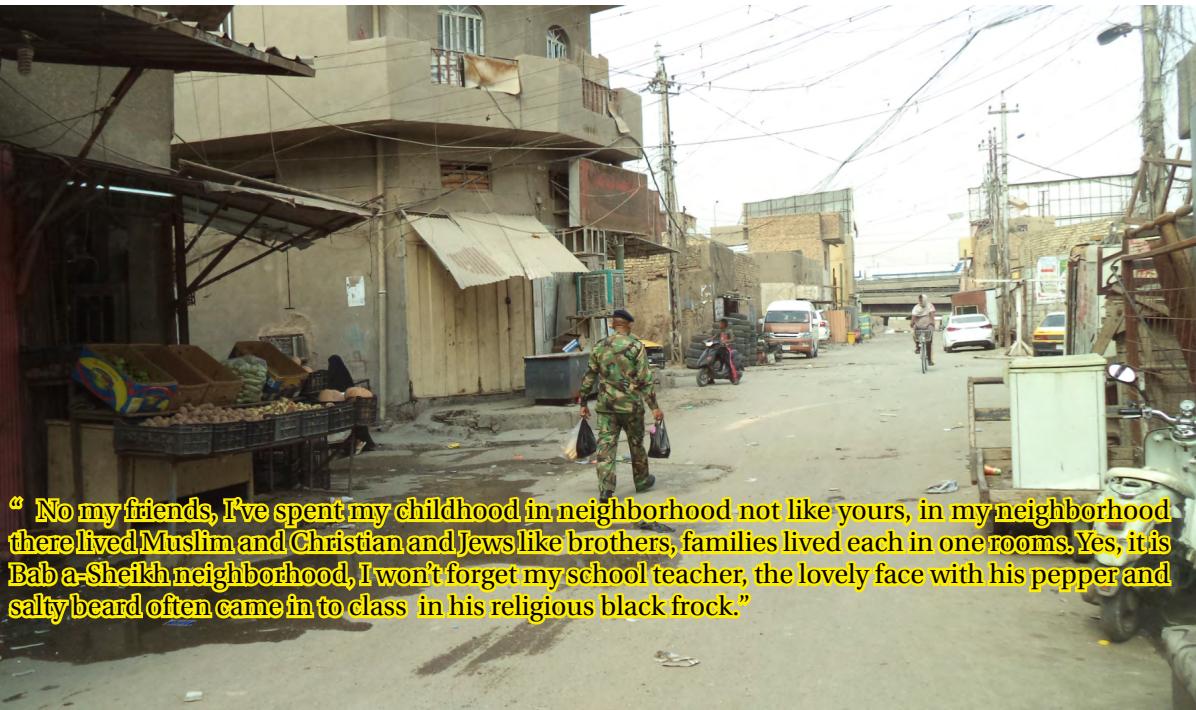
Now it turned to be inhuman houses. It was better to be demolished and compromised its people with money and build new ones according to modernized style. As for the scenes of Hajji Mnayshid square . It is still projected to these days and the shapes of ice factories there have some old tracks.

In 1980s, this area began to lose its particularity little by little. Shop keepers surrounded everything. They usually pay a lot of money for renting the houses and to let them practicing their job. This really took place during nineties.

Searching for the past, I went there and found out iron which was the mutual factor amid houses. I felt as if this neighbourhood was not as I used to know, long years ago. My look now was completely different.

Mohammed felt weird feeling when he was told, the major coffee shops coffee were demolished and that public bath for men most of the weak days and women for one day was closed long time and instead of building there were walls of bricks. There was a man who

for summer at al-Nafora square, which brought up a lot of families over there. While I have an opportunity to watch its programs freely with advantage my mother visits to the tailor Um Fatima where her house overlooking to the cinema facade.



**“ No my friends, I've spent my childhood in neighborhood not like yours, in my neighborhood there lived Muslim and Christian and Jews like brothers, families lived each in one rooms, Yes, it is Bab al-Sheikh neighborhood, I won't forget my school teacher, the lovely face with his pepper and salty beard often came in to class in his religious black frock.”**

named Noori Ghola. People here used to consider him as a mayor, as he knew this area status and details. He knew the lanes and people as an expert. He had been born in Bab- al-Sheikh and raised on it, still connected to.

What did it distinguished from others he said the popular locations almost similar to each other as for the familiarity and kindness and not discriminations amid them, Mr. Noori promised him to complete his conversation next day.

But after few days unfortunately, he was killed by a splinter in his neck of a blasted car, exploded at the high way near by his house. So we have lost Noori.

He was a resident to this neighbourhood in fifteen and sixteen's. And he said once: we were in Bab al-Sheikh in the fifteen spent our times in its neighbourhood al-Tasabeel and siraj al-Deen and Fadwa Arab and Sheikh Rafiee and al-Sadriay souk. And there was al-sharqi cinema

There were a lot of popular coffee shops which had been frequented by elders, as it was improperly to the young to come in. Later there was a important change took place as their TV sets were showed. And TV station in Baghdad opened up in 1965. And because it was not easy for families to buy TV, so the boys were gathered at a corner of the coffee shop to watch for “ten fils “shed be paid later it was served by Halaqoom desert because the tea which is not tasteful for the young.

While the existed schools it were Bab-al-sheik al-Risafi and al-Khuld at the middle of al-Sadryah neighborhood and others which had been the way to graduated a great number of elite such as Fuad al-Takerli who wrote the best of his novels about this are” al-Raja al-Baeed and Noor Ghulam and Naeem Abtan and Nadhim Fatah and Falih Abdul-Jabar.

Naturally life was distinguished with simplicity

and familiarity exaggerated some times, even if there some problems broke out soon you would find some of the old sage men who could re-tuned peace again at a lunch table.

He was been told by a friend One day he was striding around, the petrol gas he found a an old man who was more than sixty in dunked state. After he looked to him more I asked him are not the bully... But he told me no: I was surly he was one of the bullies who was putting on a knife in his belt in the seventeen searching for any one other even my parents told me one not to look to his eyes.

Perhaps the greediness of some of house owners, did its effects during the black days the neighborhood suffered from. He was advised that new comers would kept silent and did not comment claiming this was their right. And they would did what they want

He searched for Shakir, the barber, but he was told he passed always and about Abu-Sabah the barber its shops still existed but it runs by his sons as the father dies a heart stroke. When I want to al-Nahda square .I found al-Firdaus cinemas has been changed to be shops and ..... leased the square is full of garbage and hire taxi. The street which led to al-Wathba then it would take you the al-Nahda square , now turned to be a market for selling fruits and vegetable. There nothing remain of the street but a narrow path hardly could be used by a car.

During Ramadan month life would be really a special taste. People coming and going and life going on nicely. It would reshape every way and did not stay in one state.

An American newspaper wrote out once, about bab- al-Sheikh, this neighbourhood has reaaly the religious rightness and sectional co-living. Tomorrow there will be a festival Ed and with Saeed beard

This song appeared to light during the Baghdadi governor Saeed Pasha, he was murdered on 1322 Hegira . And Bab-al-Sheikh was built in older time like tunnel overlooking by an old construction, it reached to ten meters, its width five meters, this antique arch reached to Fadwat Arab in al-Ghilani street which attached to al-Kifah street with Omer street.

There were rumours narrated about this arch stores and fables public and supernatural, and due to that made some residents of Bab-al-

Sheik .

Mr Mohammed said as h remembered an assembly took place about one year ago. He was with some friends form Baghdad. He still always consider himself of this neighborhood, despite the fact that his family settled down but few years in Bab-al-sheik " really I was , so proud of the neighbourhood where I was born in, despite I remembered about is so little. We have a tough confab in a work gathering after the bloody events which often put our capital on fire of a semi civil war. He told them that time:

" No my friends, I've spent my childhood in neighborhood not like yours, in my neighborhood there lived Muslim and Christian and Jews like brothers, families live peacefully with each family in one room. Yes, it is Bab a-Sheikh neighborhood, I won't forget my school teacher, his lovely face with pepper and salty beard often came in to class in his religious black frock."

As Mr. Mohammed Fatah was strolling to what remained of neighbourhood. He remembered what the Iraqi well now Fuad al-Takerli wrote down in his famous novel" The far echo", when the novel events took place in Bab al-sheik under Abdul-Kareem Qasim, an Iraqi leader

The ground of impasse of alley zigzagged like the life of its residence. Well, you buy some apples and some other stuff, before pinning in al-Ghailani mosque and penetrate it. The sun did not reach down the meridian level, the red rays coloured the minaret top and the high clock tower. Now they have reached immediately to al-Yas coffee shop, then turned into the dim hole to Kurd neighbourhood, nagging on at the tobacco smell splashed on the grounded stained with argilled water. ■

Resources: articles: - reported by Hayder al-Hayder.

2-Muaid Miklif Sawadi ( e memory of school teacher)

3- D. Sami Al-Sheikhli ( Bab- al-Sheikh, historical baghdadi center in one hundred years)

# Untold Story of Baghdadi Handcart Drivers

By Saeed Bashir

In Baghdad's central bazaar, al-Shurja, wavering noise almost could make newcomers rather deaf. And crowd place would surely do customers dizzy as well. The highly pitched sound, " dir-baalek- dir-baalek ", lookout, phrases were now and then being re-echoed. Issuing forth now by that young handcart driver, from time to time, while his sweat being poured off from his forehead, he cried it out again and again.

With his heavy load ,The young hand cart driver was carefully dragging on his metal handcart, passing in through very narrow paths. At this time, he stopped trying to find the correct direction ,amid walkers and passers-by who often got vexed of him, fearing the sharp edge of his handcart would hurt them, taking a safe distance.

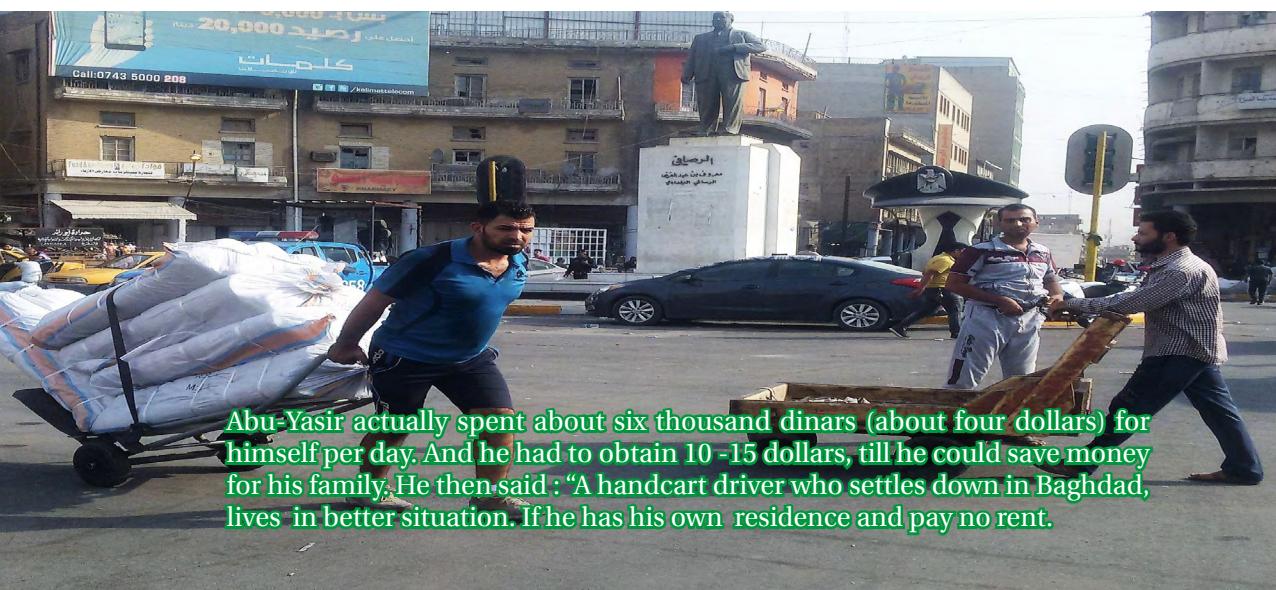
Behind al-Ghazil souk, you could feel as if the tales of the thousands nights and nights, opened up its magical doors. At the middle of Baghdadi khan, Abu-Kareem, the owner of this Khan, the king of the manual cart driving. An old man tall and lean, with wrinkled brownish face ,was sitting down on a small stool before a small wooden fire he made it to keep warm in that cold morning:

Abu Abu-kareem who has a skin of chocolate colour, as they called him here , hajji Abu-Kareem, was a not a naive, when he left his southern province and came to Baghdad in 1950 . he-

said:

"When I came to Baghdad my late aunt told me: Son the work you can do it, won't need to a capital. All you need but a good health, and By God you own it!. Here Abu-Kareem smiled from his deep heart as he remembered that."

" To Baghdad I came carrying with me all my dreams and concerns. I left my miserable village . So I came here to try my luck like others. But frankly it was very hard for me. I was like fish in huge ocean! He said that while he was trying to ignite the flames he made before him fire. Since that time al-Shurja alleys and narrow



roads I knew very well. I was so healthy at that time

Abu-Kareem seemed satisfied with his life course , as he talked about his unique job: " By God willing, I have now nearly seventy wooden handcarts. I usually rent it to handcart drivers in one thousand dinars only per day."

He then gave details on al-Shurja market about the old times He did compare those days to its current state. And how a handcart driver used to carry loads on his back, where no one used a handcart .

" In this time most of handcart drivers ,who rent carts from me, coming from south provinces of Iraq, such as al-Nasiriyah, al-Simawa, al-Diwania, Diyala and of out skirts of Baghdad. During al-Shurja old days. We , in 1950s and 1960s the handcart drivers at that time used to work in food stuff. Rays, parley and rice, apple which normally used to be imported from Syria and Jordan"

So satisfied he brought up the story of a handcart driver who lived nearby al-Kifah street. He then could have built his own house

When he got retired, he used to hang his dearest cart on his house facade with the handcart driver manual belt used to work with," the Jinda" of handcart driver belt made of skin its inside made of wool, worn as stripes on the shoulder.

A handcart driver job he described as not cost so much. But it really needs a physical strength only. He remembered when he used to work at the river street, each ballet could be equal to 500 kilos in weight almost, working from dawn to evening, just for having 20 to 40 dollars per day.

He said now "Trust and confidence exchanged between a cart driver and a customer are the most important things in such a business. Some of the handcart drivers may steal of the merchants he works for, but a thief sooner or later will be exposed whatever time it took ."

Drivers activities would be started out from dawn till evenings, through a rather narrow lanes. There was large and solitary Baghda-di khan opened in its wide square. There one could see lied on a lot of handcart painted in blue with numbers to each one

He did it hung on the house façade, which he bought by what he earned being a handcart

driver. He would never forget he was once a luggage handcart driver one day. That carriage now removed long time over there, in its place placed on the house front wall till it was ordered by members of Baath party of the ex- regime to get down.

Abu-Kareem, in the past, he was just a simple handcart driver, confirmed the work here usually carried out very well, from sunrise to sunset, without hesitation.

Now Abu-Kareem owned now 50 carts out to work. To make a hand cart usually costs 30 thousand but today it costing about 90 thousand dinars. What in the past costed about 10 thousand Iraqi dinar for a cart . At this time it needs 10 doubled in price.

The first days he came here he could not forget easily : Since he came here, he had to know perfectly the places in al-Shurja streets. His strong body like a Sumerian bull helped him in his new life, How many times he was lost in its crowded alleys!! And how many times walkers would be shouting at him. He knew so well, the bleeding due work, and backache, and the heavy cargo

That an experiment perhaps most cart drivers passed in it. When a handcart driver might be fooled by a person and stole his cart with its cargo on it.

- Would you bring the merchant receipt I forgot in the trade shop.?

The customer you might face normally wear in suit and tie, but he did steal what form hand to mouth handcart drivers earned for living.

During winter season, his hard work will be in slump as he brought up, job is better in summer as a lot of students come for work as school will be off, even college students working for and employee.

" I have handcart driver who is studying in nursery college and a school teacher and employee in health ministry!! He is saying his salary there is not enough, just two hundred dinars and it does to suffice him for living. We normally tried to let the new handcart driver know about such kind of accident and they have to award it off"

Some of young men entered into the Kahn at that time, and we seized the opportunity and asked them

Fuad Mihsin, spoke about his first days of this business , as he was let go from army duty to work in handcart driver business first.

# Hand Cart Drivers lives between a hammer of poverty and an anvil of hard job

**Some handcart drivers usually kept identity secret feeling humiliation of practicing such a business. But the new workers have to deliver their official papers to the khan owner to register their names on his recorded book ,**

He then put a tick in on some of handcart driver names list. Really it was a long list. He explained his job and said “ And when a handcart driver pays the cost of using our cart at the end of his work, he has to put a sign on his name. And when a handcart got back he put a circle over the his name.

Nabeel Ibrahim 23 year-old, father of one child, working on in carrying spice and food stuff. He was seen in the yellowish colour from top to bottom! It would not leave him, as if fall into a serious disease . He confirmed they relied upon the customiser’s tips. But If one cart driver would have an accident that would push him ways from work for a long time. He himself was under this : “One day I stepped in a dim stock shop, with a load on my back about 60 kilos, I could not have balanced. Suddenly, my ankle has been twisted , and I fell to ground. That accident made lie down on bed for three months!”

At al-Wathba square in centre of Baghdad, Abu-Mariam, 33 a father of three kids, stood before his wooden handcart, waiting for someone to hire him with his cart. Abu-Mariam, as most hand cart drivers, who used to work in this business, held out mentioning his real name openly.

The cart driver successfully made his way up. He did not care whether his handcart, was so loaded to its top, with all cargo bags, of various kinds of electric tools. In the same road, there were coming and going handcarts drivers struggling to go through sub-roads. This alley was overwhelmed with people and various merchandises. At rear, the merchant, whose merchandises of this cart belonged to, speeding up his steps trying to catch up with him.

Undoubtedly those who worked in such a craft, could not ward off humility feeling of being at the bottom of the ladder. He spoke out that he

was settling out in a poor neighbourhood north of Baghdad. He went on in his job after regime fallen apart. As he was wrapping up his red spotted Arab Yashmag neatly, around his neck , explained how he usually carried on the merchandises. And how merchants and customers would asked him to carry on their luggage: he said then:

“ We are working by the God will, carrying heavy loads of customers from markets. Sometimes, we have a chance to unload traders’ trucks at shops and stores”. A hand cart would rather keeping constant customers .

“ Baghdad is really a very large world for me. And here a lot of chances for life and work, so I came to work as driver. Yes it is so tiring job, but for that I obtained the money to earn my family and this is really the most important thing.

“ I started on to save up and bought a small residential land for me , and I am going to leave the rented house. I am well satisfied of my life and situation I dream of better life, and in God willing I am going to have the best.”

He then shifted his subject point and confirmed the price a wooden cart price which may reach to more than 50 Iraqi dinars (about 40 dollars).

“ There are two kinds of hand carts. The metal handcart used in so narrowed places and the wooden handcart drivers used often at the open places.”

At the side road in al-Ghazil souk. Ali Thamir Hayder, 68, a father to seven sons, was an old handcart driver with wrinkled face. Despite of his advanced age, he still coming and going with his wooden handcart, from dawn to evening to earn living for his family members. Slowly he was driving on his new wooden coloured cart. He confirmed that his last cart was stolen, as he left it, for just few minutes for a personal errand. He said in a seriously confirmed tone: a fancy guy neared from the hand cart driver in Baghddi accent:  
-Hey-man.

- Yes, sir.

I have some electric materials boxes, can you load it?

-Where Sir?

That trick would be applied on new hand cart drivers. In road be careful of fancy customers . If a customer pretended he lost something as his car key or his stuff at shop of the dealer. The hand cart driver would offer his help.

But this tricky move would reached it climax when hand cart returns back, and does not find the fancy customer and his own cart!!

“ That was unlucky day, unfortunately ,what I have to do, but buy a new cart The Lord will compensate me for this”

Mr. Ali was working since twenty years . He said now he did specialize mostly in loading ,and transferring rice and sugar bags into shops. He normally will be paid one thousand dinars, for each load now.

“ Payment normally depends on the customers’ generosity. I am working under the lord willing. A handcart driver has to behave politely with customers and be in good morals.”

Ahmed Hassan , nearly 12 years old, all skin and bone, he seemed absent minded, as zooming in on at the car columns of cars which were passing on before him and putting his small hands on the wooden front of his cart.

“ Yes, I am at the sixth degree class. Sometimes I have to leave school, I have to push a cart as my family relies upon me . My family settles down at outskirts of al-Karada city, with six family members. My father used to work as a hired worker at a food store.” There was Khan owner knew him and he let him hire a cart every day. He Now he worked in carrying on electric tools. He described customers as being generous, given him well tips.

“ Usually shop owners did not hire cart drivers whom they did not already know. I am working only at holidays. work is not a shame.” He

said with a smile and at last he refused to be pictured.

Abu- Kadhim, 54 old, with 20 family members working since being 15 years old. He said: “Any man could not work in such an occupation, as it would inherit him a lot of diseases and troubles, due what he did for living.

“ Once I was suffering of a fit of spasm, at my back and was unable to move for almost year.

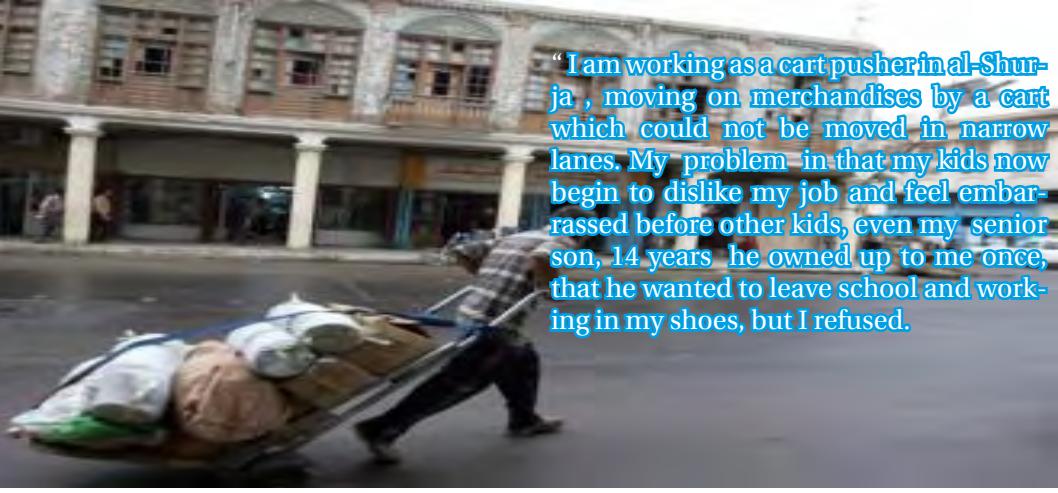
And about the people getting annoyed in crowded lanes, being hurt by cart passing. And when some brawls happened between customers and handcart drivers. He shouted out :” All that done because of Saddam. We are with no future because of him. “He said finally.

Abu-Yasir, 38 old, from al-Simawa south of Iraq . he worked as a handcart driver. He did not see his family for six months. One of his brothers would come in every month, to get back of what his brother earned. As he was from a family lived from hand to mouth.

Some young preferred to be a handcart driver and not join the army, as they might be killed by the terrorist groups. He then talked about the troubles they face in the capital, and the hard situation they face as living in cheap hotels, spending a night reached for a dollar two dollars for a bed. And how they prefer the cheapest ones in Bab-al-Sharqi usually.

Abu-Yasir usually spends about six thousand (about four dollars) for himself per day. And he has to obtain 10 -15 dollars, till he could save money for his family. He then said : “A handcart driver who settles down in Baghdad, lives in better situation. He has not to pay for the residence and rent. He touched upon to some traders whom the cart drivers deal with most of time, using handcart drivers in getting the merchandises in or out without paying them their





“I am working as a cart pusher in al-Shurja , moving on merchandises by a cart which could not be moved in narrow lanes. My problem in that my kids now begin to dislike my job and feel embarrassed before other kids, even my senior son, 14 years he owned up to me once, that he wanted to leave school and working in my shoes, but I refused.

rightful payment. “What we hate most, it is the close handed traders.”

At another place, after the dawn prayer, Jalal would put his shattered work dress on, with his military shoes to help him cross through the stagnant waters of swamps, wearing with thick gloves to ease him up to push his cart, wrapped his head around with his Yashmag.

He was now going to Jameela market, holding on his cart, waiting for the lord grace, carrying on buyers’ merchandises where they wanted. Despite he was 35 old, but life did not grant him really but a cart and impotent career. This wooden cart and my arms one my means to earn life. I am in this business for 15 years I know my fate, not be bored but I got a long with it..

Mr. Thaer Nasir , 40 years, of al-Maamel neighbourhood said simply:” it is really an exhausting work. It has certainly consumed up all my life before 25 years ago I left school in immediate level.”

“ I was so clever student at that time. I liked so much to study, but as my family being in hard time, over my father’s sickness. He was suffering of hard sickness, which made his laid down at home for long time. Therefore I had to work on in his shoes . Life threw me out from all my dreams to dustbin, so did what I could. Now I am nearly obtained 15 thousand daily.

Abu-Saad al-Ubaidi, 43 year- old a Hand car driver from al-Mosul province, used to sell sesame cereal acknowledged. Now he preferred to the handcart driver he knew after the one had does not knew. Till he came on ... merchandises to the required place without being damaged.

“ It doesn’t matter whether a handcart driver

was a younger or not. yes, some of traders did not give a handcart driver the exact money he desired and some did not give him what he deserved as for the tips.”

“ I work on from early morning to mid-day. So, I could buy my house stuff and save up oil price and rent and generator power subscription pay T.V and allowances parts from some I added up an amount to buy medications for my sick mom. She was suffering of diabetics and pressure and tuberculosis and supplied over all the social requirements, wedding celebrations or funerals we should fulfil by blessing of cart pushing drivers . By this job I keep my dignity. I am really proud of my work and I am not shame of it.’

The young Mohammed said :”I am happy of my job . By this job I help myself and do service to people.

Abu- Mohammed a resident from Hay al-Nasir, 45 years old said “ I am working as a cart pusher in al-Shurja , moving on merchandises by a cart which could not be moved in narrow lanes. My problem in that my kids now begin to dislike my job and feel embarrassed before other kids, even my senior son, 14 years he owned up to me once, that he wanted to leave school and working in my shoes, but I refused. That our society looked in very humiliated eye to the cart pusher job.

Khalid al-Hilfi , 28, said :”I am graduated from the economics and administration college. Really I did not find an opportunity to be employed to another job. And my family supplement could not wait . So I once decided to go with my cousin to work on as a cart pusher in al-Shurja. So I brought a cart for me. And

here am turned from graduated to be just a cart pusher. In the market ,my degree I obtained did not help me. An depression get effected on me, over the years. I lost my life despite I have been studying hard and work in vain. Now I feel humiliated in mention my job but what I can't do and my country did not give me a respected job.

“ Looking at as a good opportunity which may save me from all debt and save my dignity. As for the dream to be employed I did not think of it any more, as the employment system in Iraq is so leak up by corruption, as bachelor degree did not help me as my cart did.

Mr. Athir al-Juburi 27, resident of al-Sader city said : “ I was looking for any job, after the factory I used to wok in has been closed. I have been under misery of unemployment for two years. A chance would not come in but to really lucky ones. Actually I got bored so much of my life. ”

“ At that time I felt my life reached to a wall, I have to accept any job that would be appeared to me. So I have but a choice to work as a cart driver in al-Shurja where we usually unload burdens and weights of the lorries into the store and vice versa.

Yes I dream of better work and more income and less exhausted work. But I will not a prisoner to daydream. Thus I seek and in God blessing I find this job as blessing in disguise. The most important thing that I would refer to our work as a cart driver including some dangers, and it is without security.

Mr. Bashar Kudahir.29 resident in Hay al-kaafat. “ Well, as a matter of fact, I am in really in depression, almost a year and I am in this job after I left study and I was in the fourth class of secondary school. I am from a very poor family and I have two brothers who work as car pushers. It is only me how tired to complete up my school and my dad provide all requirements. But last year he undergone to a car accident that made him crippled and sitting at home. And he could not earn living after he was selling clothes at the pavements in Baghdad al-Jadeeda souk. Therefore my life had been changed dramatically. My brothers refused to provide my fees as study require it. Finally I have decided to follow up as the same as my brothers job and be a cat driver in Jameela souk, but I went on my study. So the last year was so hard and passed on, yes I obtain money and try to save up to pass the

bachelor exams.

“ I am from a poor family and did not complete my education like most of the village young men there. So I came to Baghdad to earn living, and a found a job opportunity as a driver in al-Shurja souk. I live now in a room an near hotel close to my work a with some youth of my village who came in for the same reasons. ”

“ Thanks for Lord, we have suitable work and I send some money to my family for their living. I consider this job an important opportunity which was provided for me after a long time of unemployment. As for my dream I would like if I could find and job nearby my province and to be close to my family. ”

Mr. Rafid, a resident of al-Sader city said” had not be poverty and money lack and unstable chances for work, I would not choose to work in such a job. It is very uneasy job and it has a little income. And people look to us as if we are nothing!! In it is an insult to work as driver and I used to hide my work nature in order not to be under humiliation of others.

Nearby a crowded corner, in that Baghda-di bazaar, there were some men who indulged in unloading sacks flour, carrying on it, upon their shoulders. Near them there was an older man with his thick moustache, who tried to encouraged other young men to unload the long truck of its heavy sacks as reciting local chants and they repeating after him. There were two of them uplifting the sacks in appropriate way for others by their turns.

As we left the khan owner his last words as followed :

“ A handcart job will all the time be suitable solution for poor men. It did not cost them but a good health. If come to Baghdad with empty pockets all you have to do but to rent a hand cart and pay it its price at the end of day. ” ■

Reportedly with the participation from Mr. Asaad Abdullah , a journalist.

# Brass Bazaar Tunes on the Way to die out

By Mufeed waheed al-Safi

Mr. Riadh al-Safaar, Now by his small hammer, was softly beating on the golden coloured vase. The tunes he was little by little producing got higher . Carving the small vase with some notable Iraqi pictures, he seemed so obsessed with. But , from time to time, as he talks could not hide his concern over the market present state, reflecting with himself ,whether he would sell his work-shop to a textile merchant this time or not. The whole brass market was in danger. Mr. Riyadh, 33 year-old, said that in a craft like father like son, he was dealing with in this job . This time it certainly would uneasy for him to reach even to his work place either. It took him long time to come due to the unstable security situation

now sighed over these days.

Mr. Riyadh now was looking carefully at that beautiful masterpiece- the bath ball- which was put aside amid all other beautiful artefacts. The apple did not fall far from its tree. Mr. Riyadh realized this perfectly.

It is even his late grandfather's occupation. Yes, he was so specialized in making up these kind of things. And he really learned it from father and grandfather. Presently looking to this so beautiful masterpiece crowned with figures women on these days used to buy. Mr. Riadh

Mr. Riyadh now face to face with a lot of difficulties. And really he was still there facing the changing factors and whispering to per se: "There must be something, could happen and change these circumstances. Or in weakness, will it be my turn next to sell my father workshop? "

At the present time, there a strange mixture of sounds ,as one enters into the bazaar from al-Rasheed street. Sounds either get lower, or getting more pitched. An old resources brought



Mr. Riyadh now face to face with a lot of difficulties. And really he still there facing the changing factors and whispering to per se: "There must be something, could happen and change these circumstances. Will be my turn next to sell my father workshop? "

up the Brass bazaar borders and spread on open road, and linked to impasse roads.

Its main entrance from al-Rasheed street to Bab- Al-Agha bazaar. It is extended like an arch and its end is crossed with textile dealers' bazaar. Its building had been rehabilitated according to Baghdadi style.

In 1762 the brass market name was mentioned in some historical books. D. Emad Abdul-Salam's said in his book, "historical origins to Baghdadi neighbourhoods," he confirmed that during Abbasid era, there was a singular complete neighbourhood named " Darb Masooda or Masood "

At his work-shop where manual made stuff was amassed in rows with difficulty. There was Mr. Riyadh Hassan al-Safaar 38, year- old. He graduated from the science college: "The Job of brass maker is highly classified job. I inherited it from my father. Now, he pointed out to three shops as in the past were belonged to his uncle and grandfather. There were close to his, even his marital grandfather had a shop for his own before."

Sounds near him would not stop, and probably made his voice unheard clearly. Mr. Riyadh then said: "Most these old hands now passed away. And after them , circumstances getting worse and worse, since 1990 till now.

Mr Riyadh called for officials in charge to realize the alarm of this market condition: " you have to know: tourism is a river of gold. So do not leave this river to dry up and die. He now narrated a story of his friend who told him after a visit to Khan al-Khalili city in Egypt, a shop of brass work dealers. Shops there are being sold in centimetres not meters! Work there was so profitable and every shop there selling up thousand dollars per day and they work from morning to night.

"We wish our government would help this craft to be still existed , and thus tourism activity will be booming."

They still wait for better situation, and hoping the authority will take care of this Bazaar. The skilled workers now had difficulties which hinder the brass manual industry too much. And it the brass always needs zinc for every six months in order to make an insulated matter. They confirmed certainly that brass market is about to collapse and the number of brass professionals

could be counted on few

" In the past we have old masters. But the new professionals are so little. In the past, we had old masters like Hajji Jafar, but he unfortunately passed ways last year. That man really had a great experience. He worked in all kinds of brass antiques". Said he then.

" And My father, may the Lord give mercy on his soul. He was definitely a famous professional. I will not forget, my grandfather who was specialized in making bath amulet and minqala and sink. Personally I worked in both amulets and bowls and trays. The bazaar surely will let you specialized in some works."

Mr. Riyadh's face enlighten with proud emotions whenever he recited his family in inheritance.

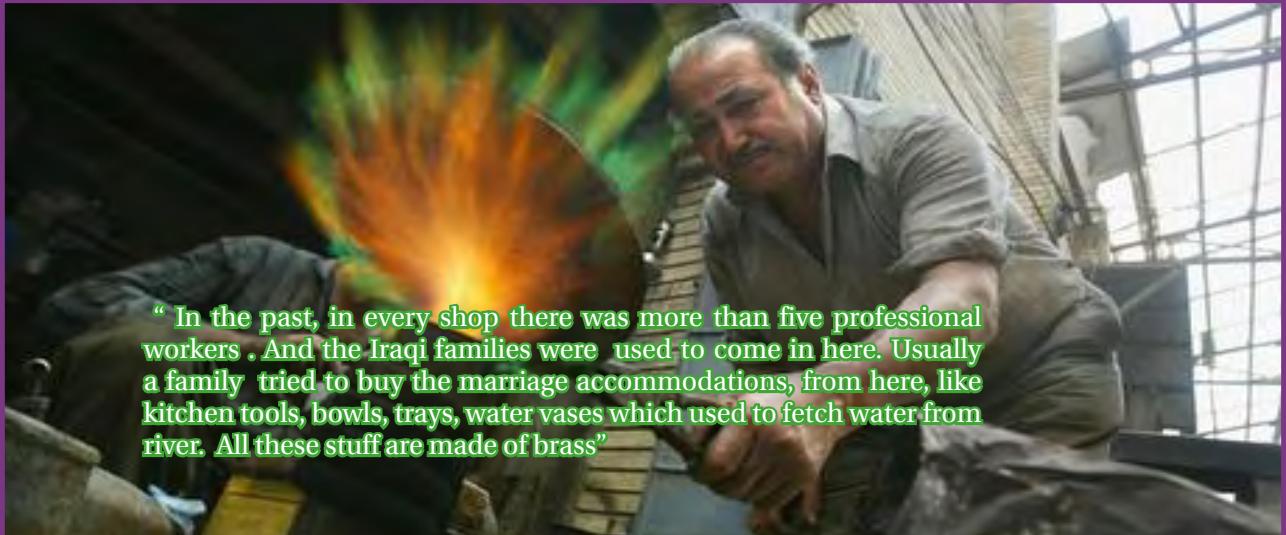
He finally brought up how he worked for now 33 years, since he was 5-year-old. The grim situation which did not help him stay longer in his career. So, he tried to choose a governmental office for four years. But later, he left it. And he said his shop did belong to his father since 1935. We three brothers, My senior brother Amir specialized in doing coffee makers and carve it. And if the bazaar got developed, we will bring on our sons to work with us. The younger , Zuhair is working as carver.

He went one and unveils their suffering

"Look at all this crammed stuff in our shop. It happens because some persons gave higher prices in their bid more than we did, so it was taken by a textile dealer. Really ,they are occupying the whole bazaar, against us as our job is getting slow down. They have great advantages. And they allure many of brass workers with money. But we still resist.

As the brass professional sounds heard, his personal tune was insulated from all far sounds. He was marking the arty pieces and hit it with his iron pencil and his secondary tools. And little by little the basic piece was cut. Later he laid it down on a rubber piece, lest it might be damaged by his hammer. Finally with ready frames of pictures, he drew on by pencil or ball-point, creating the whole figures and fixed the image features.

"You may say, I make images, carving it on brass, such as Babylon lion and The King Hammurabi and the winged Taurus. We then bring on the required frames, making it according to



“ In the past, in every shop there was more than five professional workers . And the Iraqi families were used to come in here. Usually a family tried to buy the marriage accommodations, from here, like kitchen tools, bowls, trays, water vases which used to fetch water from river. All these stuff are made of brass”

our needs. We later used the cut brass in circular shapes .

He then added information about the brass they use normally , and how would they buy it from al-Shaheed plant in al-Fallujah, in shapes like rolled balls with various sizes, from 1 mm to 0,4 mm, according to needs.

He later pointed out to a tray near him and said: we mark the frame plate, using iron engraving pencils. It will be smaller than the hit hammers. And usually are done according to what a blacksmith wants.

Most of blacksmith works we done before, as decoration antiques. This samovar you look at, the date of its production is 100 years. But the market demands for such antiques now are little. As we depend on tourism and companies or embassies. But owing the uncertain security state, we even could not get here so easily.

Mr Riyad then hoped the authority could pay a little attention to this bazaar, and he assured this place after probably one year may not be seen, but textile market. And those who remain practicing such a business, are no more than 12-14 shops. And it will down if nothing could happen to change.

“ In the past, in every shop there was more than five professional workers . And the Iraqi families were used to come in here. Usually a family tried to buy marriage accommodations, from here, like kitchen tools, bowls, trays, water vases which used to fetch water from river. All these stuff are made of brass”

“And also kettles and pots even spoons were made of brass. There what it called bath bowl or

It was made in 1950s, but people turned then to aluminium, nylon, and steel”.

He then stated that brass pieces needs to be bleached in zinc, as it may produce a poison matter. And this will cost more money and over this reason, people began to leave brass pots little by little.

And how each worker had his own kit according to the antique work he deals with. For an example an iron hammer which is curved at top in right angle. There is a lot sort of hammers, for each masterpiece. A coffer maker has its own hammer and a pot has its own.

The hammer's circular beating will leave an impact on the brass surface. And a sort of beats has its rules. It may begin with two beats slowly, or reversing, and it probably followed with soft beat. And the hammer falls in timely time with engineered way according to worker's experience. And not forget a pot has to be lain down in particular direction.

He then turned to an old story probably everybody here memorized in this souk:” I have heard some old stories such as the story of the great Arab scientist, Ahmed al-Faraheedi as he was stepping in through this bazaar, and hearing the brass dealers tunes, he suddenly discovered the poetry meters upon hearing the hammer tunes. And by the way there was a tradition such as the horses of army were used to make approach in this market, till it used to the high pitched sounds and do not draw back in wars.”

“ Professional hand definitely are considered like an important currency, you could not find it nay where. it must be taken care with, or it would be lost.

He then repeated his complains, as he remembered his craft difficulties and the tourists who disappeared after the regime fall and how they might change their job: "Everybody here works for his day. And we do not know if tourism will be activated again or not. We by our hands making such trays and plates. He then showed me some plates he made in with so beautiful paints on as the winged Taurus.

"We have graduated from colleges, me and my brothers. Really we are thinking of changing our career unfortunately". He then said:

At the shops of antiques dealers Mr. Fadhl al-Hadidi said about the famous masters of this

envelope doors and it may be used as anti-humidity. So a door will not have corroded. For this is used in bath normally. It is made of Turkey.

"Now there is a huge turning into antiques craved with Iraqi marks." He then turned his attention into swords behind him and said: it is made in Syria, with 25 thousand Iraqi dinars. This shop is owned by my father and grandfather, about 150-years ago. At my grandfather life, he was specialized in making bowls for building works, used in building. And my father was making keys. We are now dealing with brass and other materials. For me I did not work as manual worker.



I have been heard some old stories like the known scientist Ahmed al-Faraheedi as he stepping in through this bazaar, and hearing the brass dealers tunes, he suddenly discovered the poetry meters upon hearing the hammer tunes.

job: "well, Sayid Mahdi really was specialized in such artful technique of producing coffee makers. And hajji Ibrahim was known in making party huge pots. Often customers knew each one according to what work he usually made. For me I mostly import several sorts of antiques to my shop. And that was not happened before. I sell here antiques made with handmade signs and images.

And About his customers he said most of them are Iraqis. And those who travel with a gift ,and those who like to decorate their houses. He then confirmed that he did get a little profit of each piece. And he complained of the market state describing it as " a slow market. A Souk most of workers are unemployed."

Mr Riyad al-safaar, then focused his words on the brass ribbons and said: we are using it to

Hajji Abu-Rasool al-Tahiri, textile dealer, spoke about his moments in the bazaar " In this place brass works and antiques are sold. It depends on the tourists and traveller's activities, who often carry on presents to their friends and those who are coming in to Iraq for visiting and Arabs. The things currently preferred are magic lanterns, coffee maker (Dallah) or things in camel shapes and small boxes.

" Some of these masterpieces are exported from India as skilled hands number here are getting decreased. He then confirmed how brass profession turned to be an old business over hard economic state, pointing out the fact in Iraq brass industry are losing its bright. As this job primarily depends on tourists if one chooses to work here. And he said:

" As long as customers , Iraqi and foreigners ,

are getting less in numbers, this business definitely will be busted. No one cared about us or encourage us. The war embargo played a very bad role in decreasing the professional workers number".

" I have visited Isfahan in Iran. Well really I got instantly moved as I saw all their huge activity, in dealing with brass. It soon jumped to me pictures of Baghdad, brass bazaar quickly. I told myself this is real bazaar. Their authority really encourage them in work phases, giving them brass in little prices"

" It is really a fantastic feeling to hear such tunes. When you use to come here you will listen to them. One of workers may produce a thick striking tune while another does softer. Such as soft or heavy ticks. Generally, each professional has his own known sound."

He then stated the market crisis in the textile business that occupied every possible corner of this place. And confirmed how his late father did own a brass shop in 1937. He then added: " If you have a successful brass work shop and there is textile merchant who likes to buy you shop so why you do it? When brass professionals did not have brass and they have family to earn their living, what they could do?

He did unveil a known grim fact as he brought up that some of the brass skilled workers who turned to sell clothes and how others who moved in to sell antique to foreigner at fancy hotels directly.

He then said: "some workers turned to chain production which used with locks or kitchen materials or making a weight balance as the demand for it, is beefed up. He then gave examples for famous hands: " look here, one of them was, Sayid Mahdi and his son who were specialized in introducing manual coffee maker. And there was Hajj's shop who were dealing with pots used in the month of Ashura."

At that time he has to stop his telling as a man and woman entered his shop and he hurried to receive them, but unfortunately they got out at last without buying any stuff.

Mr. Riyad touched his chemise pocket. Now he sensed the blessing sign for luck which his wife have sewn him there. It did not work till now as no person entered into his shop for almost month.

As he came in this day he saw his friend's shop

was closed. He really hoped there was not a bad thing happened to him, as he heard some unhappy news about him lately.

But at this time he retuned to his recent mood and complete his story by saying:

" I remember the day when lady Indira Gandhi visited out bazaar, like the Pakistani president Dhiya-al-Haq, and the Saudi king Fahad who bought coffee an Iraqi coffee maker, which was unknown in his country. it was coffee maker of Sayid Mahdi.

Mr. Riadh al-Safaar confirmed to Iraq post magazine it was rather unsuitable now to meet one of Mr. Mahdi sons or one of whom they work with due they have currently a funeral to one of their closed relatives.

Mahdi's coffee maker design, nobody can copy everywhere in the whole world. I have seen one which rather similar to Sayid Mahdi's. But it's made of steel. Normally a coffee maker is formed according to its maker character and his art.

: "Really, I can distinguish any coffee makers by its front or back. I can do it form a twenty-meter distance. Even some Saudis tried to copy it during embargo days, so they send its design to South Korea, but they made it of steel. And brass is changed in its heat and resistance to fire, it will not have lost its heat. Now Mr. Mahdi son working in replace of him".

He then went on saying there are no signs on the shops, as workers round here are famous by their names, such as Hajji Husain's sons who work with brass.

In this market , Mr. Riyad explored the world around him, from the first day his father brought him here. How he felt so proud as he returned that day to his mother while his hands carrying his first artefact. He now recollect that and hardly could stop shedding some tears down.

He then pointed out into one of the shops who dealing with producing coffee maker of silver. And Abu-Alaa al-Safaar's sons who work with brass in the prophet households' shrines. And they are making now large lanterns at fancy châteaus.

"Masters of this business are belonged to many generations. The first generation passed away in 1940s, while the second generation, whom I knew most of them, in 1960s and 1970s. a master work and experience really make the

first factor in succeeding his shop. It's truly right saying. A master's hammer is made of gold."

He said then one of famous professional is Abu Mohsen's son, who still working till now. He is specialized in producing silver coffee makers. And Mr. Mahdi who passed away, but his sons still working.

Mr Riyad confirmed that if there had available chance to work in brass, he would work in it. Albeit he is now a textile merchant. He grown up in this bazaar. And he really knew every bit details of this career. And then added how some of the brass shops changed it work to sell on antiques nearby al-Mustansirya school.

"Sayid Mahdi told me once about the bazaar history and affirmed that those who built al-Mustansirya school needed to establish a kitchen close to it".

"Where they have to feed all students who were coming from all over the world. So they had to make pots near this school. And their work were developed till we have this brass bazaar. And during Ottoman era the souk production in here were relied upon brass."

Mr. Ayad Mohammed 39- year-old customer spoke about the reasons of his coming: I am trying to purchase some things which meet my house decoration. I have bought some carpets. And now am looking for brass works seemingly go with my house scene. I really do not have great experience in prices.

Mr. Kadhim Ali, 56, brass dealer affirmed that skilled hands of this job are disappearing from this place. During the ex-regime there was fabricated encouraging, just we will do this and that but nor profitable results. He did know a master in this job as he got older, his sons refused to work in his business. And they claimed it could not provide their needs.

"If our father business could help us, we would not leave it. I have visited Isfahan and saw a lot of families sharing the same job. One of family members working in design and other shaping its details and a third craving it."

Majid Sadiq Abu-Ilaf 46-years-old guy who was sitting with some friends before a brass shop. He then said after being asked about the brass bazaar: "Brass market bards spread from al-Rasheed street to the al-Nahar street, nearby al-Mustansirya school to the Poet al-Risafi statue at Bab al-Agha. At the bazaar there are 145

shops, I have counted it in 1980s. There are six walkways to the right and two to the left. Our shops now are mingled with the textile shops, so you may find around 15-18 brass shops."

He then added: "Before twenty years ago, in this bazaar, there were houses to brass workers. They would be closed to their jobs, as they got up early and do not return back till it midnight. Even they work under lanterns' lights".

"Brass business normally consists of brass worker and antique keeper and Nickel worker and craver. As a matter of fact, we have been residents in Baghdad long time ago. My father was a brass professional worker, but houses were collapsed and turned into shops."

He then completed his story and added how they were young and had to go to military service. As they grown up they found out their job was falling down. So they began to sell on their shops, some picked out workplaces, out of here as renting here is getting so high.

Hayder Mohsen 32- year-old worker. He said he was working at the market since he was 10. He at the present time was so busy in rehabilitate an old tray painted with the king Hammurabi and Minaret al-Hadbaa cravings. He then said about his career. Actually I have acquired this from my father, who was a brass work professional. We often use pencils in drawings, then we carve it on basic paper and print it by using carbon. Normally we take photos from old souvenirs.

Sameer Qasim Abdul-Mohsen, 43- year – old shared his work in the same shop. He was graduated from technology institution. He seemed working in tunes in his job. He later said:

"We specialized in candy tools. It is the same job of my father and his father. We still keep it on. Folklore has to live on. Actually I used to work in local vases production and bath bowl and trays."

**"Customers usually buy kettles and carved trays. In the past the work was concern on producing samovars and craves. You may see a lot of brass workers' sons, who did not learn their father crafts. Now textile merchants are paying so much prices."**

At an impasse road, before getting out of the bazaar. The Iraq post magazine met a skilled worker who was sitting down on the ground,

with a colleague: " Really coffee maker production always represents originality of Iraqi people brand. He then described some steps of his work and how they made it circular. And he explained how this stuff was importing from Syria. And he did account on how a Syrian coffee maker brought by smuggling is cheaper now.

"It is true that effects on our job. We normally sell a coffee maker with 35 thousand Iraqi dinar, and it may reach to 40 thousand. The complete set is amounted to 150 thousand Iraqi dinar. Usually a down coffee maker is preferred by Saudis. My father used to make a lot of it." He then said:

He then remembered a Baghdad coffee maker for an example. And how they did make such kind before Indian antiques entered in the Iraqi bazaar. He then brought up another example as a pear like coffee maker with manual craving cover.

"Really beating up on brass is a distinguished work. We now deal with the red coffee maker. Even we are making now Syrian yellowish coffee maker. Sometimes. You could not hear your sound over the high-pitched tuned of beating up on brass in this market." He then did not forget remind us of his suffering as he said

"In the past professional master of this businesses could buy houses and travel abroad. Not like what we are today we almost could earn living."

He described himself as working in brass decorations and samovars for tea and stated the same words of his colleagues, and how the brass skilled workers are passed away. And how was the work of his father was profitable as he could earn living for ten members and bought two houses!! And now this business would not encourage anyone.

Hajji Radhwan, Abu Mohammed 62, years confirmed he did inherit this craft from his father. And he practiced it since he was just a little kid:

"One of the Baghdadi customs, the grooms' family used to buy up all the materials which considered useful and ship it out to her home on the wedding day. And the more staff they send, the more live signs they show up to their daughter.

He concluded the reasons by which his craft slow down , he said" slowdown in this business took place due this market undergone to

recession over time. All that done firstly by the decision of health ministry since early 1950. It banned using brass over its interactivity with other materials so people turned to buy tools made of aluminium and lead later.

The crisis which broke down in this market and effected it so negatively. This bad situation kicked off since the wage of Iraq –Iran war. The brass had been taken from the markets for the sake of the military industry. Later it had been issued forth of forbidding it. They stopped of backing up the professionals, that made the traders to depart their crafts and sold all their shops to the textile merchants.

Mr. Riyadh referred out to " on these days the ministry of culture is backing up folklore crafts like manual carpet but it neglects unfortunately the brass crafts. Despite it is considered the oldest kinds of crafts. It did called for from time to time some of the professional of craft locally and internally but they

" Our job would not be existed any more, the government during Saddam regime did not give us any help".

This craft he professed did not mean work, it represents the history of his family. He could not believe himself to leave all this behind him. No. It is really impossible for him."

This morning he would not bring his son, Ali four years old, he clung to him. He did like to go with him, but he hesitated . He wished his son would not be in the same course of life as he did. Despite his mother encouraged him but he did not.

As we departing the market scenes, some hammers outside went on in sending various sounds, expressing on the brass market identity. Tunes in this market still resist time, but to how long, nobody could answer that. It is really so horrible a day when nobody will hear echo of such delegate and skilled hammers that creating beautiful and nice images chanting the identity of Baghdad and Mesopotamia. ■■■

# Iraqi Women Behind Bars own up

By Ahmed Al-Aghras

## Part 1

As approaching closer, to really unique site in its purpose. Probably, you might feel that passers by would look in askance uncomfortably over walking around. The Iraqi local saying hereby did not be recited with pride." Prison is really for bold men". At this time, it would represent infamous shame comparably. If an unlucky woman was fated to get in here, her devastated family would keep her name be hidden from hearing by others.

Early at morning, we reached this site and through a petite slit, in a huge iron gate , we exchanged some words with a guard who was behind . He firstly hesitated ,and perhaps some doubt was seen upon his face about our mission. But, later, his feature was changed, after an official permission for the visit was submitted to him.

We actually might be in fear to return back empty handed. After we passed over the disturbing long waiting, the huge iron gate was opened at last. So, we rushed in confident unbelieveing steps. At the reception room, we have been undergone to check-up punctually, then

waited for the officials' last permission, which was required for several minutes.

Then there was a problem which rose its head over; now they refused to let us enter in with our two cameras and one record!! How could it be done? But after making more calls up with higher resources, they accepted at last. We ,thus passed over the last gate to find more guards at the end!!

It is really so weird there, even in such a place, to clearly feel a feminine touch distinguishing at all corners. Along the clean passage, some paintings made in pencil, were glued as if it made by one hand. Paintings described the prison situa-

So spontaneously she talked about the inmates 'way of living, as if the prison site seemed to be her particular world, speaking to any in a repeated word, Habibi " my beloved".

tions, expressed the pain and hard waiting.

Now we turned to the left where the manager assistant room was. Here we soon have met with Miss Sajida Salih Hassan, whose serious features unveiled her age around forties. Now she guided us to the new manager room, Mrs. Faeza Mahdi. She welcomed us naturally, confirming she was assigned to deal with such a position before two days ago.

After a new order of appointment issued forth by reform office, including the ministry of work to replace the ex-manager. The new manager gave her assistant a permission to help us, as she did not yet have the exact information.

From first instant, you could recognize the assistant personality. In her rather buxom body and coarse voice, not equalized with her good-hearted character. Everybody here respects her in a way which mingled with fear.

So spontaneously she talked about the inmates 'way of living, as if the prison site seemed to be her particular world, speaking to any in a repeated word, Habibi " my beloved".

While sitting peacefully down there, we could read at a side board, some information, about the site cadre :4(male) researchers, 14 female researchers, 4 legal offices, 2 computers section. Inter activities: illiteracy counter ,44 participants, 10 skilled dressmakers, 10 training dressmakers. Eight sections; homicides, minors, prostitution, divided in two, detainees and sentenced women.

Later, some persons dashed in . They were a committee involved to human rights ministry, composed of three men and a women. And there we have listened to their conversation with the manager assistant over several cases.

The first subject was about a prisoner, she already has been brought in, claimed being exposed to hard beating and sexually abusive harassment by policemen!! And sooner, that committee employee did take some photos of her, and registered a document of what she claimed already.

Mr. Akram Ukla, 35-year-old legal assistant said about the role of his office: "our department concerned of following up the governmental service. Our valuation will be entirely the base on controlling prisons and detention centres. So we have to check up all detentions and prisons. In telling you the truth , we nor-

mally confront all objection at these sites."

" Officials often give out pretexts of the security reasons, in our country. But when our ministry sent a letter, concerning the subject. According to that letter ministers board issued forth per se, asking to help us in our job. And thus, by it we have permission to get in women prison, and the primary crime prisons and the lock-up which belongs to the brigade site"

Now Miss Sajida began to recite the inmates number to Mr. Akram; 135 total number, 91 detainees, 62 inmates 19 minor. Certainly what caused of delay in the teenage prison often did take place too much. Most of the time a detainee may be delayed, more than a year and sometimes to two years, without her case being fixated. Despite there are proper number of social researches who following up a detainee case often.

The dispute went on longer, between the manager assistant and the legal committee about the number and accusations' cases and the legal articles . And how authority were issued forth owing to the detention number and dates. He then asked her about certain Arab prisoners: and the answer was. There one was a Morocco and the other was a Syrian.

Suddenly appeared in the scene of the manager assistant room, an old woman in her sixties who soon was serving the attendance with tea and water from time to time. She was an old lady, with so heavy face wearing black dress.

We then asked about her case. She was accused of setting her husband on fire!! She was the first woman whom we talked with. And during our conversation with her, not once she asked if she could visit her dead son graveyard, who passed away recently. But, the assistant tried to ease up the situation saying. " You definitely know this is really forbidden". So she returned to her silence , but only her suffering eyes could expose what she was in.

The assistant then turned to us saying: "sometimes we might help prisoners like supplying them with more food for example. Personally, I get disturbed when find the food supplier did not bring on proper food or be unqualified.

At last we asked the assistant, if we could have a tour in prison halls. But, she said in unshaken tone: well, my friends , this is entirely not forbidden. No man is allowed to get in. So we then

asked her whether it is suitable to meet some prisoners in her own office. And we did.

The first one we met with was Sabreen Sadiq, a woman in forties, with still some hints of old beauty in face. She said: " I am sentenced to five years of detention, over a money embezzlement case. Actually it is my husband who pushed me into this state. Some accomplices confirmed I had no involvement in it. It was my husband really who did it . In the past, I used to work as program producer in Radio and T.V of singing and music department. I have seven kids, with an orphan I brought him on, four girls and four boys."

" My husband now is detained as well, in al-Hilla town. From my detention time, my kids' residence was being changed from one place to other. They left schools. The last visit my daugh-

As we walked there we know, She was the inmate who did paintings of the prison : "These painting on walls you look at, it did express what suffering I feel in here, and what other women feel as well. I like to paint all the time. Even I , sometimes , snatch out some papers from the department, as I need it. Sometimes I ask my daughter to send me more colour packages and magic pencils."

She then went in narrating her misery: " it was my husband who forced me to sign it. He always beats me. I was alone. When I was enforced to enter into investigation room. The police men were all of them drunk. Believe me I am telling the truth.

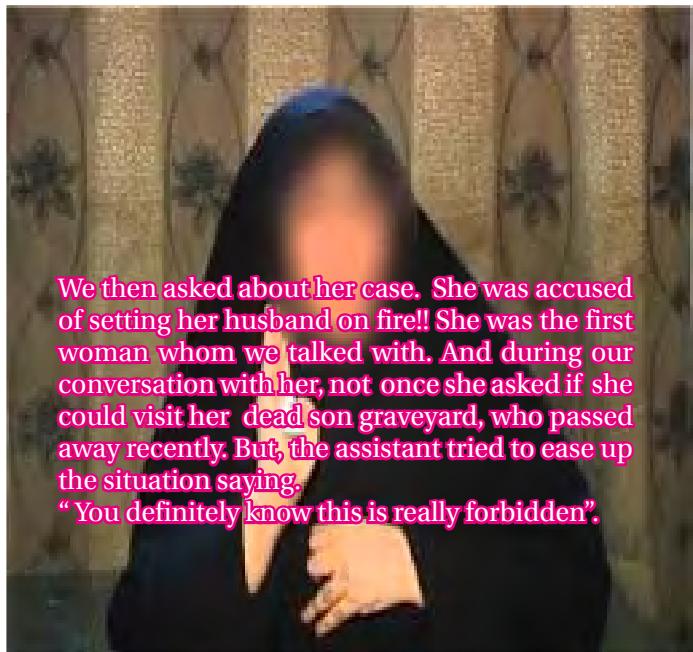
" The broker guy whom my husband embezzled his money, was a relative to the police station officer in Bilat al-Shuhada neighbourhood.

The station where I was detained temporally , for investigation period. The station officer threatened me that time, I have to confess as being an accomplice with them. They tortured me so violently ." She frowned a little and later burst into tears and after short time she returned calm and said:

" After meeting the first judge, I wanted to explain to him my case, but he shut me out angrily. The broker man was standing, beside him as if there were close friends!!!. He then entered as a witness. I never saw him before. He wanted five million dinars from me."

" So, he repeated his visits more than once to my house, and seeing my beautiful girls. One of them said to him, why you are trying to manipulate us? Personally I am going to sacrifice with my soul and not give him any one to the broker"!!! then she stopped a little and could not complete her story.

Later we met with The 32-year-old inmate Amina Ahmed who came in with her toddler, Tania, her daughter whose age was ten months!! She was born in the same prison where her mother was detained. She now sat down on a closed chair. Amina put some make up on her face despite her condition , but she could not veil some paleness clearly recognised upon her face . she



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" You definitely know this is really forbidden".

ter did to me, she said her brother could not stand living without me. Their father released from prison now."

" My husband was addicted to alcohol and he always beating kids. Recently I heard he sold the house. Some debtors wanted fifteen million from him!! What a sin I made to be here!! Those who accused me, were sentenced to less than two years, not like me. The appeal court doubled my sentence period!!"

introduced herself in black dress.

" I am accused of robbery accusation which I did not do . It was my sibling who stole that money. Actually he used to work in a car market. One day he came home accompanied with a money safe. He at the time said allegedly it belonged to the very car market , saying its keys were lost. "

She then went on: "my sibling said some persons wanted some receipts from him on personal business. Actually I did know nothing. Later he came in to the guest room with two guys. At the time I went up to my room. Later I was just hearing their voices. I concluded it was belonged to a box or safe being opened. I swore I did not see its contains whether it was money or gold."

She later said: "After one month of that accident, a police patrol suddenly stormed my house neighbour. A woman who had a infamous reputation. Even she was holding in her house so disrespected parties. And my siblings' brother used to be there. Later the patrol broke in my home. My daughter and sibling were with me. And they found the safe was hidden in the guest room

" The policemen asked my sibling to go with them, but I said I would go with them. And they insisted on saying: " Give us the ration card only, but I insisted on going with them. And there the whole case turned to be against me. And I did not return back, since the date of 9/2/2004. This is completely injustice. "

Amina Ahmed ,from time to time, was kindly caressing her baby's so black hair. She liked to go on in her story and saying:

" Over thirty-eight days in Bilat al-Shuhada police station I was being under torture of beating and electric shocks!! Till I get diabetes. My sibling, who was addicted to drugs and pills, claimed that I received money from them.

"Really I admitted of the casket existence at home. They confiscated it and with some stuff was taken from my home. At the police station when some of USA soldiers came in. The Iraqi police men hid the electric machine gun from the Americans who saved me. "

"Actually I did not know beating here is not allowed at all !! But reality is another thing. The investigation officer was beating me and my daughter, who was 16-year-old teen. I later was sentenced and she was released before two

weeks ago. She was considered as minor and no proof was against her. I born Tania, while I was in prison. My son Mustafa had epilepsy. He is 14 now. She then admitted she had worked as a security agent for Saddam regime!!

" I was assigned once as a fashion mannequin . at the time we were abide to stick to the rules of the regime secret men!! Look at me now, I am lonely, without my kids around me, and my home I miss so much. Unfortunately my mom passed away while I am incarcerated here. Actually I have to serve three years and three months, in order to be released free again with a parole."

Um- Mohammed an old lady, nearly in 60s, a mother of 7- sons. She was imprisoned for life. She could not kick off her story and hardly go on without being burst into tears:

" My miserable state took place once at that time. When My sister's husband came in to my home with a child girl and said to me: "Will you keep the child in here? What naïve I was, I did it just for one day, only a daytime. Later some guys stormed our house while they repeating: kidnappers , kidnappers, Really, I did not know what was going on. I was ignorant she was kidnapped girl. The child stayed with me just for daytime!! "

" I know nothing. I tried to defend myself. I am a poor woman, naive. The kidnapped girl's family received a tribal fine from mine, ten million dinars. Then I was sentenced to life time. My senior son, he was the only supporter his brothers and sisters now took all responsibility for them . The girl retuned back safe and sound. And I am in her now for life. Why me to spend all days here. This is injustice."

Later we met with another inmate, Suad Hassan, 28 year-old, a rather plump woman, she told her tale in saying: "I used to work as a cleaner in surgery hospital at the medical city of Baghdad. I used to be paid 250 thousand dinars per month. My husband is a handicap."

" With my salary we pay 150 thousand to our rented house and live in with the left 100 thousand. I have five kids. They are now being separated. My child girl feeds on breast milk. I heard she is so ill now!!

She then said: "My story turned horrificaly over the house we rent. Unfortunately that house belonged to a woman who has teen boy.

Once a day there broke out a brawl nearby the house me rented before twenty days. At that time we were vis -a -vis how bad people they were. As I went on to over there ask he to return some money rental back . But, she refused at the time, and there happened a skirmish. Firstly it was just in words between that women and me.”

She then reached the climax of her story:” Lat-er at night my neighbour's son came in with a pistol in his hand and suddenly punched me on head with the pistol butt several times. He did want to hit my husband, but I stood between them. Later after the attacker left, we went out, with my husband and my mother and applied for a complain at police station, against him and then a warrant letter was being issued. “

“Later his mother denied his taking part in the brawl, and claimed he was not never existed, for a week ago. As if he, last night, did not break in our house. Then after one day his mother came in shouting allegedly that we killed her son. I have been detained in al- Adamiya police station. And the Lord knows I am truly innocent and a friend to her son did kill him. From time to time the boy's mother comes here and threatens me of kidnapping my kids if not admit of whom who killed her son. “

Reem Hashim 35 year- old mother to six boys said: I am from al- Sader city. I am accused of kidnapping case. One day we, I and my husband dropped up to my brother' house, and suddenly a group of men rushed in, claiming they are belonged to one of the faction, stormed the house and arrested my husband. We now have been imprisoned for five months. Over this , my mother died, I could not be in her funeral. It is my brother friends who did it. Me and my husband, are innocent. Our children now with some people.

After we have met with a bunch of prisoners there, the assistant added : “ the prisoners' usual problem could be formed of what they face after finishing up the prison period. And what time required to speed up their cases. Here we do not have an authority to speed up the proce-dures. Normally we keep contact with the social researcher who in their turn follow up the cases at courts. And definitely they faced a lot of trou-bles by the officers in charge.

A human right employer asked her about a prisoner he identified and she said: The legal ar-

title which concerned that prisoner, turned to be suspicion. After the judge has issued an order to move her into the mental hospital. And she repeated her limited power on it. We actually do not have a power to transfer her into the transfer department. Then the debate went on the same prisoner and how other women get offended of her. But the assistant defended her saying: No she did not bother one, it is our girls who did it.

The human right employee then asked about the reason of not let the prisoners go up to the prison roof, under the open air. One of social researchers who, said: Certainly dealing with prisoner are not easy, sometimes they want it so much and sometimes not. The assistant now affirmed the upper roof door most of the time is open, who wanted to ensure. Therefore, the social researcher added:

When we let them to be there, they said it is too hot, and actually we did not know how to please them. The human right employee said: a pris-oner must have a chance to be under the open air and according to their desires.

Batool Ismael, a social researcher said: “I used to work in al-Tobachi reform. Our work nature is completely human. And normally the social researcher who keeps up secret information concerning an inmate. In the past the robbery crime was the primary one, but currently, we find kidnapping crimes or homicide as the first degree.”

“ One of the unhappiest cases I have seen. It was the case of a girl who killed her father. She was being sentenced to 15 years. And the moti-ve was a father who was addicted to drugs, and she allegedly he was raping her. She used a rifle to kill him.”

In that moment The researcher went on saying: There some little increase particularly in prostitution teens cases. Some of them are guilty and some are not! If we counted factors like poverty and economical down state, the defect of the familial raising. Not forget that most of the girl did not get enough and educa-tion suitably. And due to the hard situation Iraq passed through wars, and the lack of the paren-tal role and the huge pressure women would be under alone.

“Most the girls who reached to this place were suffering of the familial disunity, a father pass-ing away, losing a supporter, thus a woman will

be lost under life difficulties. “

“ I like my job, count it like an art work, as a deal with various psycho states. And a clever researcher is the one who knows how to deal with prisoner and to be close to them to let be a harmony between her and the inmates. Despite the hard situation outside, but we try to ease up their suffering. “

“An inmate when came in here, often she will be isolated and afraid firstly, but later when she hears other prisoners and listens to their stories, she will take it easy. The official procedures normally take a long time. And some of the prisoners will pass two years before being present before a court. “

We now took a round at the inner hall, being guided now by the manager assistant. The inner cell next to another, where the guards usually stood. It was like a rather huge screen between an inmate and who would visit her. The assistant then began to account for such state here and the way to visit a prisoner.

From time to time we have met with new faces in that weird and quiet prison. As we were nosing about , searching for new stories.

The assistant now wanted to give more details , so she said “ As a matter of fact, the way where a visitor could meet an inmate, face to face in the prisoner garden. This kinda of visit has been cancelled, due finding out it accompanied with some risk to an inmate’s life of bringing in forbidden materials. And It might be accompanied with some immoral deeds. And not forget it probably put an inmate to danger by the same persons who visit her.”

She then went on saying: “Sunday days are designated for men visit and Tuesdays for women. A human rights employee now submitted a complaint from the inmates concerning the visit procedure to the assistant, who promised to change the way of the procedure at any possible time.”

At last a social research Hanan 29, was picked out to guide us into some sites in prison. That young lady appeared to know a lot about each woman here, but she could not be taken to that easily. So we ascended into the second floor and she still talking to us in her calm voice.” An inmate could get advantage of the vocational programs we provide as long as she serves her prison period here. And through this we try to

correct their behaviours.

“For an example, most of them did not know too much of sewing skill. We had four skilled inmates in sewing, and those taught other four groups of inmates what they learnt. So today we have twenty-two tailors. Recently we succeed in winning a tender of sewing prisons uniforms. And we did it now. “

“ This piece of cloth you are looking at is the cloth we usually sew as we now are making prison uniforms. We have twelve sewing machines. And by it we produce uniforms. Of course, we need a designer who makes the proper cuts.”

She then went on:” The most important places here are the work place and the school. And sooner we will indulge in men uniforms. And remember all this work here carries on voluntarily

After a while Miss. Hanan and her colleague, Shayma, began to show us the School hall which is designed to the elementary first class only, and the school books, she then said: we try to teach them reading and writing. So if a letter was delivered to one of the inmates by her families, she can read it by herself. And it is important to anyone who joins in one of the sport activities, as that will qualify an inmate to a parole.

As a motive to them. We also have a basketball coach and a gymnastic machine and weight balance. We also have sport uniforms and sport team. But as the weather is hot, so activity becomes. The work place is the most active place. As she said that a group of young girls entered wore in blue. And we tried to ask them.

Her name is Rana Jasim, a 16-year-old inmate. She then said: “ I have been accused of covering-up my fiancée who is now being wanted to authority. My case has not been filed to trial yet. I am here since six months.

Reema Saad, 19-year-old detainee. She then said: “ I have been brought in here because my husband was killed. I am here since four months. My family follows up my case. “My situation here is not so bad. Not as the same as when I came in. This is my first time. Then I began to be in touch with other girls.”

We then asked about the reasons of the delay in their cases, Miss. Hanan said: “ As for character and state study that need more time to be completed. And sometimes in you may find a witness is on large so the case will be lacking, and the court decision will be delayed.

A detainee, Reem Sadoon, 15, said: my husband second wife submitted a complaint against. She did cause me to be here. My husband was killed at morning when I zonked out. They told me, come with us to the station in order to identify your husband. And as I entered there, I have been arrested. I know nothing. The detainee Hind Sadoon ,14 said directly: I am accused of killing someone, but it will be solved as the family of victim has dropped their right. They are our neighbour.

Intisar, 13-year-old detainee, said in broken tone: I have surrendered myself to a police station. "I am working in a beggary business, with my cousin. He was released, but I was still incarcerated here. I have spent about six months. And when my case filed into the court. I got a released decision."

"We have been trying since a month to obtain the release decision to her, but her papers did not reach yet. As soon as her paper would reach to the legal department, she will be released. Often a detainee paper delayed between the court and the reform department."

"And Later it normally delayed between the reform department and this prison. We certainly send our social researcher to the police station concerned, just to know the reasons of delay. Whether an inmate was sentenced on another charges. And the routine in such cases played out so negative role."

One of the detainees came from a corner and directed her complain to us . she said in very short words : " They have taken my daughter by force from me while I was sleeping ! My 7-month daughter was taken from me and my husband later died. And they also have confiscated some of my house furniture. My father who are following up my case. I do not know why the lawyer did come yet. I want my case to be decided.

A detainee who approached to us but she refused to unveil her name. She was 15-year-old and said simply: " I am sentenced to three year of detention over fault killing. The Judge for felony cases said I was an innocent as I faced a set-up case. That was fabricated by an investigation officer who did set up things with the first wife family, of the victim. My case was definitely changed into fault killing. But I swore by the Lord I did not kill her.

At this time the victim already existed in the guest room and I was in the upper floor in the house. Surely, I have some witnesses who confirmed I did not approach her. We were, the household, nine women over there in that morning!!

" Actually I was making a tea. We then heard fire shootings. So We looked around us, then we soon climbed up to the second floor. We found her fallen dead. My husband first wife was older than my husband. He did give her all rights when he really divorced her."

"There are a lot of problems amid our two families. At first his first wife family sent some persons to my husband. His first wife wanted to register her marriage in the court . But my husband did not accept that, without giving up her right to the kids.

"So the first wife went to the court and changed her statement. She certainly desired to remarried again to my husband. So my husband talked to the judge saying how would do that as she as she accused his father had an affair with his sister!!

" There area lot of reasons which incited my husband and made him divorce her. Actually he always was in trouble with her. Until the subject turned to be a matter of dignity. He would rather marry her for ten days only and divorce her later.

" I have one child. I gave birth while I was in transfer Diyala prison. My kid now is under the care of my dad and mom . I have been here for five months."

The time was moving on hurriedly and we have a lot of question need to be answered . But in this short journey we realized , not all the prisoners were allowed to be seen, the long term sentences obviously we could not meet with, And at that time we could not ask for more. ■■■

To be continued

# Iraqi Women Behind Bars

## own up

By Mufeed waheed al-Safi

### Part II

**Around almost every corner , women's faces were suddenly leaping out. They kept up sending on messages every time, as if wanted to expose all their secrets unanimously, about the injustice they normally suffering here. Sometimes we were really embarrassed in holding down their appeals and words which carried on their misery of life. The same misery which threw them away into such a place.**

At proper time, we try to leave the unhappy scenes. Nevertheless, we might indicate bashfully the inmates' stories that could be summa-

being no guilty. But we could notice that their sentences sometimes were so rapid and mixed enough to be contracted to others.



When we entered the nursery room this time, we met with Mr. Zaidan Yabis ,53 old, a senior nurse in al-Kadhimiyah. He then told us about his job: " Most of the diseases we are deal with, joint pains, kidney pains and feminine diseases."



rised in conservative style. But obviously we did not get great success. The issue would not stop on asking some about their kids' names, and require others about their ages. Unanimously they are claiming of having clean hands and

For a woman, in whatever case could push her on to be here, It would be a very weird position. Their cases surely emerged with numerous meanings. And it was uneasy to watch an inmate with a daughter of two years toddling

around her, being born at the same prison. It was really the hardest scenes.

They know so well their names are in mud, being without reputation, so how could they live in peace.

Most of these women were forced, to let their kids live out of prison, under so hard situations, and unknown hands, relatives or strangers. This would be added up a huge burden on them over the prison burdens . Now, we still at the upper floor-closed to the work place. It normally used to teaching them how to read and write. There was a sport hall on the right side.

Miss. Hanan, a social researcher, about 18 years old , went along with us all that time!

These inmates girls were so upset, over the period they spent usually in police stations. The highly classified crime prison , where they all claimed of being under torture and negligence ! They all talked about corruption and bribery. At last, they asked for pardon saying:

“ We simply implore you to let our voices reach all officials, for the sake of releasing a pardon for us. Most women here, are really victims. We have been treated unjustly. Even those women who have been accused of terrorized acts, they were able to leave prison, as they pay the exact money they were asked for.

That what an inmate, Hanan Kadhim 16, said and narrated the story of a girl and her brother. They , both were accused of acts such as killing and robbery and even rapes. But finally they got out of prison after paying the exact bribes!!

“ I and my sister are serving seven years' verdict of theft charge. Till now , we spent two years dated from 5-8-2016. We could swear all accused males who had been arrested with us, having got out of prison none-guilty. It is only the females whose cases are filed to trial. Most women here are victims. No one here defends them and verdicts which are issued against them are mostly false.”

Now , these inmates talked about using execution penalty again, referring to Najat Juma, 17 from Al-Diwania province, al-Wahda neighbourhood, who said: “ I am sentenced to execution unjustly. The tricky deal was between the judge who dealt with my case and the investigation officer. I am accused of looting with killing.

“ The whole matter was so unclear. Whoever pays bribe, get released of prison. People who

were accused with us of looting and killing all get released as they pay dollars .it was the same judge who issued a verdict against us, who issued a verdict against the girl of beggary accusation.”

. And she appointed out to a skinny girl stood right beside her and added:

“ We are both from the same province. What the judge issued against us , was totally considered as extreme injustice against us. We ask for a pardon. I am a married woman, with three kids. In court, I was allowed to mention the doers names. Never let me defend myself, because the victim family paid money to the investigation officer and to the judge also. We want from you to let our voices be heard. We have kids and houses. We are here so weak and in oblivion. The Lord may have mercy on what happened, no human with no faults.

Hanan ,said immediately in her serious tone:”The minor verdict may be included with a pardon, such as beggary and the false accusation and attempt to kill. All these verdicts, may be find a door for mercy and pardon.”

One of inmates then said:” we now have, with us, a prisoner from al-Simawa province. Yesterday she was sentenced to three executions verdicts. But we believe she is innocent. She is accused of killing her uncle and his wife and a daughter. Actually it was her husband who did it. As no one could capture him. She did hold the whole responsibility alone.”

The girls then mentioned another story of a girl accused of man gun shooting at the same place without any admission against her. And under torture, her mother passed away. So the officer allegedly who was in charge made the girl take over the whole case.

The younger inmates now looked at a girl we heard about, through our conversation with one of the girl researchers. They said, she did shoot fatally her father. she is not more than sixteen years old. A girl with a small and delegate body said in a broken voice:

“ I am married girl... I have no kids yet. I have been here since a year and half. I have been sentenced by the court to fifteen years. He wanted ..... to rape my sister, so I have defended her!! I want you to ask them issue a pardon for us.”

The 16-year-old inmate, Anwar Yasir from Babylon province said with a slow drawl. She is ac-

cused of nuptial disloyalty and stealing CD operator!! The court sentenced her of both charges two years of detention.

“ I have served from this period till now ten months in al-Nile police station. But this period has not been registered!! They made me lose ten months. As they did consider the first case a nuptial disloyalty and second breaching to honesty. You have to follow up my file at al-Nile police station in al-Hila, because I can't stand this prison anymore and my health is not well.

Hanan then said she really knew every case of them: “ As for the inmate Maiyada Yaseen, A verdict letter at last has been delivered to us, after being losing about ten months of it. And that owing to the judge himself who issued sentence against her. But, unfortunately he did not write down exactly her recent detention period.”

“ Therefore, she has to serve ten months over the sentence issued against her. As the judge did take away that period from what she had been served in prison before. Miss. Hanan then said: “ If there was a coordination between the province court and police station, the problems would not be taken place.”

One of the inmates said: Of course, lawyers always will be lawyers. They want great amounts of money. One of the inmates said: “ Of course, lawyers always will be lawyers. They want great amounts of money and dollars, just to defend us. But, we do not have the exact money they want. The inmates now talked simultaneously: All we want you to ask a pardon for the sake of us. One of them added grumblyingly”

“ Why they did incarcerate even elder women. Money and dollars, just to defend us. But, we do not have the exact money they want. The inmates now talked simultaneously: All we want you to ask a pardon for the sake of us. One of them added grumblyingly: why they imprisoned elder women.

She went on in her hot speech and said:

“ Go to the hall No: 204, you will see many women , older women , they could not kill anybody!! Ask for, grandma Um-Waleed. She is accused of complicity kidnapping a girl. She now served three years. And after her case filed to an appeal court, a decision was issued against her, for a whole life order. Despite the girl being kidnapped has been returned to her family safe and sound.

On the way of returning back to the ground floor, we have a look at the medicine room. We came across a short-tall woman. She then went or to speak with we without conservation. Her words were rushed on as she said

“ I am Muna Hamid. My father is a tribal sheik. I am an inmate here since two years. I have a son, who is now 19 years old. But I never seen him since that time. When the investigate officer did strip me off deliberately of all my clothes before all men in the police station and before my sons eyes! Do you believe it?

“ My poor son got down on ground losing his conscious. I was detainee at the fifth section prison. The place was made as a police station after al-Kadhimiya police station was set on fire.”

“ They did not have any clue against me, and did not find any person in our house. They really wanted to force me to admit kidnapping act, which I did not commit.” She then went on.

“ Unfortunately, I signed on one a blank papers. They later hid the investigation papers as I submitted a complaint against the officer. All I want now to knew. Where my son has gone? I did not know his place and he did not come to visit me. All I want to know is he alive or dead? Why me, where is justice and rights?

When we were at the upper floor, we looked at the numerous jail cells which were there. At every cell they put two beds with two rows and a toilet seats. Here we ask the assistant about it and she said: What are you looking at - It is the solitary cells . It is done for the emergency states. When an inmate would be hysterical, or she commits totally an improper behaviour.

Actually, we don't use it since a time. That reminded me of an inmate told me If any inmate did respect herself, they would respect her also. But if not, she would take tit for tat. Who would make troubles or insult one of the employers or did not respect the rules. She would be jailed in the locked up cell for one week or two days. And she admitted this took place rarely.

As we pass in here, my colleague, who spent all the time registering her notes in her small copy-book. Now she said “ I am sure there is a man behind every crime a woman committed. And I answered with a smile.

We passed on a hall side, where we did not be allowed to enter. We then spotted at a number

of women at various ages. They were having lunch. As we ask about, we have been told it is the homicide hall.

“ At the time when an inmate gets in here, she will give in all her possessions, her clothes or what she normally accompanied, to the store. We then are supplying of what she will be given by the general reform office; such as covers or clothes.

“ In this place we have two kinds of uniforms, the Indian dress, as we call it, shirt with pyjama and other dress in blue colour. An inmate usually wears in, black colour if she wants it, particularly if she lost one of her close relatives. And the one who could have the black, we might supply it freely”.

When we entered the nursery room this time, we met with Mr. Zaidan Yabis ,53 old, a senior nurse in al-Kadhimiyah. He then told us about his job: “ Most of the diseases we are deal with, joint pains, kidney pains and feminine diseases.”

“There are also, diabetes and blood pressure and what we called chronic diseases. We normally send patients to Al-Noor Republic hospital. A contagious disease really spread but occur but once, and caused to a medical quarantine and was being treated quickly. The contagion did by an exterior factor, out of prison. Normally drugs are available and we have enough medications as we owned our own particular funds.”

Before going out of the place, we have met with Kayriyah Ihsan, who in her forties. She had a appearance of trouble maker one. She then said in slow tone:

“ I am accused of kidnapping case. My neighbour accused me, despite we were in the same block for 13 years. My relations with neighbour always was firm and good. My husband based in Amman. As I returned back from there, before one day of the general election. Even I had some workers in my house.

“ Suddenly a girl who was our neighbour entered my home. She came crying and barefoot, saying her parents want to force her to marry. After 15 minutes, her mother came in and asked about her, so I let her enter to the room where her daughter was . She entered there and talked to her. Even I sat down with them. Her mother was asking me to talk to her about the reasons of her leaving home.”

“ Her mother then told me to keep her daughter in my home, till she managed a problem with her father. I said, OK, but I have to go on to the general election. I went on with my son, who was two and half years old. When I came back next day. I heard from neighbours that the girl parents accusing me of kidnapping their girl!!! Later her father came in to my home threatening.”

“ I told him, your daughter is safe and sound with you now, I did not do any wrong to her. But, they insisted I tried to kidnap her, claiming I shut up her mouth with a piece of cloth . And all that was just a big lie. I told her father your girl was here and I did not kidnap her. But her mother said, why you did not afraid of God and poured on curses on me. And I said I would not get out of there without accompanied by police men. Later ,my case turned to be a kidnapping one. I have been here since six months. The girl parents then presented false witnesses. Is this justice?”

Then there came a short and rather a plump woman. Sooner she presented herself as a gypsy girl. She then said: I am a detainee since five months . My case was being turned from a brawl in to prostitution case. My story began when I was invited in a sheikhs' party. After it was over as we returning back, stopped at one of the restaurant to have lunch.

“ But the restaurant owner tried to make advances to me and my husband did fight with him. Later, a police men patrol came in from al-Dooz city and arrested us. When the investigation officer knew we are gypsies. He turned my case from a brawl into prostitution”.

She then said in unhappy tone;” Being arrested for 14 days in al-Dooz station. My case had been referred into Abu-Ghraib court. Some guards told me, the judge ordered to return our case back in to al- Dooz city. I did not witness any session or judges. My letter of detention still remained at the police transfer unit. They are saying they don't have a vehicle to bring us back into al- Dooz area.

“ I have left ten- year - old son. I do not know about him. We were five persons whom had been arrested, including my husband. I did not have any information about them. I am in torture all the time. Where the pardon we have



**“ We certainly try to provide the animates who will be released with a job, to save them from the street risks. We have regulations which forbid any male from entering to women prison departments. Even the doctor assistant can't get in without accompanied by a guard. So he will deliver the medication and returns back to his place.”**

been promised? All their promises are but lying.”

Now a police woman in her official uniform, approached and presented herself. Mariam Hashim 42, reform officer: we complain to you our low wages we get paid. We have been paid very low. My salary is just 230 thousand dinars. I live in rented house. I pay 150 thousand for the rent, over the housing crisis.

“ I have been employed in this job one year and eight months ago. My nuptial status is not included in salary; As I am a widow. My late husband passed away 17 years ago. I have three sons. I'm the only supporter for them.”

Azhar Abbas 33-year-old guarder. She was a pregnant in her last month. She tried to seize the opportunity and delivered us her complain.

“ My job duty includes watching inmates in their halls from 9.0 clock a.m. to 4. P.m. I have taken a leave permission before one day, seventy days. But the risk allowance which reached to 130 thousand, will be discounted from my salary. So my salary will be just 100 thousand Iraq dinar only. Our salaries so low, not equalized totally to what efforts we do. Why they cut off

from me 150 thousand dinars , how could live in such a situation?”

“ Often the inmates caused us tiredness so much. They do request all the time. They always headed to the physical operation room or to the nursery room. And due the cold water is not available in the hall, so they ask permission to leave the hall to get some cold water.”

“ I am obliged to open the hall door I am watching every time they ask. The heat problem was fixed up after assembling anew air conditioners. But the water problem still existed. And the baths are established in the same sector.”

On the ground floor passage, we have met with the social researcher. Mustafa Hassan 31- year- old. He was carrying some papers in his hands.

“ I am in charge of following up the release papers of inmates. As the procedures begins in a particular commission which related to the general transfer office that in charge of checking up the legal papers. We are not responsible on all delay of the inmate's release. But the delay principally caused by the police stations, when the officer delayed the procedure over the routine.”

He then added concerning the cases delay: “ With the social feminine researchers, we have four male researchers. We have completed 90% of inmates cases. And we follow up their cases at police stations and courts. There is one rare case for one of the detainee, her papers at police station has been burned. After the station was under attack of terrorist acts”.

And this is out of our will. Normally is established nearby of police station where an inmate is there, for an example a woman whom detained at al-Kadhimiyah prison, her trial will be nearby of place of detention.

He then added confirming the delay conditions at courts usually take place. You will find Some cases are not be completed soon. This is done for many reasons ; the simplest is as an accomplice in the case has not been arrested. So the court will be postponed several times.

In such cases when new witnesses are required to be presented. For an example, you may look at the lawsuit No 132. This case whose papers I received again, its number was 421. And this is totally wrong. There should a proven clue which has to be clarify over the difference in the case number . In this I follow up the investigation offices over the delay cause.

Before passing out the passage, Samiya Noor 31-year-old mother of 4 said: " I am accused of homicide. At a building where my sister lived over there. She really was the cause. The killer himself had admitted and paid in the tribal fine to the victim's parents. And I have been sentenced to seven years in prostitution case, after it was fabricated against me."

" I am oppressed, and my kids were devastated and home. I do know nothing about my family. I served till now two years. My baby now she will be three years old. Sometimes my kids come in to visit me for just few minutes"

I talk to them through a wired wall. I am sentenced unjustly as the killer admitted of his crime. I have kissed the officer hand and told him, not to turn the case against me on a prostitution case. It really shameful.

At a prison corner, we met with the lawyer Safa Hassan 25-year-old woman. She is working in human right committee as a legal assistant. She said : " One of the most difficult problems of an inmate may confront, is how to file the cases up in timely time. Most of these cases are delayed in police stations. Particularly when no one may follow it up. And the courts itself suffer slow in practicing law. Thus you may found a detainee get delayed in prison over a year."

She then went on: " At the present time a new law has been issued. Probably it is unknown. It is a decision which hinders policemen of questing an accused without the presence of his lawyer. is filed to the court. It is a law issued at the time of ruling council!! And an accused who could not afford attorney fee, the government will procure him a lawyer in order to be presented before the accused statements. And it also will hinder treating an accused illegally such beating or torture."

"Usually we see some women who are being accused, but fear would overwhelmed their statements. And that will not let them speak freely before the investigation judge over undergone

to threat . For an example a detainee Kareema Kadhim . Unfortunately she was undergone to beating and torture in investigation."

At last we came back into the manager room. Mrs. Faeza Mahdi, 46 bachelor art social service. She then talked about herself: I have served as women prisoner manager in al -Rasheed city for four years. At the beginning of my career, I did not tell any family I was working in teenage prison. And that exactly what most of the social researcher women passed in for the first time.

The manager then argued the reasons behind women in committing illegal acts. She said: " Probably most of the criminal reasons done by women might be related to familial disunity which a woman usually suffers or to unwell nuptial relations."

Later she said " Actually almost things which made me unhappy when I see an inmate accused of embezzlement-and I see some of them of virtuous families, get involved in it. While the bona fide doer would disappear and who might be her boss as a matter of fact.

She then said: We may say most crimes a woman commits differ from man's. Normally woman tends to kill by burning or may use poison or drugs as has the softer body. And the economic factor plays the most important role in most of the crimes. An unemployed husband and he is addicted to alcohol, will be uncommitted for his family responsibilities. And this may drive on the family to unfitted ways.

" We certainly try to provide the animates who will be released with a job, to save them from the street risks. We have regulations which forbid any male from entering to women prison departments. Even the doctor assistant can't get in without accompanied by a guard. So he will deliver the medication and returns back to his place."

She finally said: " An inmate who breaks the rules we usually try to talk with her. And in rare cases, we have to lock her up in jail cells. The general manager for the reform office related to the ministry of work and social affairs always gives a great attention to women prison."

" Normally ,we have been visited by human rights committees. Who used to check up the inmates' affairs and clothes and foods. And some committee, named integrity and justice may come and follows up in corruption cases in

police stations."

Khairiya Sadiq is 64-year-old inmate approached quietly toward us, in the manager room. She then said: All I want is to let our voice be heard for rehabilitating the detainees who are sentenced. I was an employee before. I have 25 years of duty. I have been sentenced of official ignorance charge to two years in detention. I have served most, just twenty-five days, then I will be free again. But, how can I get out?

Without employment or future.! I am a widow and have two kids. My daughter Sara is 15 ,and disabled. And my senior son in his first class of university. I am now confronting a huge worry as long as my detention days will be over.

" I have a great experience in using computers. I well qualified of five computer languages. My brother was the only supporter to my little family. I do not know how society will look at me , as I am on the way of getting out of here. Really I feel so scared on the eve of releasing me. Am I rightful to be like this?

Truly, life circumstances has treated us harshly and we found ourselves in rack and ruin. But we ask for a second chance

After all this unhappy journey, there are many reasons and defects are spread in every corner.

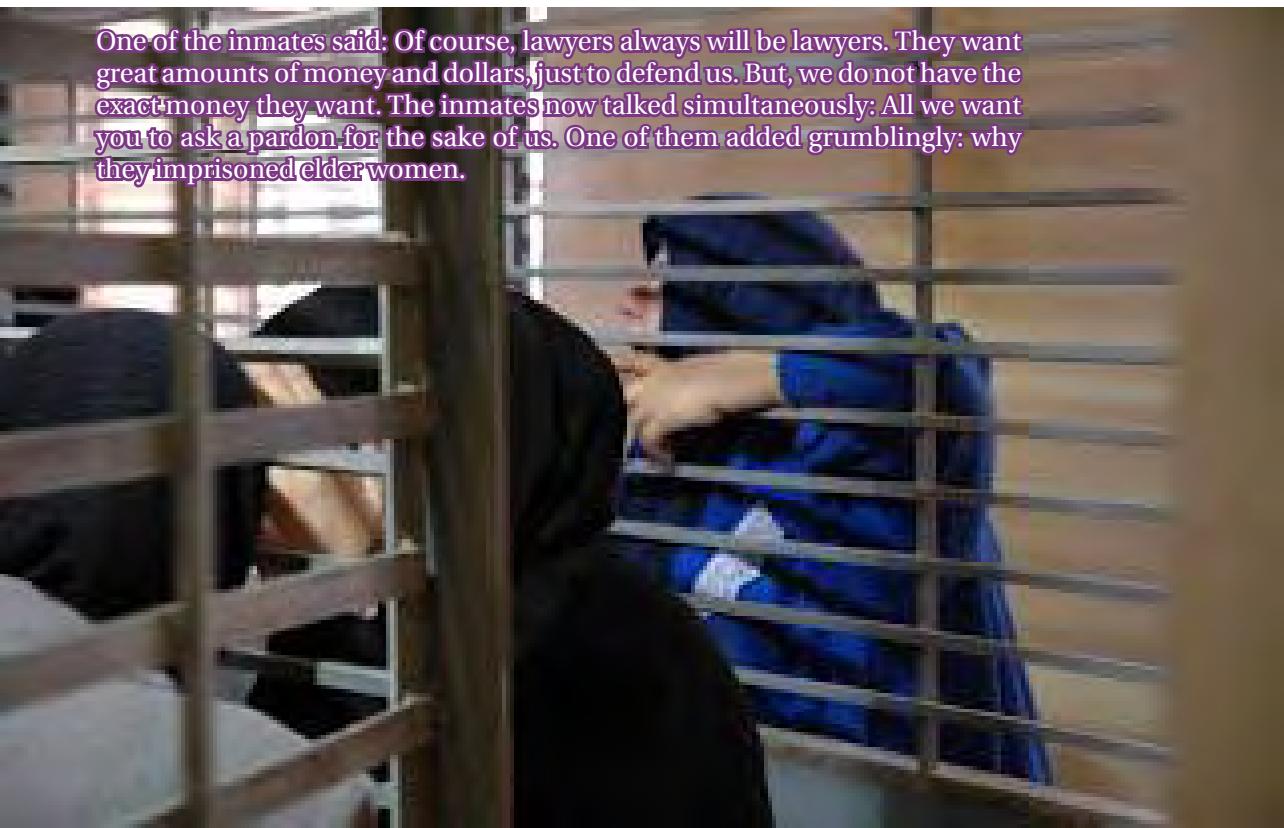
One of the inmates said: Of course, lawyers always will be lawyers. They want great amounts of money and dollars, just to defend us. But, we do not have the exact money they want. The inmates now talked simultaneously: All we want you to ask a pardon for the sake of us. One of them added grumbly: why they imprisoned elder women.

Who would be blamed more the man or the woman? Can we say, behind every feminine crime, there is a man who pushed her into a wrong path? Probably this phrase is right. Then, what it is but the society defects which are often the doer of all evil.

Those who want to back up women rights, have to improve the judicial procedures at courts and minimize the violation that took place in the police stations and investigation officers.

Not forgetting the slow down movement of the judicial system, often creates many problems, we have seen and heard upon the reality life. Certainly a living society is that society who opens eyes and ears on what is going around. And it will not bury his head under the sand, then to be so critical or ignorant and a woman is a woman as Jesus said: who are without a sin, let he throw her with a stone. ■

Note : most of the characters' names mentioned above have been mentioned in unreal names.



# First impressions in al-Nasiriyah city

By Ahmed al-Aghras

At al-Haboubi crowded square, I stood helplessly till now, since nearly an hour, - looking at the busy walkers passing on before me. I had been held on by a police patrol over there, because only I wanted to take a picture to al-Haboubi statue!! The police men explained the matter, saying I need a permission from the media bureau of local government for that. But, in vain, I tried to ward off from this trap, despite al explanations which my long experience, provided me. Unfortunately, they did not convince at all. That was what I wrote down in my first visit.

The hot morning at al-Habbubi centre square in al-Nasiriyah was really unforgettable day fro me. People's movement and car traffic would never stop. As if the residents in this city seemed to get along with dust which overpassed everywhere. Dust and grim atmosphere as bothering as naughty spirit which might play around and spread by force into all corners .whatever you

do to put it a way, but heavy host would come again.

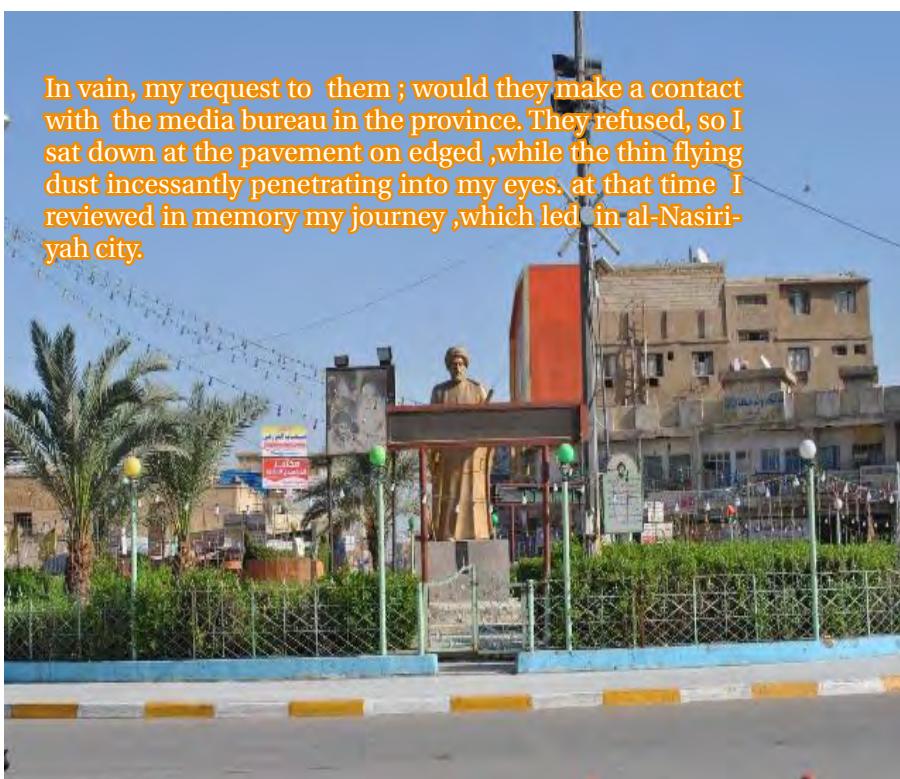
All things went on unfair with me . One of the policemen told me, while busted with pride. He did not let a citizen take a picture of al-Haboubi square, just before me. He was on his way to leave the city, to take a picture to al-Habbubi statue. What a great job he did!!

A traffic police man, who was stood near me seized the opportunity asking me about the government state in Baghdad after being informed I am a journalist from Baghdad!!

While a police officer, with a sullen face, was calling on his headquarters, without giving any sign of sensing my existence next to him.

Later ,a woman who came from nowhere, stepped in to the police officer complaining of something. She allegedly said there was a guy

In vain, my request to them ; would they make a contact with the media bureau in the province. They refused, so I sat down at the pavement on edged ,while the thin flying dust incessantly penetrating into my eyes, at that time I reviewed in memory my journey ,which led in al-Nasiriyah city.



who tried to advance to her impolitely , so a police man asked his team to be ready to arrest the wicked felony! Suddenly the patrol moved out and left me alone. For the second time a police officer came to me now checked up my identity and then retuned it back ,he said

“ Two minutes and I will come back.” Said he

In vain, my request , whether someone could make a contact with media bureau of province. But, they refused, so I sat down at the pavement on edged ,while the thin flying dust incessantly penetrating into my eyes. At that time I reviewed my memory of the journey ,which led into al-Nasiriyah city.

Some flashes of my travelling returned back suddenly to memory. That journey took place two days ago in Baghdad.

Firstly I remembered also the brawl that broke out amid al-Nahda largest garage where drivers quarrel about who should be the first to set off with the passengers. Normally most passengers would get near the chosen car they would take . It is not easy to choose a car heading to al-Nasiriyah, for nearly 380 kilometre. It clearly needs a punctual decision and according to your wallet heaviness.

The road between Baghdad and al-Nasiriyah was secured now, I have been told , especially the distance at outskirts of the capital . There stories which were mentioned about the terrorist cells that attacked small buses through al-Hafriya area and al-Wihda. They said now it was not problematic.

Hiring a south Korean Kia in these days may cost you six thousand Iraq dinar. In suburban Chevrolet. It will be seven thousand dinars. But by taking Bahbahan Chevrolet, the cost may reach to twelve thousand dinars.

Abu Fareeda, the chauffeur still crying out at his long Baghdadi accent; “Nasiriyah, Nasiriyah”, with concentrating on the last part. He is displaced from the capital in Abu-Grab city, west of Baghdad .

Now Abu-Fareeda settled down in al-Nasiriyah nearly one year. He did explain how displaced people who came into this province suffering and how they were supporting their families without been back up by the local government. He talked about sarcastically, when one of the official in his area did provide fans for the displaced who lived under tents!!

Abu-Fareeda still calling with all his lungs for customers to ride on. Perhaps, he indulged sometimes with other drivers in tough talk. At last they left him alone, as his car almost occupied. Finally he did it and started to leave that so crowded garage , directing toward the high way.

But from time to time we have to stop for checking up. I was watching the scenes that emerged on the road. The military check points wherever we reach on. It would give security and confidence. Nearly at every five kilometres there some military vehicles were pulled over, on it there some signs of The-al-Fakar military force.

Abu-Fareeda said it belonged to al-Kut province and since this force being established the terrorist groups would think twice before did attack al-Hafriya area or al-Wahda neighbourhood.

Later , after passing through al-Kut city, the road turned to be one side. Before we use it I have seen a taxi car which was turned over. Abu Fareeda said there would be no day passed without some accident that would take place over there, for that they called it the death road.

On highway road, after two hours , there we saw some vehicles and machines .Some workers were busy to pave some parts of the road. Here our driver said:

” Al-Kut city authority is really more active than al-Nasiriyah.”

Then he tried to count the names of the cities which have to pass .

” Al-Nasiriyah city lied on along the Euphrates river.” This remind me of what I have read once by the famous scholar Ahmed Sosa, who wrote once on the effect of Tigris and Euphrates movement on the populous areas.

Now Abu Fareeda said, confirming the cities names we have to pass on subsequently, al-Hay city which belongs to al-Kut then al-Fajir, al-Qala, al-Refae, al-Nasir, al-Shatra, and al-Gharaf cities, and between any two consecutive towns there are nearly about 20 to forty kilometres.

In the end of the journey ,circa five hours , we did it safe and sound. And the passenger would congratulate each other , of the safe arrival habitually.

At al-Nasiriyah garage, the last passenger left his place, So Abu-Fareeda took me into a small

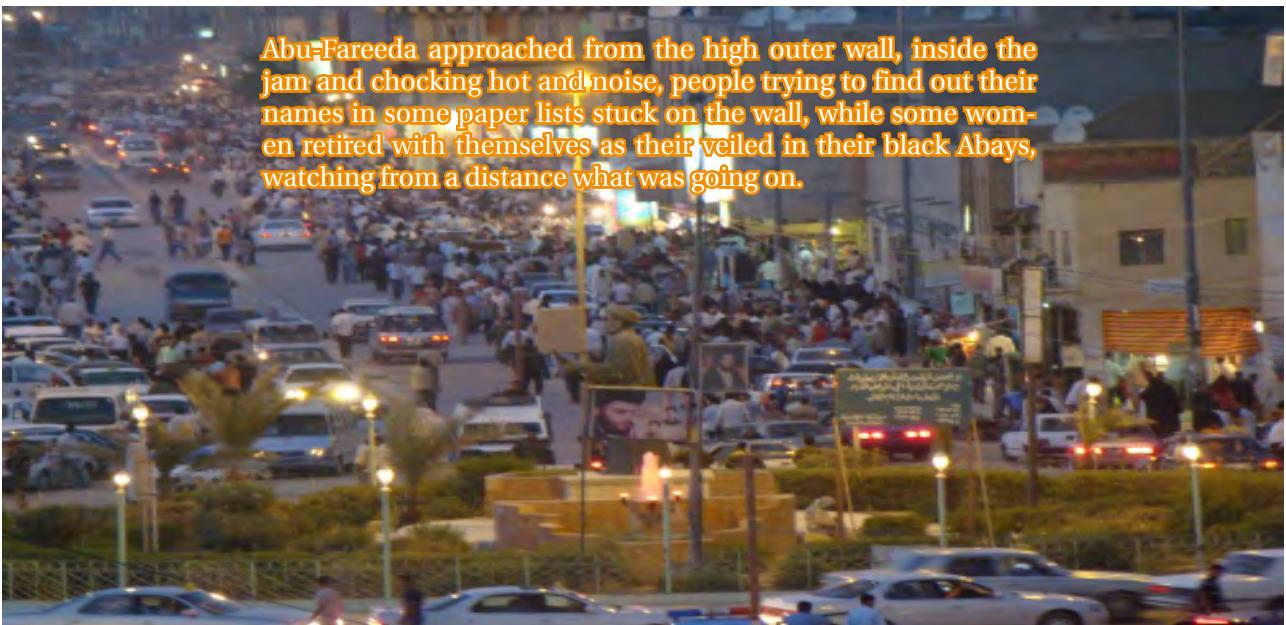
hotel at al-Habubi square, which I booked a room in it for three days .

Next morning as I left my room, I was reflect-

apart. Al-Nasiriyah society definitely would be undergone to all changes that took place everywhere.

The local government members now are not

**Abu-Fareeda approached from the high outer wall, inside the jam and chocking hot and noise, people trying to find out their names in some paper lists stuck on the wall, while some women retired with themselves as their veiled in their black Abays, watching from a distance what was going on.**



ing over from where I should kick off my round. . In that time the city was so busy. And my first site was an old library I dashed in , trying to buy some books about al-Nasiriyah history.

It was uneasy task. After some questions by the library owner, I get amazed he did know quickly my family tree later I have bought two books he did himself wrote it.

Definitely my family came from this province, and of course it was not my first visit, and in every time I could not forget the dusty weather in summer and the unpaved streets. But during winter al-Nasiriyah weather would be something else.

Some people I met would not stop complaining about the slight municipal service It was like a song in every place here and every person would say it. Some criticized the governor and accused him of buying his new house in very highly price after he was penniless .They hope I could meet him and ask him about that!

Now it was in mid-Summer , and weather would be so hot and dusty. I moved around in al-Nasiriyah market, the purchase power is clearly seen moderate, after the regime falling

from another provinces of the country as usually did during the ex- regime from al-Ramadi or Tikrit or Baghdad.

The government members are being elected from the province local parties themselves. Some people I met with talk about the social changes which did take place at the local tribes.

They were now controlling the employments, and the new rich men and the high cost of price of lands. The employers who owned salary and the unemployment who envied them always.

In this city definitely , as in the capital, the new parties occupied the important buildings , what could sustain wonder there are no great projects, no drinkable water. This is really an old problem which needs to be fixed as some one handed me a glass of water. There was a thick layer of clay down it.

Abu Fareeda went along with me in first round into the building of immigration office.

When I came in with Abu Fareeda to the building of immigration and displaced, it was nearly 10 o'clock, and dusty weather still circulated around the building. People who immigrated from Baghdad and Diyala, most displaced were,

province which witnessed broking out sectarian violence. In a human mass were enlarged in size and the new faces cam on every instant.

Abu-Fareeda approached from the high outer wall, inside the jam and chocking hot and noise, people trying to find out their names in some paper lists stuck on the wall, while some women retired with themselves as their veiled in their black Abays, watching from a distance what was going on.

Abu-Fareeda kept up reading carefully the lists before him, Later his eyes flashed and said: "Well I am lucky today, this is my number.

The clock approached to eleven and the side front building still ajar a little. A policeman was holding a black plastic stick, some employees were moving lazily, no enter but you could see some persons who rush in, through the very and narrow door.

I heard one of the employs saying to a policeman; " Let that man come in. He is a relative to sheikh.... Later I spotted a man who stood not very far, as if he was out of this place, and his file was under his armpit,

Mr. Fadil Alwan, a school teacher from Baghdad, Abu Ghraib, every time he get near the policeman, he told him your turn is not coming yet, so he returned back ... and he extends his hand to his pocket to ensure of the little paper being there.

The file he and every displaced should complete, might cost him an effort and money, he did not obtained his salary for two months, the long journey for issuing a identity for displaced had exhausted him so much, a letter from the municipal council, at the north side of the city, copying the fourth basic documents then going back to office of the immigration and immigrants at town down.

Then going back to the national security office at other part of the city, all that I he did : "All that I can cope with but the silly commitment ! it is written in the paper that all displaced who came from the hot zones must commit they have no relations with any terrorist acts!

Who do they think we are? These stupid persons . Do they think I am a terrorist ? I am a school teacher for twenty five years. I have raised generations of students teaching them how to behave well and teach them Arabic literature."

We did not think the matters will reach into such a climax, we did not know what could happen. The storm started with assassinations then using mortar even they put a blasted bomb in a football field, it killed three boys. Then the situation tuned to be more dangerous I could not sleep well unless I ensued of locking up the outer door in my house, but the situations worse and worse,

Abu Fareeda now hold out the small paper of his pocket ,ensured of the three numbers, the number of the immigration ministry, yes as there millions of immigrates now and the number of immigrants file and the number of the national security.

Sounds of immigrants near him, getting louder and louder, the policeman and employees get quarrelled with a immigrant who get lost his temper, I have seen handicapped immigrant who lost her legs but the policeman stopped her and she said: I am not a beggar the terrorist had killed my son with my daughters.

Abu Fareeda said it was not on hundred dinars people cared but the identity which let me live in al-Nasiriyah after they lost their houses .

Later I have seen Abu Fareeda who came back again, get quarrelled with employers and I tried to ease the situation among them, they get at ease after they know I am a journalist from Baghdad.

That employer told Abu Fareeda to ensure his number when he get the outer door .obviously he feared he would not be let him enter again. He did not understand why that employer doubted of his number. He has been waiting along but that employer accused him of disturbing the order.

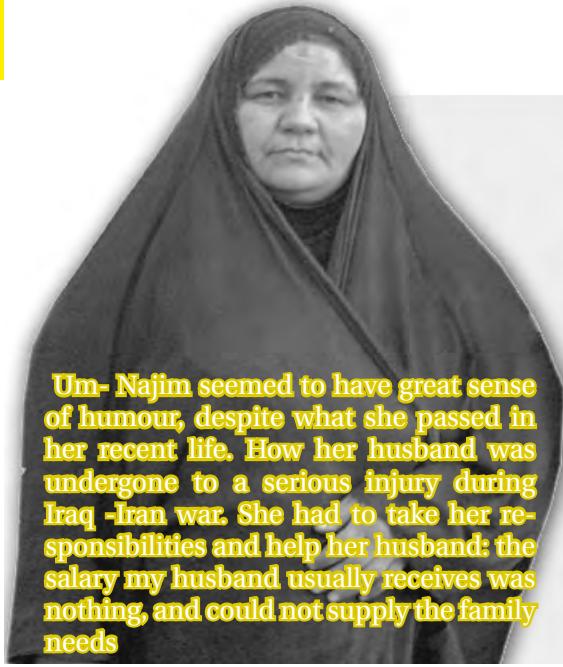
He turned his looking to me and said:

" I told him I am not. Then he began to call them names. They tried to push him out of the building as he was shouting: "I am not lying this is my number.

At al-Haboubi square "

At last a policemen patrol came in and gave return my identity back saying they will not let me take a photo to statue !! and I have to go to the province information bureau, at the road most people I met tee off and sometimes sail into concerning the service the government provide saying :

" The affairs that are going on around us se-



**Um- Najim seemed to have great sense of humour, despite what she passed in her recent life. How her husband was undergone to a serious injury during Iraq -Iran war. She had to take her responsibilities and help her husband: the salary my husband usually receives was nothing, and could not supply the family needs**

cured and peaceful , so why our city still remain without enough reconstruction? What do we wait ?for without knowing the reasons?

On the second day, Abu-Fareeda suggested to take me into another place. He told me he would take me into a good story. He said it certainly be interested. But when I asked him what it was. He smiled so big and said “ later you will see? It is a surprise.? So I remained silent and trusted his talent.

After making some loops not too far, from al-Haboubi square. He took me into an ordinary house, where there were several cars parked. And the there was a woman, wearing her nation Abba, with her rather plump woman and strong hands.

Yes Um Najim was standing there , looking carefully to that Chevrolet. She was wearing a loose pantaloons. Now she began to check up the car engine before her. Busy she was, checking up in her work, doing the basic steps in confident moves and personality.

She definitely was the sole woman in such a business, working in such an unusual kind of job. How did she learn all this?

It is her sister in law. Kadhimiyah. But unfortunately we could not meet her. Almost all al-Nasiriyah drivers knew her well. The woman who could repair automatic gears in a way which might compete the best male mechanics or might better; Necessity is the mother of invention. This word here definitely fitted totally with

### Um-Najim way of living

The first impression, you certainly at the first instant might be surprised to see a woman in her fifties, wearing black unfitted dress, with turban on her head. As most rural women did in Iraqi forgotten villages do.

But Um Najim now wearing the pantaloons in home. And she bore the responsibilities that circumstances had pushed her tensely for sure. Um Najim in about forties. All the time during interview with her, she did not stop confirming that her senior son Najim also had more a great deal of experience in fixing cars.

But most drivers we met with do witness for her sake. And How she got more willing and talent than men in such craft. And she also did own the character of professional real master.

She then spoke out as she was trying to get down under Cadillac car after she left its bonnet, she wanted to check up its broken automatic gear.

“Why do you consider it a tough job? Are foreign women better than us,? She added that while she showed some of her experience in using mechanic tools.” Always I deal with work seriously to find what kind of acting up and fix it and the driver won’t go until be satisfied”

Um- Najim seemed to have great sense of humour, despite what she passed in her recent life. How her husband was undergone to a serious injury during Iraq -Iran war. She had to take her responsibilities and help her husband: the salary my husband usually receives was nothing, and could not supply the family needs and we have kids to be fed, so I have to give hand to cope a hard life.

Um Najim assured her specialty in fixing broken car machines skilfully which compete men skill, such as automatic cars. Dealing with drivers by herself. Before her current job she tried various sorts of jobs, practiced tailoring and even making clay –ovens .

She then added: “ I can fix up broken tools and things in my house, by myself, such as oven, lamps, electric devices. All things need be replaced in our car I can fix it by myself.”

Najim, the family senior son, now talked about how he had been brought up to find himself amid a family all its members dealing with repairing cars. Father, mother and Aunt. He said a smile on his face: “ Actually I was born amid

screws and machines".

Najim then gave some details about his father and aunt and said: My father and of course my aunt Kadhimiyah were working in fixing cars, specialized in American ones. In 1970s my father was just inexperienced for such a kind of work, but he learned the job at a nearby industrial suburb to our home.

He then added: " My dad later came to live in al- Nasiriya in the middle of 198s. After the situation was so hard for him. My aunt Kadhimiyah was younger than him. She was very smart and patient woman who could learn the job from him shortly, and he left her do it."

He then talked about how his mother was sharing them their hard business. And bit by bit she became something. He and his junior Jawad now did give hand to our mother after their father did not have the ability to work.

Ali Kadhim, 39-year-old driver, in his turn talked about how Kadhimiyah Um-Najim's sister in law, during embargo time did work on as builder, for a period of time. When she came in with her brother. He then added : "Do you know that about half of the houses in my neighbourhood I lived in was built by her. And residents used to say she was qualified in building as the same as in fixing cars."

Abu-Firas 42-year-old a well-known mechanic in al- Nasiriya said about Um-Najim: She is really a master in this business since a long time. This woman everybody respects her experience and fame. She really does repair any malfunction properly.

Being her husband a war disabled, unable to move easily all that did play the main role in choosing her such a hard way of living. And her two boys always give her hand.

Mr. Ali Mohsen 27 year-old driver, said: all Um Najim's family members are working with here as mechanicians .For two years I usually bring my car here, if some wrong happened to my car engine. I prefer my car only to be fixed by the hands of Um -Najim.

Um- Najim talked about her job troubles, and how work incomes were not as used to be. She then said: " I am going to give an example of how the higher prices of spare car parts made drivers hesitate to fix up their cars. It really cost arm and leg and do not encourage customers to come in here"

"You have to know in case a mechanician wanted to rent a work place at the industrial neighborhood in al-Nasiriya that would cost a lot. This is the reason that let me not me rent a suitable workplace for me over there."

Um-Najim then said: " Well, means of living was not as used to be before. I and my boys could not change our business. We dream all the time of having a workplace or a large garage for us. But even now it seemed impossible."

Um -Najim, did not have an opportunity of going to school before. But once she had joined some illiterate compulsory school, where she passed the six degree.

She could read English letters and numbers quite smartly. She then showed her ability in reading English numbers craved on her tools and spanners. She then said: " Of course I know all car malfunctions and how to fix it. For an example if there some wrong in oil pump, we have to dissemble the automatic gear box or change the whole system."

: " If I checked up the malfunction and found it in the oil pump, I tried to change it or change the whole set".

Um -Najim then narrated a real story which took place during the ex-regime time. She seemed to be so proud as she went on in her story. And how once al-Nasiriya governor personal and no one could find out exactly the reason of malfunction car.

It was a hard time. And the governor was about to imprison all mechanics who could not fix his car as he liked.

Um-Najim said it in high pitch tone: " I did it. I succeed totally in fixing his car and saved all mechanics of going to jail."

And when she was asked of what wrong with the governor car at the time. She then said: "It was nothing but the main filter gear which had to be replaced with new one."

She then completed her story and how the governor's body guards were distributed around here. But she did insist all the time that Najim, her son, had obtained all experience and he would be her successor on time.

Her junior son, Jawad, did not share to much his mother interest and he was from time to time was cracking some a joke he heard lately. And they did not give a serious part. He then said: Personally I hope I could change this kind

of work and I do not like so much to spend my life in it!!

At the present time Um-Najim do confirm so well she unusually repairing without ensuing of her properly work. In particular, with those who dealing with car agencies. She accuses them of trying to fix car temporally they buy it as they were new! She ten said: I normally tell these guys, take your cars and depart soon. Such a kind of work may let you lose all your customers and at the end you would go to nothing.

And about prices she said: usually I took 50 Iraqi dinars (about 40 dollars) for repairing a broken gear and 150 Iraqi dinars for fixing an engine, of course just hand work fees only.

And upon the reasons why she had specialty in fixing USA cars , she said. " Probably we before a long time owned a Chevrolet. And at the place I came from, Basra, there are a lot of cars made in USA.

The family members wish al-Nasiriyah province could provide them with a free land so they could build on their own dream garage for fixing cars.

Sometimes they were fined by local municipal of their province. Our province authority did not help us and we did not go to them. And about the business troubles all hard malfunction they confront they then confirmed as all in one, they gathered to repair car problems and definitely they do it.

Jawad, her son, went on, playing the clown role here and he said when his mother faced an unusual malfunction she might be seen worried, blowing shaking moving her head and imitating her moves and caused all to laugh deeply. But his mother said: " Even if we find something

hard we all together and do it soon."

She then added:" Often I deal with car owners. Sometimes I hear from some them how their wives do not know anything about their husband cars situations"

She then said not once she would meet with women who ask her why she have picked out such a kind of job which is uneasy for men too. But she would respond to them with a smile saying : "It is something I get used to."

Finally, she pointed out as she really had to do all housework also as any house wife. There passed a period when she was so busy after she got her two daughter married lately. But things now changed as her son Najim got married now. So she did not have to do a lot of home duties.

Her son in law Ahmed who kept calm all the time of interview looking to his mother in law nicely. He did confirm" Um Najim is a nice woman, smart with a lot of experience".

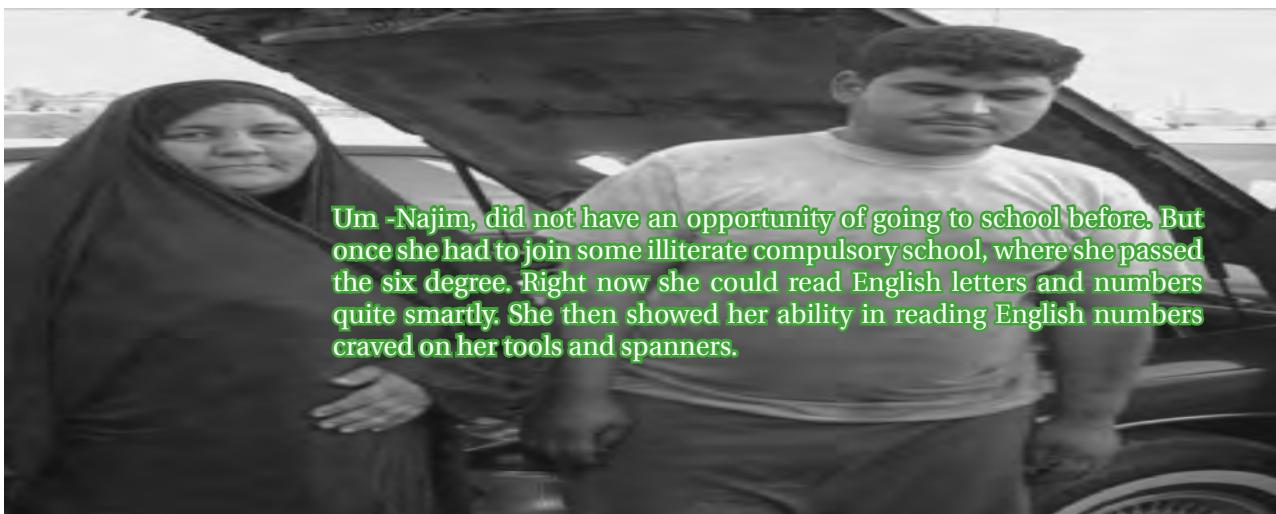
And the old women who was hiding her green tattoo on her face, and seemed out of this world.

One of the difficulty we have met in writing down feature is Um Najim refusing totally her picture to be taken as she was doing her deal of repairing. How can we prove it? Albeit all our explanations and earnest appeals, were carried on in vain.

At last we shelter into a trick successfully, that we would take her picture beside her boy and it did it.

Kadhimiya, her sister in law was more known than her, but unfortunately we could not meet her might assure there was some scuffle between her and the family. But it was improper to meddle in such a familial business. ■

Um -Najim, did not have an opportunity of going to school before. But once she had to join some illiterate compulsory school, where she passed the six degree. Right now she could read English letters and numbers quite smartly. She then showed her ability in reading English numbers craved on her tools and spanners.



# The Guard's Story of the Forgotten Ziggurat

By Mufeed waheed al-Safi

**As a priest ascending on a temple for his ritual spiritual performance, Dayif, the guard of Ur city, went up upon the wide dusty old stairs, along the clay steps of Ur Ziggurat. Then he stopped a little, before reaching top, and said in almost low-pitched voice, with a big smile" yes, my friend, these steps may take your breath. But, believe me if, you want a good view you should pay.**

At the ziggurat site, Dayif, reached to his last point, looked over extensively on the temple summit walls bricks. He then worded up at the landscape view: "You see the whole scene from here, it is the most important Sumerian city ever in the ancient Mesopotamia. It has the most known modern name Tell-Mulayam. You should to know that Ur city is located to the south of

spent most of his time amid the excavations:

"This city was built circa 3800 BC. It was the largest city of its time and its people started off the first civilization in everything, writing, law, schools, even music!! Being built by two great kings Ur- Nina, the king in the first dynasty of Lagash and Ur-Namu from the third dynasty."

Mr. Dayif was currently checking up

Mr. Dayif looked at the huge view before him then said "Often I would be both translator and guider for visitors and official characters who occasionally visit this city, such as our presidents like al-Jafari and Noori al-Maliki, and of the foreign characters such as the French foreign affairs and the English ambassador. Most visitors by and large, preferring this site to be in its right shape, where no a hand passed on to spoil its antique beauty!"



Euphrates on its right bank in al-Nasiriyah city."

Dayif Mohsen Naeis, 57-old-year- guard in his simple clothes, and has a job like father like son, appointed as a guard in the same place too. He might be repeated Ur city history over and over to the visitors, as an expert who

that spot carefully for a while then he made a circular tour around the clay summit. The pictures of the whole scene may inspire feelings of peace and admiration of the new comers. Dayif then went on saying:

"Certainly this site had been visited by a lot of

people along its marvellous history, scientists, presidents and writers. Do you know even Agatha Christy has met here her future husband (Max Mollohan)? He was at the time working as assistant to an English scientist who set about his excavation for the British museum."

From the first time, Mr. Dayif's abundant information and his way of bringing out the historical facts of this forgetting city and might zero in on coming the tourists and visitors. Some exaggerated friends said he could speak about five languages!! But when he was asked about that he would shrug his shoulders humbly and said: " It is the books my friend.... The books, really I did not complete but my secondary school."

" But, with the help of an Iraqi archaeological professor, Dr. Qasim Radhi, who always did encourage me to do that. Yes, that doctor had now passed away now. But I will not forget his favours, God may mercy his soul"

Mr. Dayif looked at the huge view before him then said "Often I would be both translator and guider for visitors and official characters who occasionally visit this city, such as our presidents like al-Jafari and Noori al-Maliki, and of the foreign characters such as the French foreign affairs and the English ambassador. Most visitors by and large, preferring this site to be in its right shape, where no a hand passed on to spoil its antique beauty!

"This temple was built during the reign of Ur-Nammu, in circa 3800 BC. it is believed that it was reconstructed in the sixth century by the last Assyrian king of Babylon. And here it was found the shrine of Nana (the god of the moon). This city really has lost its political power after the third dynasty. Although its distinguished position provided her with all advantages and her great Assyrian and Babylon kings"

With extending view, Dayif, pointed out to a small spot not too far from the old site, he smiled and said " well, yes, that is my house. I have been here for seventeen years, where my five daughters have been left home for their husbands'. Now we are a small family, me and my wife and a boy and girl."

Dayif now was getting down from the temple, headed to the left. He then passed around two hundred steps. And as reaching the first basic walls, he stood a little said: " In this site, we have reached the royal tombs, the greatest treasure in

the world where by excavations there be found a lot of things buried with the dead kings."

" But the professionals say some imports to Ur came from many parts of the world, such as precious metals, gold and silver, all this confirmed the city splendor. They royal tombs dates to the early dynastic period, 25-24 century DC. It contained immense amount of luxury items. "

With his confirming tone, Dayif went on narrating what he knew: " Ur is an important city indicated by the types of the cylinder seals. So for this reason, it's called the city of seals. I think you have seen a lot of it in al-Nasiriyah museum. These seals contained a lot of proto-cuneiform signs, which appears to be the writing or symbols of the city-states in the ancient Sumer."

"Of course, unfortunately such a great city attracted a lot of enemies along its history. Thus, Ur turned to be under the control of the Semitic Acadian empire which was founded by Sargon the great, between 24, 22 century BC. Then there another occupation by people who came from Zagros mountain. The demise of Ur at that times was perhaps owing to drought, and changing the Euphrates directions."

Dayif continued his routine mission and said: "After the Baath regime falling apart, an American military patrol did show off here, with their arms and vehicles. When they found me alone in this antique site, suspected me, then arrested me, cuffed my hands. Although I tried to account for them. I am only the guard of the ancient city."

He then confirmed his story: "Believe me, it took a long time, until I let them understand the picture. When they released me they said it was a great courage to be here, to implement my duty!! Yes, it was very hard time for me, but all my concern was to get them out of this valuable area, which was not easy at that time"

Dayif then added: "Excavations in this site, perhaps started from 1920s and 1930s which resourced said it was founded by the British museum and the university of Pennsylvania. It was led by the archaeological Charles Leonard Woolly. Where they did find what they found and still there more burials still uncovered and containing many valuable artefacts."

He then assured the pottery debris of this city was found, in colours and painting on them: there is mountain of broken pottery were removed from excavations, and hu-

Dayif continued his routine mission and said: "After the Baath regime falling apart, an American military patrol did show off here, with their arms and vehicles. When they found me alone in this antique site, suspected me, then arrested me, cuffed my hands. Although I tried to account for them, I am only the guard of the ancient city."



man remains from many of the walls of the royal tombs area. Western excavators who came here really found out many famous pieces from the Iraqi royal tombs of Ur city.

Dayif now said as he spotted some Sumerian writings carved on low walls: "Here, they have been found a large body of cuneiform writings, mostly from the empire of the so-called third dynasty of Ur. The archaeological activities have confirmed Ur was a major urban centre on the Mesopotamia land."

He went on in saying : "One of the surviving works of Sumerian literature described the death of the king Ur-Nammu and his journey to the underworld.

There you find cuneiform of the Sumerian writings on many walls, some totally covered in script stamped into the mud-bricks. Its texts sometimes are difficult to read, but, it covers most surfaces."

At al-Nasiriyah museum a new comers may get astonished as they have been confiscated of any camera with them. They tried to enter into this museum at that time. One of the visitors complained and said:

"One of most absurd decisions in al-Nasiriyah museum that a visitor is unhallowed to take pictures inside!! He said as he entered to see the manager there, he forgot to deliver his camera, and after making interview with the manager himself.

Later he picked out his camera and took some photos. But as he was coming back policemen stopped him

And when he asked them why they did do that. Despite he tried to explain to them his work

nature . It was a public entertainment place.

They said it was the orders from those who in charge. But what incited more wonder that journalist has seen a camera video inside the museum itself that camera belonged to a local media channel which belonged to the province !. Therefore they And they issued the rules and broke it themselves.

It was not a matter of media freedom only but also for tourism activity that begged to be improved and such a kind of native decisions imposed would hinder a lot.

At that time Dayif tried to simplify his words: "Modern graffiti (pictures and words painted or drawn on the walls) has been found on the graves, usually in the form of names made with coloured pens (sometimes it was carved). Dayif then referred to Ur ziggurat and said: Even our great Ziggurat has graffiti. It is lightly carved into the bricks."

As Dayif turned back to leave this site. He then said: "Some of the tombs are really accessible, but most of them have been cordoned off. The splendour of the city, and the greatness of its kings, have a great reputation throughout Mesopotamia history. In 2009, there was an agreement between an Iraqi team and University of Pennsylvania to resume archaeological work at the site of Ur. Personally I have worked with an American scientist (Elizabeth Stun in 2015)

As Dayif felt the sun heat was not a joke, he inclined to stand under wall shades behind the north side of the temple. He then said: "The name of this city has been brought up many times in the Torah as the place of Abraham the prophet (peace be upon him) about four times. Even in al-Quran the stories of the prophet with the al-Nimrod, the ruler of that times has been recited."

He then added: "Do you know the Sumerian civilization go deep in spirituality. For an example, when you read Gilgamesh attempt to find immortality and how he did face off all dangers and monsters just to live forever. It differs totally from Pharaohs way of thinking who were concerned with the body not the soul."

Mr Dayif then affirmed this site has received groups of European tourists: "We actually have received more than 250 visitors of Christian group. They came in four tourist buses for the first time. and Dayif did confirm: I was really very happy at having them, hoping many happy returns to them to see our archaeological sites. They came though al-Basra air-

port, to perform their Christian pilgrimage."

He did give more information about them: The visitors really were so enthusiastic at touring here and expressed their enthusiasm and happiness to arrive, as it holds holiness and history for all religions, they were so eager to be here. One of tourists unveiled her wish the pope may visit this spiritual place.

As he referred to the police checkpoint. He then said: "This site here is so secured. And the people who live around it. They of course know the importance of it, so it never be looted".

He said finally: "for this site, really I have many wishes; such as we do need to build some sort of qualified restaurants and places to our families in case we come here to have some entertainment and nice time. Personally I hope that my salary will be raised, as I now have just 370 thousand Iraqi dinars per month."



## A Short journey into Mesopotamian Deep Marshes

By mufeed wahhed al-safi

Over the calm waters of al-Chibayish marshes, Abdulameer boat continued sliding on, like a surreal Sumerian fish, aged of thousand years. As the wooden boat has been driven by its powerful engine, the marsh resident did not stop showing off his skills either in hunting down birds or cutting off reeds and papyrus as a business.

Abdulameer brownish features really owned a considerate deal of persistence and hard-working. He now gave his personal view to the latest UNESCO decision of recording these marshes to the sites of world folklore list. He immediately assured that water levels sometimes stepping up and down. And kinds of immigrated birds did return back to its old nests.

Then the marshland progress slowed down

as gradual dryness showed its face at some swathes. Mr. Abdulameer then turned his subject about the last marshes inscription to the world heritage list: "I wish the local government would look at us in merciful way, and bring in more projects to us. I do not have but hoping some grace and prosperity would cover up all Iraq, and therein we may obtain a little bit."

The road to al-Chibayish through AL-Nasiriyah was long, hard and full of hole-traps. It

seemed as if one did pass on more than 85 km. On both side the rural scenes still were shaping. Sometimes it presented either wide barely fields or thorny bushes at the marshes edges.

There we saw more water areas, which suddenly demonstrated as huge plants of reeds. From time to time, some gray wooden boats were spotted. There we saw several shattered old fish boats thrown long time away.

Shabby shelters sometimes could be seen on both side of road. There were local people walking around going for their business, as if they were coming back from a long, involuntary immigration to their homeland at last.

Now I remembered my favourite book on marshland written by Kevin young. "Return to marshes". Definitely it was by chance, the same person who translated it into Arabic, Dr. Hassan al-Janabi, as it is said, played an important role for the last UNESCO initiative. All these pictures come to mind alive again, as we passing the territory of al-Husasra tribe.

We then left Sayyid al-Dakheel check point area behind, with its suitable places for grazing. After leaving away al-Fhoud and AL-Hamaar neighbourhoods. The scenes of playing kids or the shrines of sacred men would be seen from time to time.

Finally, we have reached to al-Chibayish market, we have been at a common humble market which did spread on a large area. There were some houses built along the marsh shore. Mr. Basim who works as a cart driver did affirm, he could find a boat for us to take us to the marshes.

We then left the idea of visiting guest halls, as Mr. Basim did suggest. Owing this would take us away from the idea of going on into the marshes. At that time neighbourhood market which was spread on enormous land, demonstrated the clay -made houses constructed on long beach at the border of the marshes.

Mr. Basim pointed out in his suggestion to visit public guest houses. These houses are made of reed and papyrus. And he did offer to be hosted either at Al-Wonayis or al-Asjaria, and al-Fhoo迪ya Madayif (guest houses). We did realize that would take a long time. Presently we all concern to take a journey inside the deep marshes. So we thanked him for his hospitality.

As we were looking for a suitable boat to do

our journey, having seen some vehicles and digging machines. At this Mr. Basim said: "Yes, after the ex-regime fell down, some schools and drinkable projects were made, but, the people in al-Chibayish life, did not change so much as we hoped. People here earned their life through cutting reed sticks since years."

He then gave an example on the hospital his people kept it safe and sound during the chaos time. And how did they rehabilitate it and opened a new women department that was not before.

He then said: "Before these days when some wife about to begot a baby, the whole family would be indulged in a complicated state, the pregnant had to be moved on to al-Nasiriyah main hospital, in a distance circa 85 kilometres!!

Mr. Basim then jumped in to account for how important making carpet of reed for the poor families around here. He then referred to piles of reeds thrown aside the road. It was the job of a plenty of people to earn their lives. As he assured saying: "A person could get five thousand dinars per day if he had succeeded to sell it to a merchant."

As we approach the marsh edge, we spotted a boat anchored. And there it could be seen a slim and tall man , who was talking to woman beside, who him. As soon as his women saw us approaching , she covered her face with her Abba. Later, after we did greetings to them, from a distance, the man smiled and this encouraged us to advance more.

Mr. Abdulameer rapidly turned to be on duty and pushed out his boat over the water surface. As we on board we asked him about how life going on there. And he said people here used to cut reed and sell it as main job. He then confirmed during the season of hunting wild ducks and birds, it would an opportunity for them. There a sudden wave of satisfaction on his face as he talked about hunting birds, the profession in which he surly was well expert.

It seemed he got multiple talents as most of his people did. He cited the names of immigrant birds that already came with the aquatic planes back such as water hen some kids there where swimming skilfully as if they were born fished.

As the boat drifted over the slippery water surface and we did feel the nice wet breeze which may let one feel as if going into untrodden plac-

es that never seen before.

At the time we had some certain overwhelmed desire to reach the deep points of these marshes, But Abdulameer suddenly rejected the idea as it was possibly hard to obtain.

Therefore, Abdulameer spotted and so thick reed bushes and said: I normally use this part to cut reeds and papyrus. Later I dry it by putting it under the sun. Certainly to crop reeds and break it forth and trod it would take a long time.

told us about how immigrated birds would come back to the wetlands, described al-Maghrafi and Abu-Minjal and water chickens and al-Ghattas and al-Gharnooq as people here called it.

He then unveiled the names of the far places where hunters might go to hunt down such kinds of birds in order to sell it at al-Chibayish local market. He then named, the princess of laziness, buffaloes and how fishing phases done, described it as good business but it dangerous

**Mr. Abdulameer rapidly was now on duty and pushed out his boat in the water surface. As we on the board we asked him about how life here. And he said: people here used to cut reed and sell as the main job. He then confirmed during the season of hunting wild ducks and birds, it would an opportunity for them. There a sudden wave of satisfaction on his face as he brought up on hunting birds, the profession in which he surely was well expert.**



So we then reached to the phase of weaving it, which needs skill to do properly. And do not forget that not all the reeds parts are used here, as the soft parts can be used for animal fodders.

He went on in his story and confirmed how they did sell on reeds at Abu-Subat bridge. He then said that as one of the many boats which came a long from nowhere suddenly and loaded with fresh cut reeds, that covers all who were on the boat board. He then said: "People round here work day and night in cutting reeds or fishing which demands going too far in the marshes."

Abdulameer then smiled as he gave details of his experience in shooting birds professionally. He did have many skills as most people here. He

with money and efforts.

He then added: "well, you have to provide amounts of ice blocks per hours, to covering the fish. Due hot weather, might make lose your money. And remember there are seasons where fishing will be forbidden, on the first months of year."

As he said that you might look at his face features to see whether some real facts of his Sumerian origin were true. As the great British writer said about the people of this wetlands. When we were reflecting of such train of ideas, we passed by houses floating drowsily upon the water surface. There were some skinny kids swimming on like fish.

You might feel as if you out of this world. And

probably you be overwhelmed with a desire to go the deep wetlands where nobody had been before. So Abdulameer would wake you up from your daydream by his saying: " No, my friend there will be bloody bugs and flies which hurt intruders, especially at fresh reeds and papyrus' regions'

Abdulameer confirmed there were some projects on the way of constructing. He did not hide his slyness in referring the finance spent and corruption smell. He then hinted to the municipal council and marsh projects as: " Those who are in charge do not be profitable but for themselves".

He then touched on his hard work all day. And he now hoped his son Alawi would have an official job in government, so he could help his family. And Probably he might succeed in building a new house instead of the clay made house they live in: "All we wish to live in better".

Abdulameer was a fascinating narrator as he brought up a weird old story of his recent village, Abu-Lumba. He was a kid at that village and all his ancestors lived and died there. It was related to al-Chibayish. There were but the first class of clay elementary school. They usually owned a bigger herd of buffaloes and cows. He remembered so well as he returned back one day from school. And Suddenly he found all water marsh turned to be so black from nowhere. They did not know what was going on. But later all knew it was the black crude oil well which exploded naturally!!

He then pointed out to his boat, which we were on board. He did buy it in three millions and two hundred Iraqi dinars. For buying the boat he had to sell some of his domestic animals.

He then shifted his speech into his family as he said all his kids are in schools. He is 39-year-old father of six boys and three girls. His son Aqeel, younger than his senior son Alawi as they hoped, being in the last class of a secondary study.

He did confirm the harsh suffering caused by ex-regime. And how he deserted military service several times. But at last he had to return back for the sake of his family safety.

During the military actions which broke out in 1991, the ex-regime forces attacked his village and that pushed most of people run away and

settled down inside the Iranian borders fearing of the regime: " Really it was so hard time to leave your land , but we were forced to do that. During immigration time, we were crossing the borders, some families barely warded off death of shortage in water and food. But now we retuned back again. And we have hopes and dreams.

Abdulameer complained of higher price to the benzene and engine oil which he used. He did feverishly spoke on behalf of all the people of al-Al-chibayish, out with it of the bad conditions they are confronting. He did agree there were some human right organization for widows or elders. "But no all people here could obtain such a kind of back up."

Before a period, he was asked to enlist his name in the local municipal council and really went into al-Nasiriyah, city centre many times but in vain: " Everything there dependent on close relations. Those who being paid salaries from the government could built normal houses made of new bricks, not like most people who lived in houses made of reeds and papyrus."

He took it easy as saying again: "For me, Praise to Allah, I am in goo d health to back up my family, but what about others who do not have even suitable rugs for their visitors " The sound of Abdulameer currently was higher than his speedy boat sound he was sadly exposing his troubles and wishes. He now said: "If you give a chance to invite you in my house, surly you will learn what I am saying now."

While we were floating nearby a high hill he said about which being demolished by as the municipal council, to let water carry on and overflow. One of Abdulameer problems he still did not have any personal paper identity, ! he said " Personally I do hate going to the government offices due to all delay and ignorance we face."

Abdulameer is a man from this wetland. On this land he was born as his father and grandfather. He liked so much his home. Could he at last benefit of late UNESCO initiative. He said finally: " we have spent our lives living under lantern lights, but now we have the right to dream of more. ■

He then said that his boat, which we were on its board he did buy with three millions and two hundred Iraqi dinars, and he sell part of his domestic animals in order to got it. He then shifted his speech into his family as he said all his kids are in schools. He is 39-year-old father of six boys and three girls. His son Aqeel, younger than his senior son Alawi as they hoped, being in the last class of a secondary study.



# Nosing about the last Jews in Baghdad

By Mufeed waheed Al-Safi

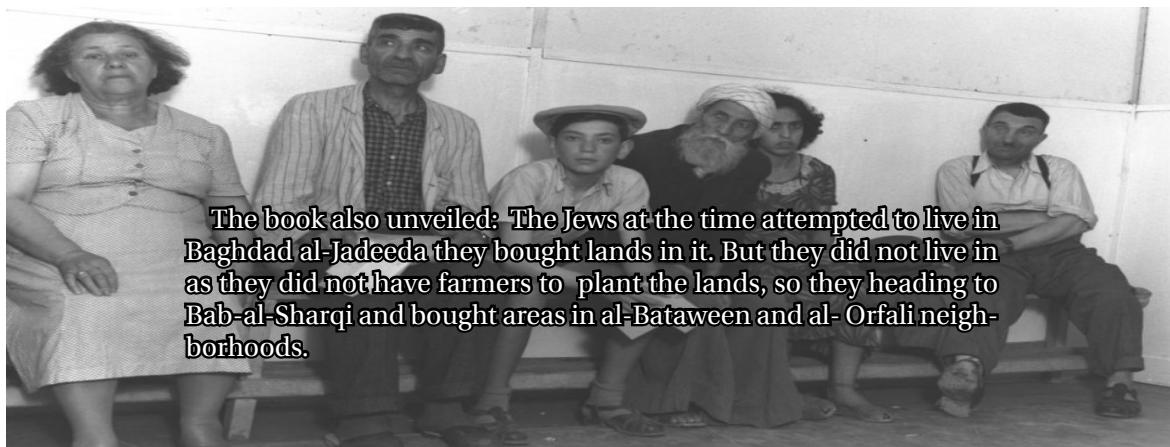
**Yes, the details of this unimagined story really took place exactly three months before the ex-regime falling apart. At that time, I was employed as a journalist guide at press center, an office related to currently cancelled ministry of information. We at the time were a group of interpreters who daily accompany foreign figures and journalists, those who fly over coming to Baghdad, to covering news, as Iraq turned to be Mecca in so weird way. One day, it came to me to escort a German journalist who was working for Swiss magazine**

What a weird request the German journalist did apply!! His first application was to visit a synagogue still stood around there! Yes, a synagogue for Jews in Baghdad! He did confirm its existence to me. But, I confirmed my great doubt of his words, believing there were no such people over here.

Yes, I have heard they have been victimized

Before few days ago, I was reading a book titled "historical to Baghdadi neighborhoods" for Dr. Emad Abdul, on page Number 36, he wrote: "al-Torah neighborhood is located at the middle of Qanber Ali neighborhood and al-Ghazil souk and Hanoon souk related to a Jewish synagogue named al-Torah or related to what known sheikh Ismail at the seven century of Hegira.

Jewish community of Babylon constituted the



The book also unveiled: The Jews at the time attempted to live in Baghdad al-Jadeeda they bought lands in it. But they did not live in as they did not have farmers to plant the lands, so they heading to Bab-al-Sharqi and bought areas in al-Bataween and al-Orfali neighborhoods.

to deportation long time ago. But the questions which jumped in my mind how did they survive and living in our national state? With an authority's propaganda which built a pretending goals for the sacred Palestine question. Finally, when I submitted his request to our direct manager center, he quickly ordered me to forget such a matter completely.

world's oldest and most historically significant. Even their Talmud was compiled in Babylonia.

"It was considered as one of the most scared older synagogue in Baghdad, over the Othman era. That neighborhood was named al -Bu-Shibil, with Johns list 1846 it later is considered, since the first years of the twenty century as a neighborhood stood by its own. It contained



So cautiously with him, I totally was in fear, that our conversation will end unprofitably. He said now there were some excavations in al-Bataween neighborhood. He then added:

“ You have to be so careful, when you ask. There may be a person whom you ask, a bad guy, and his ideas was not like yours, then definitely you will be in trouble. He then unveiled some details in his saying: Do you know al-Awsiya school. It is located in a certain place in al-Bataween street, nearby old nationality office. You may ask elders; surly they know the errand.”



various roads, most of its residents of Jews, its synagogue still established now".

Now I started on the move, firstly at nearby souk al-Ghazal, trying to ask some people who stood there in a corner watching various kinds of birds and animals. After introducing myself usually, I would ask if they heard on a Jewish synagogue around them there? They said hearing of a story of them, so I made up my mind to turn left toward a lane behind al-Souk. There I came across an old man who owned a shop for seeds.

Mr. Ismail, 73-year-old man (Abu- Khaleel), said while smiling calmly: "Well, you remind me of something really passed a long time ago. So, well I remember Iraqi Jews. They were working in various occupation like selling clothes, lines, carpentry and Jewellery. Alas, they were forced to depart country in 1948. There was an area named " al-Torah neighborhood" nearby souk Hanoon. It was said the rich of them were living round, and the poor used to live in al-Batween."

Then he added: They were distributed in souk Hanoon, Abu- Saifain, Abu- Dou, Dou, having remains and shrines. They always kept good relations with other societies, in Baghdad society habitually accustomed to amity and exchanged visits.

With some hesitation, I asked him if there some wrong took place in their last days. So he murmured such words and said: Yes, yes, as for an injustice story, nobody of ordinary people did hurt them. What did happen during Farhood-looting- year, some mercenary and bad guys had looted their properties. He then told me if I could visit him later, he would let me meet a Jew who used to pass in a near alley!!

In the library of the folklore and archaeology association, an employee told me privately, about a story happened to him while visiting London some years ago. As he got in with his wife, to one of the cloth sell shop. They wanted to buy a piece of clothes, but the price did not

satisfy them. Once they were about leaving, a shop owner raised his voice in Iraqi accent calling them. Our brother, our brother. The story teller then said:

" I was totally in wonder of what happened. The shop owner introduced himself being born in Baghdad as in Iraqi Jew. He asked me to hug him as Iraqi normally do. Really he was in nostalgia pro Iraq."

D. Hameed Mohammed Hassan, the manager of documentation and archeological department said on Jewish people in Baghdad: "There was an agreement made between some Jewish organizations and the Iraqi government in 1950s, to drop the Iraqi nationality off, from them and force them to depart to Palestine."

" Most of them, did not like to do such a thing. That event took place at the time of Noori al-Saeed president ministers of Iraq at that time".

Some of known Jew characters at that time, such as Denial who established a souk at the debris of Khan Jighan souk and al-Nidamiya school- still known of Denial souk during Ottoman era. He then added:



"After deportation, a greater part of the Jew did sell off their properties in al-Hila city to depart into Europe. The famous physic Dr. Jack Aboot, expertise in neurology and Dr. Karji Rabi opened up a hospital in London".

" Some of the them were from university faculties. They were of various classes who were unwillingly to be immigrated. Some were subject to looting. Iraqi people named that year of al-Farhood year-year of looting. In 1951 their Iraqi nationality was dropped off because of the agreement, as I said".

Then Dr. Hameed brought in an old book, contained more than five thousand names of Iraqi Jew people who was dropped of their nationality. The first page commenced with similar names as Ibrahim and Isa and Hizgial and female names as Tufaha (apple in Arabic) and

Juliet.

“Currently Iraqi Jews numbers are counted in tens. They normally are avoiding near community. And who was left of them, they were likely tend to be unsocial and conservative. Their villages were distributed in all parts of Iraq, such as Dhouk and Anna cities. They have a synagogue in al-Simawa with province, named al-Torah synagogue.” Dr. Hammed confirmed : Really my friend, in the 20th century the Jewish people played an important role in our community. Between 1950-52 , there were around 120,000-130,000 of them in Iraq.

But now all that was just a history. Yes there are some synagogues in Basra and Umara province, for the nearby Hanna al- Sheikh church. I think their number are now between 100- 120 persons.

He then said: “There is a forum closed to Baghdad trade chamber. This place before five or six year, had been under attack by some one !”

He finally added more information: “The first minister for finance, at the national authority was Sasoon Hizgial, who was well-known for his strict measures in finance affairs. His house was closed to al-Jumhuria bridge, now it is collapsed.”

At this point I left him with a note , that it was not easy to meet them. It is not known that any journalist met one of them in such a situation. Did they hide in special locations or change their names and surnames?

While I was searching on in the general library for folklore and antiques association, I found a book named (Nuzhat al-Nufous in the history of Iraqi Jew). His author, Yousuf Riziq Alla Ghunaima, published it in 1920. This book narrated the Jewish history in Iraq, from the days of Babylon to the Ottoman era.

In one of its chapters which concerned about the religious shrines to Jews, the author touched to the graveyard of Ezra ,The writer, or al-Aziz(prince) as named. Then he referred to the shrine of prophet Hizgial or al-Kifil.

In Baghdad there was a shrine, named, Yoshi Kohen kadol. It was located at al-Karkh shore of al-Salam city (peace city), that shrine belonged to a Jewish Rabbi, who was a virtuous one, and people used to visit and having blessing. He was after the name of prophet Yoshi or Yoshi Kohn of Kohn kadol. It was two Jew words which meant,

the great priest.

Nearby Sheikh graveyard of Maroof of al-Karkhi (Muslim Sheikh) was closed to lady -Zubaida in a neighborhood known during Abbasid era named Bab al-Basra neighborhood. It was visited by a Turkish tourist in 965 H.A- 1554 A.D and by the Denmark traveller at the end of the eighteenth century.

The book also unveiled some details about Abu-Sheikh Is-Haq neighborhood: “In one of Resafa neighborhood, we have seen synagogue for Jews. There is a grave yard for one of the Rabbi, his name is Shaq al-Ghawoni, for the synagogue and the new one lead to Hanoon Souk, the is-Haq sheikh neighborhood really is considered one of Jew neighborhood, the graveyard keeper said its history related to seventh century ante Christ. And the one who was buried down, a banker for imam Ali Bin Talib.”

The book went on in its details: “His grave was in cubic room, furnished with nice golden textile, over the door there a marble carved upon it with a line “ the history of lying down, the virtuous rabbi Is-Haq al-Ghooni, passed away in 620 corresponding to Jerusalem devastation.”

In his book which tilted (Baghdad in twenties) Abbas Baghadi wrote on Jew residents: They did not reside in al-Karkh side, but they gathered in Abu-Saifain and Abu- Dou- Dou an al- Torah neighborhood and Qanber Ali neighborhood and Qashal and Faraj Allah and al-Masloob (crucified one) mosque and Taha al-Tikiya and some of the solitary neighborhoods in al-Resafa side.

The book also unveiled: The Jews at the time attempted to live in Baghdad al-Jadeeda they bought, but they did not live in it as they did not have farmers to it, but they heading to Bab-al-Sharqi and bought areas in al-Bataween and al-Orfali neighborhoods.

He then brought up something about Lora Khadori club: “ that club is built at the beginning of al-Sinak in al-Bab- Sharqi and its members all of Jews, of high classified traders and employees and lawyers.”

He said as if remembered some new details” At al-Adamiya, there were houses located upon the Tigris shores. Houses were rented by Baghdad Jews during summer season. On those days al-Adamiya was considered really as a summer resort for the Jews. But they quickly run away

from it in 1930 over the firing hellish speeches which was made by the religious man Numan al-Admi."

He then confirmed: "So they all moved to reside to east of al-Karada. On those days in Baghdad, almost all who dealt with money exchanging were Jews. They normally stood at the entrance of al- Souk, receiving comers from al-Karkh, or standing at the head of a-Shurja souk where people by and large coming to the shops and exchange what they have of cored of paper money."

Mr. Haitham Hadi, a researcher, said: "I've heard a story from a friend who he came across an Iraqi Jews, in Turkey. The Jew told him they did not want to go to Israel, as the Arab made them dislike Israel, and the Jews made them dislike Arab!"

"Eastern or middle east Jews liked Arab because they lived with them, and they had a good reputation such as the Christian had in Iraq, the excavate Riadh al-Qazi spoke about"

We had a neighbour, of a Jewish family in 1950. We often were exchanging visits with him. Married Jew women normally wear a cover like a veil and dress with buttons and light turban. They had shrines such as prophet Yoshi's, in al-Karkh. There was a complete walkway in Diwania province where Jews still living there.

My journey never stop. So I decided later to move in again and search for Jew association I heard about. Baghddadi neighbours called it Moses sect, I then came across of a young man, who took me to its site directly, the road he said:

"I remember well the day, when there was an accident which took place suddenly. A Palestinian guy did shoot few bullets at the Jewish house. that accident happened before the regime fall. I saw that man. He was dressing in white, he then added that he confirmed his seeing Jewish people and said " I have seen some of them, they are Iraqis, speaking the same language and accents. Normally they gather over some periods."

. To obtain the rent they owned. They were well known for their highly good behaviours, there number, I do not know exactly how many they are, as I have reached to the required site. I have seen a common house.

The young man who accompanied said: " In the past there where a sing closed to the house door, but now it is disappeared later I have met

an old man, how also confirmed to me that the people of kept saying. They were coming every six months. As they have properties in this neighborhood, not the same persons come usually. There was a Muslim driver who worked for them, but he did not give us his address.

He then added: It is not the first time. Before you also came some persons who looked for them, there are building in al-Shurja named al-Torah building in behind the shrine of al-Hussein Bin Rooh, people of the sect are intelligent one having a good reputation and praise.

Here I went on in my search. And this fact began to improve. It was surely not easy to find them, as a needle in amass of hay. And after a hard and difficult work. A man I came across near the al-Nahar street gave me some important information, confirming there a big compound for shops owned by the Iraqi Jew.

So I made up my mind and taking a head to the building of river compound asked Mohamed al-Rubae, 52 years or directly about the building owner, who he rent a shop in 50 he said after confirming my job nature: "you have to know that we rent a shop and normally persons how rented form other should be insulated from the owner. And after stressing on my final question he then said: what do you want to know about them, they are a family and a group of family, they are real Iraqis, not all of them are religious."

"They are really not so conservative, but because their number are not so much, so you can't see them always. Normally they gather in Mondays and Wednesday in their association and they have a family patron, Abu-said- family head, they are peaceful, if not exaggerated they are more than excellent people. There around a north shop keeper".

Basim al-Mamoori, shared in the weird conversation! It said he was the first one who opened up a shop in this area. He did give an important help to probably find what I am searching for.

He then confirmed the Jews have owned shops in Samuel street and Diyala souk still has its name of the Jew merchant and they have shrines in al-Uzair city and al-Kifil. They had houses in al-Bataween and al-Sadoon, most of them lived in the south in Basra and al-Nasiriyah.

With the help of a shop keeper, who gave me a secret address. Now the road drove me on

through narrowed textile shops and alleys . and after about a five minutes I reached my goal. I was a textile large shop. They told me his name was, N-Diwania. Over there certainly I would find the truth. really I was thinking quickly how I could have opportunity to speak with Jewish patron.,I thought the best is make up a reason to let him accept to talk with me. Pretending to be a student of higher studies in a university is a good idea! And my study will be on older shrines. I realized the great distance began to shrink between me and the truth. At last my careful steps must reach to something

It definitely , a good idea and my legs led me after a rather long round to the middle of huge crowded market. Over there my eyes spotted a man in his sixty with red face, sitting beside him one of the customers, wearing national village uniform. With some courage I dashed in the shop hoping to find some answers to my long questions.

But as soon as I cautiously introduced myself to him, he suddenly was so offended, and his face features shifted dramatically, and said in absolutely clear fury: "There is not a such thing. There is not a such thing, He repeated this phrase many times, so I have nothing but withdraw quickly from my position, after feeling his constant resistance to more words." That great fear appeared suddenly upon his face made me retreat so I retuned empty handed.

Clearly he did not like to speak with me, his firm features and tone denied all. So I made up my mind to depart the scene at one.

Later my feeling and mind refused to let it go, neither raise a surrounding flag. Presently I returned back to the shop keepers. So he might give me another clue or suggest some person who would accept to have some words with me. The two shops keepers truly helped me again. And they now said there was a person who belonged to Moses' sect I could meet, but they did it indirectly, just hinting. Even I would be lucky at last and I am going to meet my prize.

They then pointed out to a man who was standing not too far, when I looked to him I was amazed at seeing a lean man with his long stick near Tigris shore and beside him a mass of rags.

He was hitting the tapers before him. The guy I looked at was rather thin. I have some courage and stepped toward him cautiously. From

that distance I could conclude, the man I was watching was in his fifties. His thin and fatigue features might give him more years.

I approached more, the man did not care what was going on around him, busied in his doings. His bare legs were moving on a carpet thrown on its back.

I have to seize this opportunity or never., Preparing myself what I should say to him. I would approach him, and present my errand. This time I should say of being a photographer, to take some artful pictures and I have some questions about that. Perhaps the emotional desire I would show in my accent , would make him confident and calm.

The carpet cleaner was moving his long wooden stick between his hands. He was shaking his stick down in circular way, on the folds of the antique carpet, So some wave of dust flying on. Than he would stepped down on the extended carpet. From my site his features did not clearly be seen

He was wearing a short pantaloons with brownish shirt without sleeves. With a long face and five-day beard. Really I was in fear of losing him, I had to seize the opportunity. To be or not to be. I must prepare the scenario I would deal with him.

For few minutes, I watched him as he carried on another carpet. It was overwhelmed with blue colour laid down. He took it into Tigris river, at low location, where he spread it with another on already wooden stairs.

With some hesitation, I introduced myself to him disguising my real job. I tried hard to let him speak about himself. On spot I have thousand and thousand question to him, but I fear he would have refused. How did he survive all the time? How he did live in our society, as life here did not tune peacefully. And truth in my words. The guy's looks seemed rather worried, spotting in doubt firstly. I must try to show trust

In fact I was in fear he might refuse to converse with me. I then asked him how about al-Torah neighborhood and he answered calmly thus, it isolated between al-K street and al-Jumhuria street and thus it is important shrines in al-Resafa, then I have asked him about the most important ones, and he answered it was Masooda shrine and still there.

At last I realized the long distance got shrunk

this time. And my weird research come to a successful end, in my nosing about the evil totem as we have been taught, those people who hide from others like ghosts. Are these people responsible of what others did. Those who opened the doors for Babylon conquerors, who killed the prophets, the evil itself

He then added: "But you could not get benefit of it, there are some, but it collapsed forever into stones and you could not get benefit at all. I was in wonder why he repeating the same phrases, you will not get benefit of it, what did he mean by that. Clearly we both are twisting form the real subject, then I recoded what I have said before."

So cautiously with him, I totally was in fear, that our conversation will end unprofitably. He said now there were some excavations in al-Bataween neighborhood. He then added:

"You have to be so careful, when you ask. There may be a person whom you ask, a bad guy, and his ideas was not like yours, then definitely you will be in trouble. He then unveiled some details in his saying: Do you know al-Awsiya school. It is located in a certain place in al-Bataween street, nearby old nationality office. You may ask elders; surly they know the errand."

- Well, actually my family residence was in Bab-al-Sheikh.

- We were living of all sects. Muslim, Christians, Turk, Kurd, JEWISH.

- Do you believe at that time there were several families living in one house.

- Nothing remains before the time. He said very slowly.

It's for the Moses sect, located in al-Bataween street, nearby the old place of nationality office you can ask the elders there, they might know some information. While we were talking then appeared a another man. I was sure he might be his colleague, perhaps older, his looks reminded me of the same Jewish photos I have seen in library. He seemed he doing in the same job. But suddenly he vanished as soon as I got out my camera . We were both playing the same game, never exposed what we were thinking of openly but hinted it.

I probably tried to make a clean breast about the reason of my interest in that subject, in some paper I dragged, on from, tending my conversation about my childhood and he I was living in

camp al-Armen where there many various religions nationality.

At this time I told him just to ease the tension: It is the time of freedom, why are afraid? Then he jumped in suddenly and said: "No my friend it is the time to kill"

At this point, there was no way before me, but to probably ease the tension I did in my conversation, so asked him about his career. And he then seemed comfortable as saying: well, I work in cleaning carpets for ten thousand dinars per one.

He then began to show off, speaking about kinds of Iranian carpets, such as Kashan and Isfahan kinds and how these beautifully distinguished and not like the industrial sorts" I am in this business since 1960s. I have acquired it from my father. I found it so interesting.

He then with high experience in this job, said: " Even Japanese tried to copy its production, but they found it so hard as it has a great hidden secret. He then pointed to it, al-Kashan carpet he was currently cleaning it up all the time. He assured that its price may reach 15 thousand dollars.'

"As long as it has been having trodden, its price will be increased by time. As it gathers all kinds of sciences, physics, chemistry and psychology!

Now the matter seemed to me so hard, I could not take him to my real aim of this feature. so I let him go on his show as he finally described his carpet's wonderful colours. He then ended up with his word: Truly colour is pleasure.

At this point, I tried to joke with him and asked if I could stamp over his carpet, so he smiled and said: I should have taken some money for it.

Probably It was not only fatigue and suffering which could be seen on his face as he was talking about his craft, that really stopped me not to go beyond the red lines in our conversation. Despite all the hard journey I have.

It was not easy to insist on asking him about his religion and how did his people still living live here. So I made up my mind to leave him in peace.

When I returned back to the shop owner, it was very strange of him. I met was a Muslim not Jew !! and he sowed a silly remark to his friend to confirm his saying . confirming if that man be recognized as a Jewish man. It will █tainingly he would be escape of being killed!!

# Why Had Al-Halaj Been Murdered

By mufeed Waheed Al-Safi

**As we roving around the Baghdadi alleys, Some grim visions were immediately hovering over my eyes. At that time, with my colleague, the old hand photographer, Nihad al-Azawi, were on the way to hunt the spirit of al-Halaj old story and his bloody ending. We were determinedly to drop on his artificial shrine in al-Mansoriya in al-Karkh. Therefore, we speeded up our steps amid the streets and the old Baghdadi houses, and from time to time, we have to stop to ask about the road we indulged in. My colleague Nihad, portioned his time between taking photos or trying to paraphrase, some of the known sophism sayings . Now I was repeating some verses a memorized from al-Halaj poetry long time ago:**

I have a beloved whose love  
Inside me deep  
If my beloved would like to step on my face, let  
him do  
His soul is my soul, and mine is his  
What does he want I want, what do I want he  
wants

As we crossed over al-Alawi  
Baghdadi eastern station, satisfied  
of following required our  
address. At the old cinema site,  
you may see a bunch of work-  
ers, sitting on ground, waiting  
for someone to hire them. Now  
we took a straight direction. On  
the street end, we faced now  
sheikh Maroof al-Karkhi shrine,  
a famous Sufi.

Here we again asked for  
sheikh Mansoor al-Halaj  
shrine. Presently we were told  
we were following the exact ad-  
dress.

Around fifteen minutes be-  
fore reaching al-Mansoriya  
neighbourhood, we have seen  
a great old building. So decide  
to seize this opportunity and dashed in inside,  
taking some pictures over its roof. What great  
advantage here? You could see from that point a

huge scene of whole Baghdad from its west side.  
It is called lady Zubaida graveyard, one of Ha-  
roon al-Rasheed wife, as people there said. But  
some of the resources confirmed this shrine be-  
longed to Zumurud Khatoon grave yard.

As going down on, refreshing my mind and trying  
to organize the information I read once on

al-Halaj trial. Working  
all day in the Baghda-  
di streets on these days  
were not easy, we nor-  
mally do certain account  
to our daily newspaper  
in features, we have to go  
through Baghdadi risky  
roads. As being from dif-  
ferent sectarian schools,  
I am always telling him.  
Mr. Nihad if one which  
belonged to your sect  
copping us, you have to  
save me. And if one of  
you sects put his hand  
on us I will save you. And  
I remember him Mr. Ni-  
had, laughed so much at  
that time.

Finally, we have been guided directly by a  
skinny child of about ten years old to al-Halj  
grave, nearby the dents medicine college, be-



hind al-Karama hospital. Some kids from neighbourhood were watching us curiously. We then have seen two boys hurrying up to call a person. They named him as grandpa, who later it was clear to us. He was the same the sheik who was in charge to al-Halaj shrine.

We stood at a wide door, waiting for him to emerge from inside. Presently still the kids were around us. My colleague Nihad exchanged with them some welcoming words

Later the shrine keeper appeared from inside. He was an old and blind man, who lost his sight long time ago. He seemed surely at the end of his seventy years, with a long white beard gave him more dignity. He soon welcomed us warmly, opened up for us a door overlooking the wide al-Halaj world.

Sheikh Sabie confirmed:

In 1992 this site had been rehabilitated for sure. It stood up on a space on more one hundred cubic meters. The Sheik said in the past, it was an old house composed of two rooms. The inner was the smallest which did not give space to visitors who come in from time to time from all countries, to have blessing of this sacred man shrine.

The outer room was in size of four multiplied of three meters. But after rehabilitation, they were built in one room. Al-Halaj grave site stood at west side vertically with Mecca Qibla. The room dimensions about five meters plus eight and it height about four meters.

On the middle of ceiling, a small dome was built and small- sized chandelier hung down from it. On a wall facing the door there were pictures of scared Mecca and some sayings of Luqman al-Hakeem.

Over two windows covered with green curtains a wooden box represented al-Halaj grave thrown on a piece of cloth in green colour, was put in opposed to al- Qibla.

The grave was found in a larger room. It was

just an artificial tomb due his real body was been torn and burnt at the time of execution.

Sheik Sabie Ibrahim Rasheed al-Shaikhli, 79-year-old man said: al-Halaj is from Nahawand city. He loved Allah and Allah loved him, so he has been given by lord ability if he extends his hand to heaven in invocation. It would pour on him a lot of dirhams, by Allah's willing. Certainly this Maqam had much of blessing.

The grave keeper features would expose pictures of faith and believing as if he knew all the answers of the world, his smile did not vanished over his face.

Now we start asking him some short question and he did say:

"If you ask me about the reason of his name al-Halaj . It means a person who deals with ginning cotton; the sheik did narrate a story of how al-Halaj teacher once did give him a great amount of cotton, demanding him to gin it as

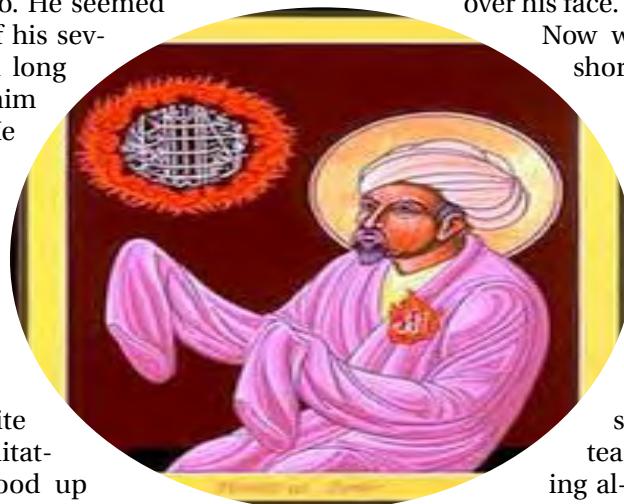
soon as possible. Later his teacher was so amazed a seeing al-Halaj did achieve what he asked for. The blind sheik said and he bent his head direction to the roof as if he saw something we did not see here:

"No doubt the angles did help him, what did you say? At this moment he gave a question as deliberately wanted to test my faith.

I said cautiously in my response: This man certainly has a lot of blessings

Sheikh Sabie seemed satisfied of my answer and his face was brightening slightly. He then said: "There is a perfume like musk matter. It does not stop smelling from this maqam. He then assured this place is being visited all the time, by visitors coming from all over the world, even from France and Britain.

He then said with pride: "once one of French journalists confirmed to me. In France there are a lot of people who have admired so much of al-Halaj character" He then added: Half of France people are converted into Islam because of his books!! He later spoke out: "Al-Halaj was not the first one in Sufism thought of course. Initially he was a student a great Sufi master.



He was called Sheikh Junaid al-Baghdadi. That sheikh lived during Muqtader al-Abbasid period of ruling.

The sheikh then said: al-Halaj has been slaughtered after undergone to extreme torture. He was being whipped 77 whips. Finally, he was thrown under the sword mercy. And they did not stop at this. It was said he was burnt and his ashes thrown into the Tigris River. The river at the time flooded and drown a lot of people in mourning for the sheik.

The sheikh then retuned back to reality and said: This grave you see is just his maqam. It was said he was doing his praying in this room. And before this place being rehabilitating, there was a cemetery for dead children. People usually come to see this place, but did not find it easily, because it is it surrounded by the houses in this quiet neighbourhood.

And about his work, Sheikh Sabie said. I have been keeping this place for fifteen years. I then worked as an official muezzin at al-Awqaf. And when I have reached the age for retired, still worked in maqam.

"In my first days I used to go back home at evening in al-Utaifiya, city. In this maqam, it was picked out as residence for me to live, nearby the place I am now serving".

Later, he mentioned some information about his family he said: "I have six family members. My daily works as a keeper of this maqam, reading Quran verses in it, and doing my service. Before leaving him we asked why people called him grandpa. He then laughed and said: kids of neighbourhood loved me, and I loved them also".

"In al-Halaj's old story, ablution in blood, wrote by Michael Fareed Ghareeb, it is a historic story which speaks out: As soon as al-Halaj rushed in the court hall, he was as sure as death there was a conspiracy fabricated against him, to cut off his head!! Abu-Omer, judge of Baghdad east shore of Baghdad, Presided over the session.

At this time there came of the al-Halaj foes. He was named;" Sheik Hassan, nicely dressed-up, from his body perfumes of musky and ambergris smells so strongly. But from his fatwas you certainly would smell a rotten fish.

Minister Hamid determined his plan would work out whatever it might cost. There he had crowd of witnesses, circa one hundred, all stand

behind doors waiting for their roles to be played on.

It was said after seven years since the black men's uprising broke out, al-Zinj, uprising. Then here we have another uprising, but was more violent. It was an almost on the verge to cause Abbasid dynasty fell down. It was al-Ghramita uprising. All those revolting deeds took place in a society overwhelmed with poverty and oppression and chaos.

In his book," al-Halaj a martyr of sophism" to Taha Abdulbaqi Surur, the same defending view could be realized. He described the following scene: At the time guards handcuffed al-Halaj to crucifying machine. They then determined to use all ways of pain and torture, with their whips and tongues.

At that time Al-Halaj passed his horrible night, handcuffed, crucified, day passed, at night he spent crossed on a palm tree they said and his wounds were bleeding. Baghdad people spent night around him on Tigris river west shore watching a disaster.

Next day morning, Baghdad population got doubled around his crucified site, as Bin Kathir, a writer said, in one of his books. There was out-numbering of people.

But again the guards started to torture him over and over. His right leg was cut off, and then this left leg. And with the more blood dropping there were more whips lashing on. Al-Ghareeb al-Baghdadi said in his book. I did hear a knight say al-Halaj boy limbs were being cut off one by one, but his face colour did not change and his tongue did not stop praying for the Lord.

Another writer, Bin Fatik said when al-Halaj's - legs had been cut off, he was reciting these verses:

Kill me, Oh, your wise people.....To be murdered is my life  
My death is in my life..... And my life begins in my death  
For me to vanish my being.....to be in my present qualities

It is the ugliest sins.....so kill me and burn  
With my worn bones.....then pass by my corps  
To the forgotten tombs.....you will find my secret lover

At the folds of remains

The bloody scenes followed one by one, without stopping, all night long with real horror. The

third day dawned with its suffering. There were crowds of people roving about Baghdad streets, demolishing and breaking down and demanding to save al-Halaj.

Ibin Kathir, a writer said: On the third day, the minister Hamid approached near the wood guillotine There he recited the caliph order. He then read the religious jurists' fatwa. That to kill al-Halaj is certainly a reform matter to Muslim people, Umma. He later ordered the executioner to cut his head off and finish him off.

One of the resources touched upon as following:

"When al-Halaj was presented to his death, he at the time of his execution was at ease. So I asked him in wonder: why Sir, you are in this state? And he said: the evidence of beauty (Allah) who attracted to him the beloveds. Ibin Kafeef, a writer as well said: al-Halaj neck was been cut for instant, and his body was remained out there for two hours of day was stood and his head lay down between his legs. And the head was talking in weird way that nobody could nail down His last word; the lord is one, Allah is one.

Ibn Anjab narrated by al-Shirazi "when al-Halaj had been crucified, for three days, he did not die, therefore they got his body down and searched his clothes. They then found a paper. In it was written down, al-Kursi Quran verse and an invocation which:" O Lord, cast on my heart your satisfaction. Leave away my hope to any without you. Help me by your greatest name. Make me rich with your Halal to Haram. Give me that you gave not to any, but me with Ha meem and Seen qaf. Let me died a martyr, with qaf Ha Ya Ain Sad".

In 309 Hegira correspondingly to 26 March 922 AC, al-Halaj was wrapped by a palm branch cover and pour on him oil and burned. His ashes then were thrown a way from minaret top, to be worn away by wind on twenty-six of al-Qida Islamic month.

At another place, as we approached the first gate of Baghdad university, heading toward the history department. In his office we met with Doctor Abdul-Raheem Saad al-Marjani, doctorate of Islamic philosophy that read to us some of historical resources and said

From a book titled " mind and godly love" to the doctor Gholam Hussain al-Ibrahimi, philosophy professor in Tehran university: we

know that some of the Shiite sect scientists condemned al-Halaj murder and consider his killing as totally big mistake ....

Al-Halaj seemed in his reciting some words. Probably you could smell in the Shiite thought in it. The Shooshteri pointed out and others such saying : I swore in the large shadow. The Lord did not create someone who loved him more than he did, he swore in the greatest witness, he swore of the one light, the prophet Mohammed "peace be upon him and his progeny, "all these have been created for paradise.

This term may expose clearly love scale which al-Halaj do, and that what some understood as a proof his Shiite for the prophet progeny. There were some clues the one how concluded of his Shiite, such as his visiting to the sacred Qum the city.

The risk of al-Halaj did not disappear by his death, as a lot has been quoting from him. D. Hassan Ibrahim the author "Islamic history," said when the common people had seen his magic and voodoo and his weird state, till they made him god and believed in him. The Islam Hujat al-Islam al-Ghazali has defended him, despite he did not explain his saying in goodly manner.

Before the Abbasid caliph was submitted a copy of al-Halaj books. Later they prohibited selling in or buying any of his books. Some said al-Halaj story in its history and context is similar as the Jesus story so much..

Doctor Abdul-Raheem stressed his opinions of this infamous murder and said: "Al-Hussein bin Mansoor is really considered as one of the men who was under dispute about his affairs. Some many agree with him and explain the principles Baghdadi has seen it contracted to his philosophy which al-Halaj has mentioned..

"At al-Halaj days practicing prayers and practices Sufism al-Halaj appeared to be dregs unstable of no fixed days . He was seen wearing dress of poor and Sufism and in other days he wore on as rich and wealthy."

They said sometimes he was dressing as soldier and sometimes as a worker But most of his time he was roving around countries, settled down in great cities, moved on from the place to other calling for God the right on his way so he has followers in India and Iran. And In Basra some

of Sunnite historians who did not understand him, the spiritual affect him of practicing tricks and philosophy Zirdasht and some accused him of being served by the Jinn They saw him shifted with every sect to attract their hearts and support to him and he with every sect.

Al-Halaj has developed the Sufism, Jihad owing to him call of its effect in society and minds like a good the oppression and soul tyranny. Which has seen the unity of the creation with is creatures, but despite of that.

we find in his thought something which could b hidden from the philosophy of the unity of existence and unity. But without going deep in his thought and his folklore there were many artists that release him off from the idea his ideas so we may find sheikh al-Islam Abdulqadir al-Ghailani said about him he said about him

"Al-Halaj failed but he did not find in his time a person who could save him and if I was with I could give him my hand.

I have heard al-Halaj said "the point is the original of any time and like points. So the line can't be without points and points will be the and I any straight line or curve is movable from the point itself ad what one see is a pint between two and this is a sign to appearance of what one see and realized and upon k I have seen nothing but I see God in it.

If you see me you see him. If you see him you see us. It is he Allah in the image of a human being in others word some criticizes him, Blessing he who showed. Then he ... his creatures seen In an image one who eats and drinks, till they say bad words against him. And of eye brow with eye brow

I have seen my Lord in my heart eye. And I said who are you.. So he said it is you. There no to where from you were and not when and not

as you .In omitting and draw my body, I asked about me and I said you.

Al-Halaj was of the first Sufism polar who believed in the unity of existence and Hilool al-Lahoot," entering in theology" in human. And it said that most of those who practicing Sufism disbelieved him when he said, I am the right and that to mean he is the Lord and his saying there nothing under my turbot by Allah and he said also in another words "the lord send him letters writing by his hand and his was proud in his saying that Lord is .him

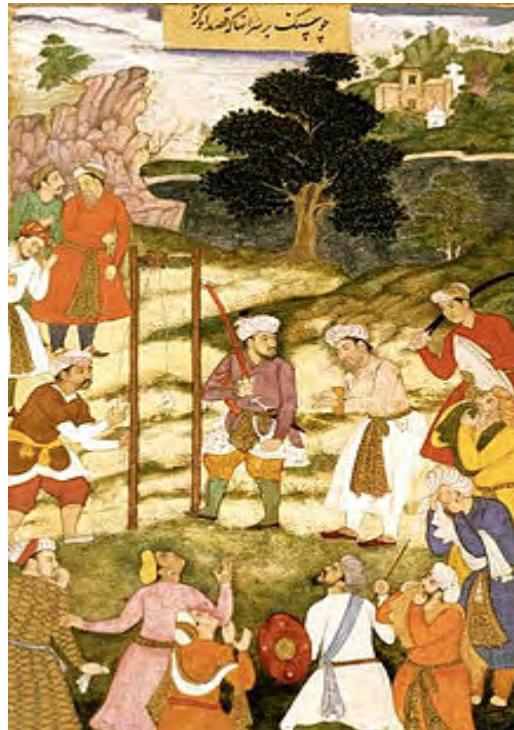
We are two souls mingled in on body. Al-Halaj fame and narration was wide known by a lot of people, till it reached to the Abbasid caliphate al-Muqtader. On Tuesday 24 al-Qida Islamic month in 309 H. upon the caliph order al-Halaj was put out to off with his head.

People crowded to see him. It was said the reason for his killing owing to his response about a question of a nomadic

man who asked al-Halaj what is his turbo, then al-Halaj answered ( there nothing hidden in my turbo) by Allah) he was accused of infidelity and put to penalty and some said the reason was a political one.

With regard of what he said about himself by his saying and poetry. Some accused him of being infidel by his word without a base and it was fabricated words.

. It is a great mistake and from those as well Sadr al-Mutakhen al-Shirazi and al-Faidh al-kashani and the judge nor all-ha. And Nasir-al-Dean al-Toosi affirmed in a book for him with al-Shooshteri described his saying am the right in his saying decrypting of the virtuous for hating off al-Halaj as a correct word if it correctly. Some said scholars like Nasir al-Dean al-Toosi



and al-Faith al-kashani knew the tracks of people of al-Irfan. This science who provide them with a chance to understand words of al-Halaj therefore not accused him and praying him

Doctor Abdul-Raheen Saad added on those who knowing al-Irfan not without human understood and al-Halaj realization uplifting his level of consciousness and mind to know the truth and facts. As well as there something should be known there some Shiite characters who not consider and Irfan, like the judge Noorallah al-Shooshteri. They were not in tight relation with Irfan sciences and Sufism.

Luis Mansion said in his book (al-Halaj disasters) the judge Noorallah al-Shooshteri has praised al-Halaj because he was accused of infidelity.

And the truth this accusation it was not the reason behind the praise as he was hat off for al-Halaj before he himself was accused of infidelity. As one knows the spiritual and moral characters for al-Qahdi Noorallah al-Shooshteri he might find another reason behind that.

He believed al-Halaj believed in Shiite thought and al-Shooshteri was seeking to include much important historical character to this sect. And al-Halaj has said some words you can smell in it he believed in Shiite thought in which al-Shooshteri had relied upon and others in

Our conversation did not take away some doubts still hovering whey they had killed him. It was the way of paraphrasing. I realised how many times in that small buses we hear some paraphrasing al-Koran as he liked

Anyone who believes such as al-Halaj believed of the terms in which al-Halaj had been killed for; he is really infidel convert ... with Muslims. And bin Taimiya said Muslim killed him on the principle unity and such as thought like infidel and al-had as his saying. Imam Allah and his saying God in heaven and God in earth and al-Halaj has superstition and kind of magic and he had written some books of magic generally there no difference in Islamic

We have now reached al-

Most of writing against al-Halaj has rooted of Wahhabi thought. They justified the caliph ruthless deeds and accusing al-Halaj of being Shiite or Sufism.

We did not know any Muslim imam who mentioned al-Halaj in good way. Most who studies Sufi though referred to the Islamic truth theory which al-Halaj claimed as it quoted from9 father , son , the sacred soul) the Christian theory and Christian beloved in the testaments.

...

And Jesus for Christian is a word, and his followers are words. And Mohammed in Sufism is a word and other prophets and messengers are word and for Christians have particularity.

. This amazing similarity between christen and Islamic Sufi say the issued forth theories from the Christian philosophy and Buddhist and Hindus according to hire parts and amid sects made the difference. As Mohammed is the one polar from eternity to eternity from the first to end and this is the same what Christians thought!.

And one who reflects al-Halaj biography summed he is substantially a Shiite in not ( this infidel thought as Ali as al-Halaj said the link between Allah and existence, despite he rejected claiming of godly but his beliefs approved that.

It is said this is my line and I have written now claim of being God but he said I did not claim of God but this the plural name and neither writer but good and it is just a tool. In order to eliminate their foes, we would not forget the matter of creating Quran and how many religious scientists lost their heads because politics is the art of lying

As we returned back that day, this time our speed nonchalantly moved on. The crime was not the first and would not be the last. It a war between two schools, One links to the artificial meaning, did not like to go deeply in meaning and the second school. ■

# The Legend of the Sun Behind the Clouds

By Mufeed Waheed al-Safi

Let's go, and visit the shrines of the fourth ambassadors. Don't you think it is the time to see the last day of the world ? A world now and ever full of violence and corruption and misery. You will be amazed how many people would be happy if we could do it . Yes. Each nation and religion has its version So you give me your informations and I give you mine. Certainly you will find out huge resources about. The majority of muslim people think there will be a man form the Prophet of Islam progeny, whose duty will be spreading justice and peace for all our planet. Some would depict dire and bloody scenes while some other on contrary, happiness and progress will overwhelmed our mother earth.

The marvellous events of this story might commence as what old resources narrated: When Imam Ali al-Hadi (one of the twelve, infallible imams for Shiite sect) sent one of his loyal servants. He told him at that time:

"I am going to send you for an affair quite important. You have to set free a Roman girl prisoner. Just give her this letter – The letter was written in Latin. Later he handed him the letter with a yellow money bag. In it the exact amount of money to set the woman free. Amazingly the deal will be done of the exact price he fixed - two hundred and twenty dinars. The miracles of

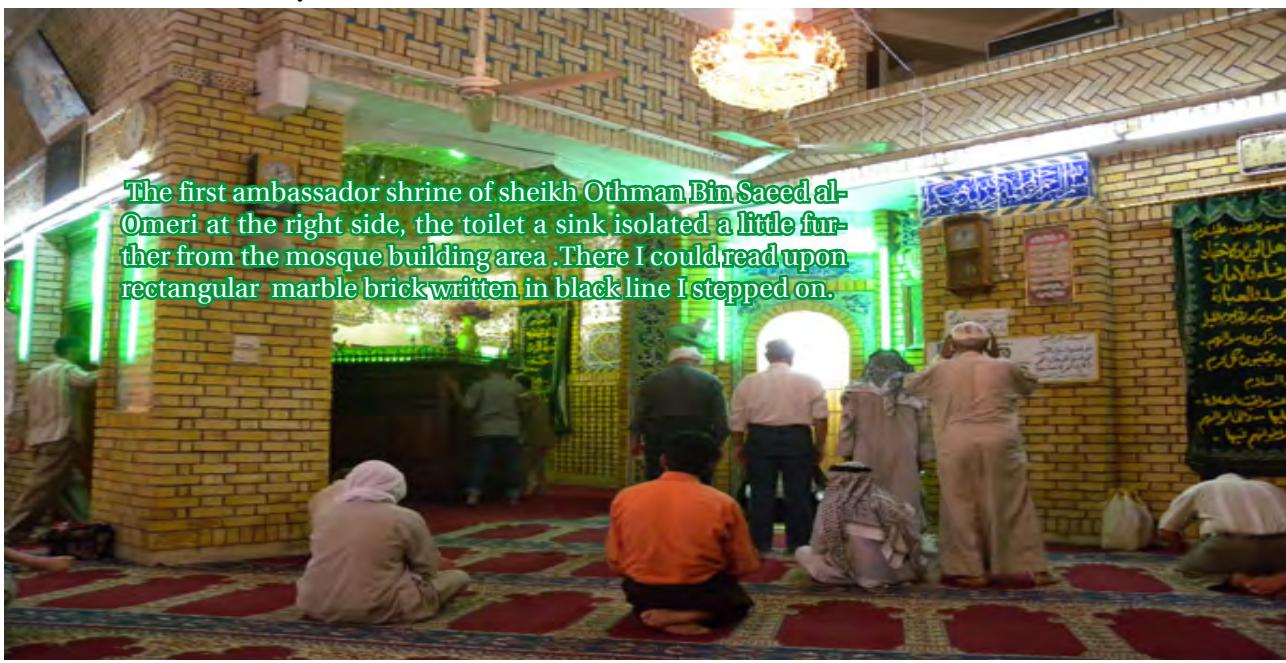
Imam would go on.

"Go ahead to Baghdad, at Tigris shore, you will find a boat anchored for slave women. You will spot a virtuous Roman maiden, who dislikes people looking at her. So you deliver her my letter."

After the servant arrived over there, and saw the lady, he delivered her the letter. As soon as the prisoner read it, she burst into tears intensely. And later she told the slave monger:

"You may sell me to the letter's owner". Yes, she was Maleeka Yashua, the Roman king's daughter and her mother one of the Jesus followers.

Imam al-Askeri then, the son to Imam Ali



I am going to send you for an affair quite important . You have to set free a Roman girl prisoner. Just give her this letter – The letter was written in Latin and do not forget this yellow money bag . It must be delivered . In it the exact amount the deal to set woman free. At it the deal will be done - two hundred and twenty pieces of dinars . The miracles of Imam would never stopped.

Imam al-Askeri then, the son to imam Ali al-Hadi, asked her hand and married Maleeka. She was named later Narcissus. This name was very famous to her.



al-Hadi, asked the girl's hand and took her as his wife. She was named later Narcissus. This name was very famous to her.

After required time, Narcissus got pregnant. Her pregnancy was kept secret from almost all around her, who were afraid for her life. There was no sign to the mother belly. Narcissus was subject to the spies' eyes, like any other women in the household of imam al-Askeri.

Before Narcissus gave birth to her baby, the political situation of Abbasid dynasty was extremely clouded. Every part in the state was in deep concern, wherever the lust for power and ruling, happened to one of al-Abbasid family members.

So he planned with the army leader to de-

were reaching, from the chosen one to those who kept faithfully of his secret.

Rising sun at that morning could spread lights everywhere. Presently I crossed on the crowded al-Midan souk at Bab al-Sheik Muadam, through the public souk into Baghdad lanes and neighbourhoods. Later I reached the location I wanted now. As if the morning air breeze would incite me to something I was looking for long time there was a little sign wrote on it.

In one area, at al-Risafa side, believers come to pay their respect and ask the Lord to have mercy upon their souls. It was so amazingly how did they succeed in keeping their secret hidden for sixty-nine years.

Little by little I was approaching the men's

Albeit cars traffic jammed the street, I was not stopped to crossing on al-Ghailani square. After entering their wide gate, I have seen the mosque did occupy, location distinguished from other shrine.

throne the ruling caliph. It was Mohammed al-Muhtadi al-Abbasid, his cousin, bin al-Mutawil, so he dethroned him.

The secret of delivering the child began to be heard by loyal ones of the Imam. The father set all things properly for the promised event, despite the dangerous situation. The promised child of achieving the just world disappeared sooner after his father passed away.

As the Sun rays would disappear every day. Here the role of the four men kicked off. They were as a circle between the chosen Imam and his followers. Through the letters and fatwas

shrines, and their greatest secret! What were those men kept hiding from the ruthless caliphs? The sun would be useful to all mankind even when it disappeared behind the clouds.

It is they who were obliged to keep the greatest secret in our world, dreaming of living life of justice and peace. In a world where people would live in without wars, or disasters!! It is the utopian world, where all human-beings are still dreaming peacefully and passionately. They are themselves who for long time guarding, the utopian world vision practically with their souls, and the gist of human dreams and desires

everywhere and every time.

#### First ambassador

The first ambassador shrine of sheikh Othman Bin Saeed al- Omeri at the right side, as one passed by the mosque building area. There I could read upon a rectangular marble brick written in black line I stepped on.

There were a lot of questions boiling in my mind, heading to the first ambassador. What did he do? It was said first ambassador relied upon the principle of being cautious in his dealings to be safe from all spies and eyes.

Therefore, he did not indulge in any dispute or sectarian debate whether it was politically or religiously. He was trading in selling fat to cover up his real affairs. He was given the money of zakat, so he would keep it hidden in bags of fat and vases.

One of the old resources narrated about al-Mahdi letter to Is'haq in his saying "Do not go out of this city, till you come across al-Omeri. You get to know him and he know you. He is really a virtuous man to us and all money transferred to us, you have to bring out to him first.

Some resources said al-Zayat craft as a merchant, covered up his real mission, hiding the secret letters in the vessels, fearing Abbasid authority. His ambassador lasted first year on

The mosque guard said at that time: "This is really a sacred tomb where people come around here to be blessed, from various places such as Pakistan, Iran and India, and most of the Arab countries."

"We are suffering a lot of things, such as we do not have a proper praying site for women. Even the shrine domes are about to be falling apart. Now he stood and showed me a breach tracked upon inner roof to the shrine around green lamp that gave it spiritual atmosphere."

The guard followed saying: "Verily we try these days to connect with Shiite Awqaf directorate, but no use this shrine was deserted at the dictator time and still. During these days it was a forbidden to use even a tab in it. We were in extreme injustice at that time and still being suffering now."

"Despite this important character like al-Omeri shrine, but we met but ignorance. Well, there was a simple activity to rehabilitate the mosque, but do you believe it. They did it without measuring or engineering control.

Later the guard narrated stories about this shrine scared man. "Some of various men affirmed, once they were going to practice the daily five praying, going to wash their hands and rinse their feet at the mosque sink. They met with a man whom they have never seen before in neighbourhood. He seemed with serious features, wearing Baghdadi clothes.

"As the people entered the mosque, its door soon closed. Those who were occupied in praying got amazed of the man who passed from there, and story happened to me personally, while I was taking nap in the mosque."

The guard went on in narrating his story: "I was dreaming of a person who told me to wake up and sooner I walked up, and have some steps, then the chandelier fell down on my bed. I already left it."

As I was standing there, I recited the words which were written there. It was a letter from imam al-Mahdi which headed to the first ambassador saying: your father lived happily and died with praising, a mercy upon his soul

Othman bin Saeed one of the well-known figures of imam. For his post and activity was assigned at the time of tenth and eleventh imam. The imam accepting his role, an receiving what he said without being commissioned in of giving out a miracle was surely known. He certainly was backed up by some of the imam al-Hassan al-Askeri followers who had the honour of meeting Imam al-Mahdi.

Represented in this their particularity of the safe ring he was between Imam al-Mahdi and his Shiite. They normally carried on the letters and answers and questions directly from imam al-Mahdi. They see him and ask him.

They carry on responsibility of keeping the common Shiite safe and the faithful men who were spread in various countries. Undoubtedly these missions are greatly vital upon the shoulders of the fourth messengers. Othman kept up with the eleventh imam and he who, when imam died, he attended his funeral like being purified and in charge of his ritual funeral.

#### Second ambassador

Albeit cars traffic jammed the street, I stopped to crossing on al-Ghailani square. After entering a wide gate, I have seen the mosque distinguished from other shrine.

I ask the mosque sheik and I was told he was

not available right now. I looked around and reached to a beautiful brass cover shrine. It was parted to sections. Over it there was a sign. On it was written his name and praying.

Mohamed Bin Saeed Bin Othman al-Omeri al-Ghilani, the second ambassador, his embassy lasted forty years did in 305 H.A. He held the largest ambassadorship.

Presently I accompanied by a photographer who was working there, said: "you have to know that al-Ghailani is the only mosque in Iraq, probably where its dome has the same height as its minaret."

He then led me into narrow well where believers used its water for blessing and treatment like skin diseases. The mosque contained a very large library; the inner shrine is divided in two

and the rural resident will follow up the city resident. Its concession is still existed generation after generation after the smallest occultation. That what had been definitely realized in conclusion and truth

As all messengers, the historic resources did not date exactly his birth. Al-Samiri was just mentioned as one of the imam Askeri followers, concerning the other three messengers, there had been written down openly particular statement.

Third ambassador

Later I passed through the extreme traffic, through al-Shurja souk, nearly souk al-Arabi. There I moved on and found a little door two women beggars sit down there, the third ambassador shrine. The courtyard inner was so



Later I passed through the extreme traffic, through al-Shurja souk, nearly souk al-Arabi. There I moved on and found a little door where two women beggars sit down there. And there was the third ambassador shrine. The courtyard inner was so high, and seen a lot of people who came to do praying.

parts, one for the shrine and the other for praying.

With regard to the three messengers there were mentioned on, clearly particular text of being in maqam a messenger, only him there was not an opened particular for his being the fourth messenger.

It is known as agreement and concession which has been found out amid Imam Followers. This is issued fort undoubtedly of his announcement for imam Mahdi peace be upon him.

This agreement and concession the populous bases submitted to Imam relied upon it. Therefore, the ignorant will follow the one who knows

high, and seen a lot of people who came to do praying.

By windows, inside the white rood there were beautiful windows shining with blue colours to the left. The shrine already was decorated by flowers bouquets of various colours, why you get down your eye, you will see the metal box where put on it a defining sign of sheikh Hussein al-Nobaghti revealing that he was appointed on ambassador after al- Ghilani until his death in 326 H.A. His ambassadorship lasted to 21 years.

There was no a particular character for Hussein bin Roh at the second messenger. He was one of attorney to the second ambassador, and

there not particular advantage for him as most of the narrations had unveiled it. But the will came to mentioned him. Sheikh al-Tousi said: Mohammed bin Othman, Abu-Jafar al-Omeri, may the Lord accept him, he has some persons that follow up his affairs, nearly about ten persons, and Abu-Alqasim was one of them.

All of them are closer than him. So in case he needs an errand, or a cause, it would be carried out by others, as not advantage for him. As time passed on, he was appointed. Some of the narrations which was written down by sheik Abu-Jafar about Hussein bin Roh, the sheikh narrated there was an accident took place with a person where the second ambassador that Imam may the lord speed up his salvation. It it's done that Hussein Bin Roh should be in the shoes of Sheikh Abu-Jafar al-Omeri, he said

Abu-Abdudullah bin Mohammed al-Madani he was the person who transfer the amounts of money to the second ambassador. So he ordered him to give it to al-Hussein bin Roh. But he stopped till he returned back to sheikh Abi-Jafar who said to his angrily "go immediately God have mercy on you, I have appointed Hussein bin Roh in my shoes and put him in my post, so I said "by the order of imam, so he told him go God may have mercy on you as I told you, so I have nothing but response. So I have order to be inherited to Hussein Bin Roh.

In other narration the second ambassador has assembled an elite and sheikhs of Shiite and told them "if an accident does take place and I die, my will be to Hussein bin Roh al-Nobaghti as I am ordered to put him in my place, so retuned and consult him after me and depend on him in your affairs.

The man who is in charge of the mosque, Abu- Teeba, 35 old said: well, the visitors in the mosque today unnumbered then was the regime fall. The shrine as well, was visited by people coming from various countries, in 1950 on some development done to the shrine and mosque in building by some of the virtuous merchants.

"In fact, we still in need for water supplies. We do not enough space for prayers; the heavy water pipes were changed with new. We try to by water cases to be supplied with water. We often buy barrels for water every three days in 25-30 thousand, as firemen unit help us some times

supply water."

He then added: "Also we have problems in electricity. We hope if we had better electricity supplies, so we can do some activities as reading Koran. We do not prefer to use a generator because it making a lot of noise in so crowded place. And the toilet sections were old. We have cellar in the mosque which can be used as a well-fitted library".

"This mosque state was not in like this in the past. During ex-regime time, they often brought on imams who himself should work as a disguised intelligent officer. People of that time, usually do not deal with him too much, and the mosque might be closed officially if the situation get worse like what happened in al-Ghilani mosque"

He said "al-Nobaghti is one of the messengers and Nowab particularly from the twelfth imam "God speed up his easiness, his well-known and greatness provide us of saying too much about him

"The scared rites in Ashura month, a forbidden and their trouble happened there, owner who. Heavy by one tried, the imam mosque tried to file a complaint to a court he was being threatened because that rich man was backed by a government figures".

Sheikh Mohammed said: Al-Ghilani was very known by his surname which nears to his selling al-Ghilani as he was trading it and it might mean Ghilani as friendly.

After his father had passed away, his son replaced him, as the test of Abi Mohammed by the imam himself as the sheik al-Sadooq said about the secret signature which was issued forth to of his late father was the same signature was issued to him. On the stamp it was written" we are for Allah"

And something was written about: As returning back to him as concession to his order and his fate, your father lived happily and die with respect. There was a delegation from Yemen to imam al-Askeri to pay him the money. So he ordered to bring Othman Bin Saeed and order him to receive the money and imam said, all of us Sir,

By the Lord, Othman is of best Shiite and you give us more information about his pot as he served you, and he is your attorney and justice upon the Money of the Lord and he said yes

he mosque could contain 300-100 persons. Some of the clouds began to cover the sun face, but its sight still in tense after day long walking to know the place of the fourth ambassador.



and witness that Othman bin Saeed al-Omeri is my messenger and his son Mohamed is my son Messenger of your Mahdi.

“ In 1960, before the mosque was enlarged as it was without minaret and still . Some virtuous men went to al-Najaf, trying to buy additional area close to the ambassador shrine, Jew woman house. They made a deal with her to buy her house, but she wanted to give it for them as a gift, but they refused and gave her its price.”

It is narrated some of the blessing acts for the shrine man. It is said that one of the workers who was working there. Fallen from a high level about twenty meters to the mosque ground, they thought he is dead defiantly, but as soon he touched the ground, he rose safe and sound while he cleaning dust off his clothes.

Fourth ambassador

Some of the clouds began to cover the sun face, but its sight still in tense after day long walking to know the place of the fourth ambassador. I entered into the bank it, some of the security men in circle clothes after ensuring my identity.

A tea seller guided me directly into my final destination. So I dashed in the shrine. Its site was in narrow road where a pushcart hardly would move. and the road led me into clothes market. On the right, there is seen a sign in it was written: Ali Bin Mohammed al-Samiri a grave inside inner small side chamber, put on it green piece of clothes, a visitor can see a small space between two small wall and outer side some of persons put a candle still burning.

Sadiq al-Qafaji, a merchant, 40, his shop was

next to the shrine. He then said: “This souk was established in 1991. There was so unattended room. Its walls were too black over dust amassed over years. Most people ignored who was buried under such grave or what was it here even.”

An old man was usually selling candies before it. My uncle Hajji Swadi used to say to me: My boy take care of such of this grave, here lied a quite good spiritual man. later I know It belonged to the fourth ambassador shrine.

He then said: “Once I made up my mind to go to the manager of religious shrines, his name was Nasir al-Nasir- member of the same tribe of the fallen dictator- but I could not get an agreement to rehabilitate the shrine going over shortage in funding and means, then later I've tried again, but this time the Manager told me angrily “go away and not let see your face again! ”

He then added: In 1990s there was a time when a man from al-Hoza (religious institute) of the al-Najaf came in here and insure and check-up the grave existed in 1997.

He then said: The man then gets an agreement from the ministry of al-Awqaf, but later someone threatened him if did not stop what he was doing, as governmental papers wrote about works done then.

He finally said: “Mr. Muadh left what he did uncompleted and left even Iraq, after he had some troubled by some influential men from that time we used to clean up the shrine, we and some of the merchants till it reached to thus shape. Shiite waqif directorate did not do any activity here to develop it.”

In the Full al-Najat book- ships of saving: "Mohammed bin Ali al-Samiri was ambassador for three years. He died in 329 and his shrine still stood, by mosque hand mosque of al-Qablani near al-Mustansiriya school, today is established with a dome!"

In a book of Nuzhat al-Haramayn, the author said" al-Samiri in Baghdad located at Haraj souk in a chamber with a large window to the left side in you of the souk.

Sheikh Mohammed Hariz said: I stood before his grave in 1967. It was a wooden box lied down, with three windows could be seen through the bazaar road with a sign in blue Kashan textile.

It once visited by one of the Sayid and he then said: we have visited al-Samiri shrine in Souk al-Saray. We did see the yard and its court but the mosque was demolished and but one new market, then was but the minaret.

Al-Samiri did ambassadorship works after sheikh Hussein Bin Rooh al-Nobaghti passed all the way and of no secrets. His friends and Baghdad sheiks narrated of the savant al-Qumi death at the exact hour and day and morning.

He was still in messenger Maqam for three years in the shoes of al-Nobaghti and in his passing away, the smallest occultation ended up, and the greatest occultation for imam Mahdi started in.

In few days before his death, al-Samiri showed in a signature for imam Mahdi, in it he does announce the ending up of the smallest occultation and the maqam oath of his passing a way and in it he rejected him of inheritance to any person to be in maqam the messenger.

It was not past seventeen days till news came announcing of his death as exactly as al-imam brought up. Certainly it was one of his miracles that he predicted to some people of his death in six days. O Bin Mohammed al-Samiri you will die in six days, so prepare your affairs, do not give will to anybody, so he will do you work, here the legend.

The most living story I have ever heard, you can listen to the people talking of the nearest signs of Imam al-Mahdi and his details were everybody memories on heart. Human beings could not relax without knowing the last days of humans in this planet.

Sheikh Mohammed Said this time: Most Mus-

lims do that, despite some who ignore it completely but they will confront with the Prophet narrations which are confirmed totally of the days and that man who would do all justice on this earth.

Islam prophet says in a narration "if there remains no more than a day from the earth life, God almighty will make up the day so long until a person from my progeny shall come out and rule" and another narration he said" the life in this world shall not cease to exist until a person from my progeny shall come and rule"

"Qiymat shall not be established until the earth is filled with cruelty and oppression. Then a person from my progeny shall appear and fill it with equity and justice"

And Imam Ali confirm this fact in his saying" Surely Allah will liberate the people by the hands of a person from our chase family. May my father be sacrifices for him; whose mother is the best amongst the ladies of paradise? Imam Ali in this statement referred to Mahdi, the awaited one.

Mahdi shall be manifested. He is someone who will revolt with his sword, straighten the crooked, conquer the earth and revive the forsaken aspects of religious obligations.

"My son, Allah shall create the chosen one. He will be named al "Mahdi, his face rosy and hair golden in colour. He will fill up the earth with justice and peace. In his very childhood he shall get separated from his mother and father, and from the view point of training, she shall be rare and matchless. He shall rule over the Muslim countries with utmost and security and time shall be favourable and friendly towards him....

Now I departed the place while I was reflecting in words I have been told: At the promised day, the sky will pour in its rains and trees give its fruits and earth its palms and decorates for it people and wild animals will live in peace and it will feed so well on earth like domestic animals, there was no hate in the people hearts, what beautiful world will be!!

# Dur- Kurigalzu still fights back

By Mufeed Waheed Al-Safi

**Jinan Fadhil Mohammed, the Iraqi archeologist, now bent her head out a little, from the outer room in her house, which was built at the middle of Akerkoof site , she was looking to the lucent star in the sky, that really made out, a magical scene over the ziggurat top, which definitely dated back to 1345 B.C. That scene she liked so much, wondering every time she looked at , albeit she had seen before such pictures in old clay carvings, " Those people who build up such a city , certainly were true dreamers!!**

Jinan Fadhil is really a remarkable woman. She graduated from Art college- archaeological department in 1986. Jinan in her forties, settled down in this area, with her eight member's family in solitary houses at the middle this old city. The house belonged to the general association for folklore and archaeology.

Her husband, who also, a graduated from technology institute, now works on at Abu-Ghraib souk, selling food staff. They are all settled down in this large house with low fence, overlooking on all city, as if it was specifically built for this purpose.

During winter days, rain was pouring dogs and cats. It would wash out the craved history, upon the kassite city which runs deeply in very old times. Of a history which really extended to

more than thousand years. It is an attempt to melt out that clay mass which beat up the time and still.

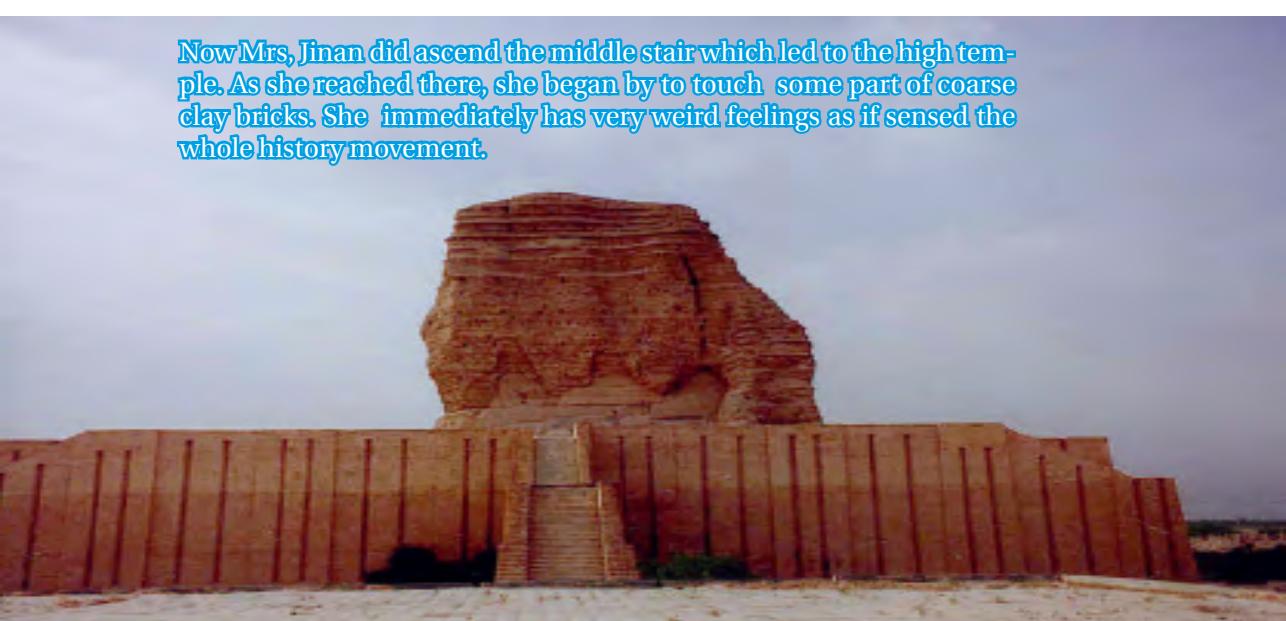
After the rain stopping completely, Mrs Jinan would go out to get a tour round the city, watching how the ziggurat top dried up soon and humid disappeared soon before other parts what a weird phenomenon.

It might owe to particularly numerous holes that penetrating through the ziggurat, the high temple, after air would pass through these holes, so it would dry it up sooner,

What a great intelligence they have? She began to say that as moving around the historical city. That habit she never left out, trying to forget her some routine She was reflecting what she did deal with in this old city.

Now she looked at the lofty ziggurat, and to

**Now Mrs, Jinan did ascend the middle stair which led to the high temple. As she reached there, she began by to touch some part of coarse clay bricks. She immediately has very weird feelings as if sensed the whole history movement.**



the high temple and the graded edifice. That clay mass was built by clay bricks, how it survived during all these years. The ziggurat secrets till now did not be unveiled. Even an Italian institute to which some parts, of which built were sent to. In order to test and know what the clay mixture consists of. The result was a failure. It definitely had a secret formula of humid clay and reed and animal hair.

Later she did ascend the middle stair which led to a high temple. As she reached there, she began by to touch some part of the coarse clay bricks. She immediately had very weird feelings as if sensed the whole history movement.

She glanced a careful look at the top which rising over the meadow nearly 57 meters it may be its origin level more than that. Its layers number

there , she found out the stairs, the middle stair and the side stairs were built strongly and she asked about the thought that made those people used such principles of strengthen the clay layers with reeds and ropes, mixed with tar. In this way they kept up the construction solid and stable and confront the time effect.

She touched upon her first days and how an official letter send to her in 1993, identified that she had to settle down nearby the greatest ziggurat in Iraq in a location lied upon at outskirts of Baghdad over 20 kilometres.

From a far distance now she was looking into the city walls which were built with bricks was established over a rocky lime layer on the old Akerkoof marsh edge. Its land was penetrated by a river from the north to the south. It took

During winter days when rain was pouring dogs and cats, it would wash out the craved history , upon the kassite city which run deeply in very old times.

exactly nobody knows, it might be three or seven as it in the well-known Babel tower, did the Babylonia people want to reach to the sky and a curse did happened to them.

It was built up in the form of bricks row, layers of reeds lied on in the building between eight and nine rows. There were numerous cubic holes breaking the whole building in. the base of the temple was closed from outside of bricks. These bricks had beautifully architecture decoration shape in and out in all its four façades.

At the middle of the southern dimension,

its water from Euphrates. It is named of Inleel channel. It may the same river of Abu-Ghraib.

She has a fear as she was looking at the huge breach in the ziggurat which its marks began to be seen next to the huge bench.

In pain she was watching the great ignorance which the historical city suffered too. She knew she had uneasy burden upon her shoulder, to keep up everything safe and sound in this city. How could she do that? But the things not always sail in quite water. Some have stolen the interlocked fence which used to encircle the

city of all its parts. She feared that would kick off a new problems she could be confronted

While the gardens which have to give beautiful shape to the city atmosphere now began to withered and die. There was a wave of that made some old papers flew over, something stuck to her black dress, she pick it up it was old and various brown cartoons which the visitors used to carry on with them.

Now she smiled with herself. All this turned to be disappeared. Now people would not come here again. Even the old city was not being safe now. Most of the time she got pissed off of the American soldiers who came with their heavy military vehicles rushed in every time, searching for insurgents who might hide somewhere.

In the past there were celebrations and joyful parties would never stopped of this city at any occasion. These parties were the sole consolation for their city. But now nobody would dare to came at such circumstances, even those who had projects which that should take a per-

**It was named after the kassite king (Kurigalzu the first) and what remains of the kassite civilization was a ziggurat one of the main temples. There was a huge fence circulated it and beyond the fence at the sides of the east are to the ziggurat was a lake.**



mission from her, in order to give them official persimmons on the agricultural territories.

At the top she looked to her house, her small kid was stood alone at the outer door of their house, she decide to go to him.

At another place, not too far from al-Alawi garage, at Baghdad centre, you can see the large building. Really it holds very great importance to the whole world. It's the Iraqi famous museum for archaeology.

After you would enter the gate, some guards would search you up. Then you would entered

into the place, you might not be as happy as it not so fit to all its great importance. After you get inside, you will discover the location overwhelmed with employees, and then you take your way into the excavations and investigation office.

Mr Abdul-Hameed Aghar, general assistant of this office said: "When he listened carefully to the questions directed to him, he focused on a little and started showing his information, saying:

"Akerkoof Ziggurat is really one of important archaeological sites in Iraq. It was established nearly circa 15 century A.D. It is located about 15 kilometres east of Baghdad from Abu-Ghraib city. It is still stood presently as this area was representing the capital of kassite Empire which had dominated the world circa four and half century.

It was named after the kassite king (Kurigalzu the first) and what remains of kassite civilization was a ziggurat as one of its main temples.

There was a huge fence circulated the area.

Akerkoof ziggurat is represented the largest tower ever existed at our present time. Its height reached to 57 meters in cubic base. It is said that height was 70 meters with three stairs. Most of the western travellers thought it representing the remains of the famous Babylon tower. But this is wrong in my opinion.

The maintaining operation was carried out on it. So, its base was coated with heated bricks. Through delegate investigation to the stood ziggurat sites, we can know to the way of Mesopotamia construction. As it was laid amid the horizontal layers of the brown bricks several reversed layers of reeds plunged with cement. It is built like iron pipes.

Now Mr Abdul-Hameed gave some glimpse on the ex-political situation that affected so much the nature of works in archaeological sites.

"Truly the hard circumstances Iraqi passed in have really added up more ignorance toward the Dur-Kurigalzu city situation. But despite all that an optimistic really this city will rise again, and ministry of culture has prepared an ambi-

They gained control of Babylonia after the Hittite sack of the city in 1595 BC (i.e. 1531 BC per the short chronology), and established a dynasty based in Dur-Kurigalzu. The Kassite were members of a small military aristocracy but were efficient rulers and not locally unpopular, and their 500-year reign laid an essential groundwork for the development of subsequent Babylonian culture.



tious plan to develop.

Mr. Abdul-Hameed had been working in Ak-erkoof for long years. And he knew how in the last two years, the ignorance has doubled more and that everyone knows.

He now obliged to silence a little and then said: "As for your question about the kassite. People of ancient Near East, controlled Babylonia after the fall of the Old Babylonian Empire c. 1531 BC and until 1155 BC.

Herodotus, a famous historian, was almost certainly referring to Kassite when he described "Asiatic Ethiopians" in the Persian army that invaded Greece in 492 BC. Herodotus was presumably repeating an account that had used the name "Cush", or something similar, to describe the Kassite; the similar name "Kush" was also, purely by coincidence, a name for Ethiopia

They gained control of Babylonia after the Hittite sack of the city in 1595 BC (i.e. 1531 BC per the short chronology), and established a dynasty based in Dur-Kurigalzu. The Kassite were members of a small military aristocracy but were efficient rulers and not locally unpopular, and their 500-year reign laid an essential groundwork for the development of subsequent Babylonian culture. The horse, which the Kassite worshipped, first came into use in Babylonia at this time.

As there settled down a factor might more effective than humid on the old clay pieces. It was ex-regime men who did trespass on greater parts related to the city as they tuned into their

framers, for play and do what they like.

The Kassite kings maintained control of their realm, through a network of provinces administered by governors. Almost equal with the royal cities of Babylon and Dur-Kurigalzu, the revived city of Nippur was the most important provincial centre.

The formerly great city, had been virtually abandoned circa in 1730 BC, was rebuilt in the Kassite period, with temples meticulously rebuilt on their old foundations. In fact, under the Kassite government, the governor of Nippur took the Sumerian-derived title of Guennakku, ruled as a sort of secondary and lesser king. The prestige of Nippur was enough for a series of 13th century BC Kassite kings to re-assume the title 'governor of Nippur' for them.

He did know the more the state concern on nay thing, the more of and demolishing it would be under. Some of the official's relatives would show off with their fancy cars inside the historical city, and the visitors would be annoyed of these acts.

In spite of the fact that some of kassite people took Babylonian names, they retained their traditional clan and tribal structure, in contrast to the smaller family unit of the Babylonians. They were proud of their affiliation with their tribal houses, rather than their own fathers, preserved their customs.

Then the last disaster came as Saddam brother's Watban did cut off greater parts of the east and north pats in the city. They were like evil

worms that eat up everything. He did not care of how important this city was and in vain our efforts to keeping up its historical features and tourism. For them it was just an absurd talk as if you talk to a hand

Sabotage went on in the city and made it up in emergency and war time, to become as a stock for Iraqi military instrument weapons and missiles.

What a genius idea!! It emerged again, from now where they kept a huge tanks they called it strategic store in this place to keep up oil and benzene and the city turned to be a war zone.

A little museum had been established by the archaeological office at Akerkoof site. It was closed to no deadline. It was used to contain number of explored antiques of various eras, thus would approve it was inhabited till the Abbasid era, as it did discover glass and meal vases which related to these eras,

An old resource showed the old city in Islamic time. It was once Al-Hajaj, the savage leader, told by one of his entourage "had you, lord if you could turn out of this ominous village name" Akerkoof, and al-Hajaj said: do you frighten of this? I swore I would not go to fight my enemy but though it, it's ominous will be on our enemy. And the same name has been mentioned by Abu Nowadays where he said "hours took us though Akerkoof as in morning dawned.

Undoubtedly, this city was inhibited though the last Islamic era. Some of historian resources

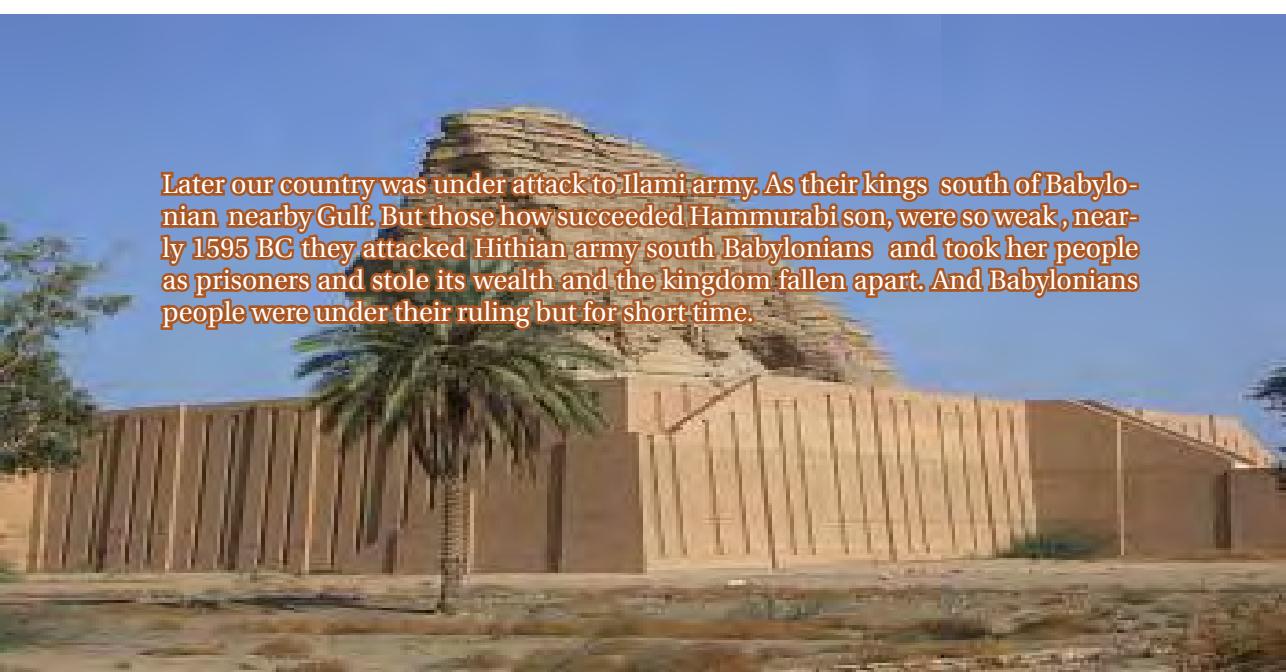
refereed Isa River to the same river of Abu-Ghraib is still running nearby its land. People of that time they thought it was haunted al-Nimrud had live on.

The late Professor Taha Baqir, was author of the great book (Introduction in the Iraqi civilization history) that man really suffered of deep oblivion in modern time. It is he who has find out the fifth temple which had been circulated the huge rectangular settee which rose over the ground nearly three meters. And he also did find out the front ziggurat stair.

Mr Abdul-Hameed said: Under Saddam Regime sabotage was very clear. Till now it not was lighted on most of its sides. No one would know, some hesitate to do that. For example simply the dictator initial letters which referred to his name S. H engraved on the clay pieces at most of archaeological locations throughout Iraq. What greatness manic which pushed him up to put on his name at these sites, its ideas of greatness.

At ziggurat, bricks were used in rebuilding it was sabotage the scene, to the routine and administrative corruption that do a lot. Official would out on deadline short to projects unfitted with work quantity degree, all they care of is to please those who were over them, so you can see the modern bricks in its scenes unfitted to those of old clay bricks or the sunned heated bricks which retuned back to old times. Even they did not make suitable gutters to walls in

Later our country was under attack to Ilami army. As their kings south of Babylonian nearby Gulf. But those who succeeded Hammurabi son, were so weak, nearly 1595 BC they attacked Hithian army south Babylonians and took her people as prisoners and stole its wealth and the kingdom fallen apart. And Babylonians people were under their ruling but for short time.

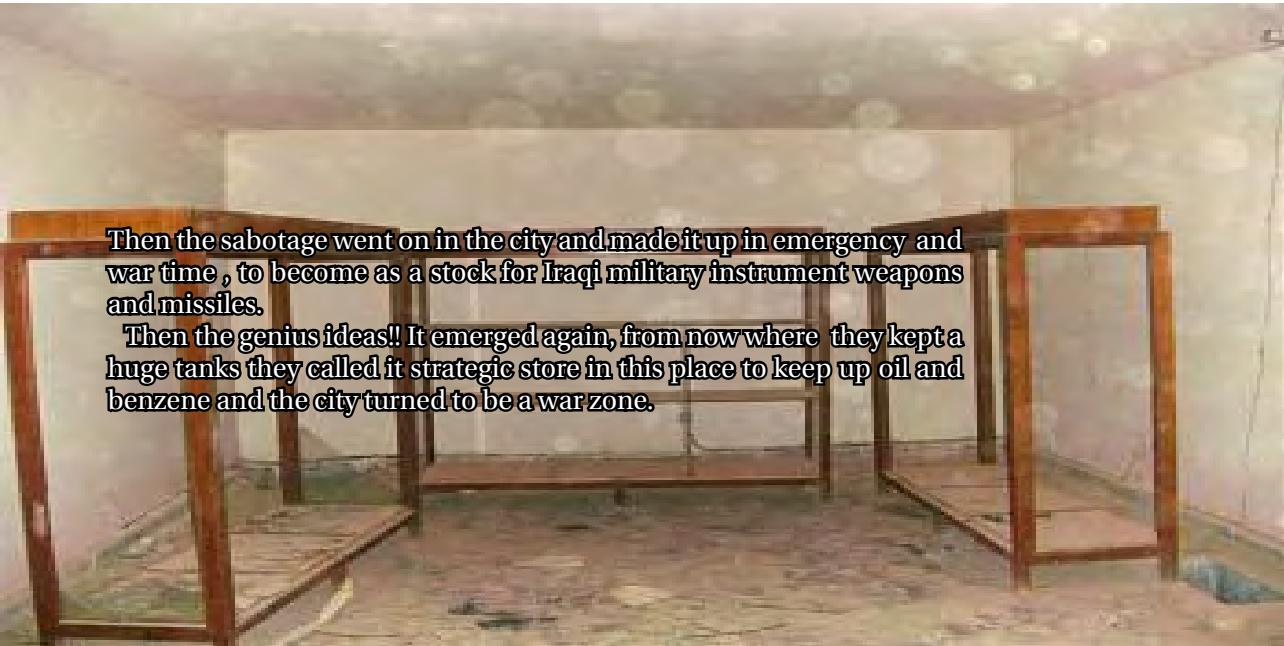


modern adaptation.

The operation of making bricks and dwelling with hay and reed and let it dry with special oven and in huge amounts. That kinds of bricks

in which it was found a lot of findings and clay pieces which dated that era.

The Kassite were a people of the ancient Near



Then the sabotage went on in the city and made it up in emergency and war time , to become as a stock for Iraqi military instrument weapons and missiles.

Then the genius ideas!! It emerged again, from now where they kept a huge tanks they called it strategic store in this place to keep up oil and benzene and the city turned to be a war zone.

need period of time which might count to years, but who could perform such an order

Despite all troubles and difficulties her family face off she has to keep up her role in being the keeper of the old Ziggurat of Akerkoof. Later our country was under attack to Ilami army. Their kings took south of Babylonian nearby Gulf. But those who succeeded Hammurabi son, were so weak, nearly 1595 BC they attacked Haitian army south Babylonians and took her people as prisoners and stole its wealth and the kingdom fallen apart. And Babylonians people were under their ruling but for short time. Kassite might use the Sumerian language themselves. Researchers say their language did not belong to India-Europe

The excavator looked down the low levels of the temple walls. The work on it at 1969 was carried out normally and the scene was OK. But in the 19790 the work was double more and it's was allotted to more amount of money. The fifth temples had been rehabilitated. But during 1991 the financial allotment grow less and lesser, till the work kept on but Abu-Shijar are

East, who controlled Babylonia after the fall of the Old Babylonian Empire c. 1531 BC and until 1155 BC (short chronology). They gained control of Babylonia after the Hittite sack of the city in 1595 BC (i.e. 1531 BC per the short chronology), and established a dynasty based in Dur-Kurigalzu. The Kassite were members of a small military aristocracy but were efficient rulers and not locally unpopular, and their 500-year reign laid an essential groundwork for the development of subsequent Babylonian culture. The horse, which the Kassite worshipped, first came into use in Babylonia at this time.

Also he gave details in his words as saying: king Kindahs (1665-1680) who was one of the sixty three kings who rule on the land, that king began to advance toward the white castle side, then he wondered around his castle which contained rectangular rooms more. There were three rooms on each side. And a passage circulated on both sides with roofed small room.

Mr Hameed still continued his short journey

in history and said: some departments in this building controlled on the whole castle. Ans it formed the level to the bastions like towers. She has imagined it as if the kassite women who still working in the eastern sides of the castle, that used to the same affair, household. Yes there was still ambiguous thing circulated of this castle, as there was less exaction carried on yet.

Mr Ahmed al-Asadi, an archaeological scholar, said: "I was such a new employee in the ministry of information and I have a sister who worked as a writer in the Iraqi museum. She said it was a big lie. Most of valuable thing have been stolen by the regime himself specifically the real and valuable things which started off since thirty years!"

Before USA occupation, just before one month or two, all valuable things were disappeared. Later they accused the riff-raff people of looting it, I did not ignore that some illiterate people shared of attacking Iraqi archaeological museum, but that was a silly play.

Later Mrs Jinan headed to hill Asmer, it area reached to seven thousand cubic meters long, its height five meters. It had been found on its soil, parts of broken pottery. And on the second tell Asmer that has five thousand cubic meters long and five meters high. Through it there flat grounds encircled around with garden

and house to residents. It also surrounded with concrete pillars, connected with the Ziggurat site. And Between them was separated of Great River still unexplored. And tell al-Faras the first, which laid in Ibidem marsh al-pasha its area of one measure of land and its high 2-25- meter circulated by agriculture areas.

On the ground there were large temples circulated by a lot number of chambers and passagess. She has imagined as if she see those people who practicing worshipping god Inail and his wife Nineel, the god of atmosphere and fogs for the Sumerian people.

How long she could resist being here isolated from all others, her daughters get matured. She had to deal with all their new problems.

Mrs Jinan liked so much to wander at the temple of the great master. Over there the rites and word religious had been held. There came the religious man the potent and those who practicing sacrifices and musician and magic and .... expounders and women who devoted to serve the gods.

Now she cleared always of the ziggurat site and head into the west, to the hills where far about one thousand meter of the ziggurat temple. It Abu-Shiajr hill, as local people named it and for it lied upon between thick garden and trees. She reached to the last grade in that long stairs, she exposed some of her historical information

The danger is not limited here , how many times these American soldiers who deliberately stole some Sumerian bricks with their knives, they said it is souvenir, how fool they are , she could not stop them doing such a horrible deeds.



It is her uplifted nearly seven meters. It has been found out some archaeological findings, plates, and vases and clay pieces and others.. Quarter of this area had been discovered and they might be another temple.

One of the hidden things that may in the future be unveiled. That a lot of artefacts even the electric machine were hidden in the houses of employees. The ex-regime prepared for such a moment.

Mrs. Jinan was looking into the castle where it is though the kassite kings had built before anything, than they built the temples and ziggurat as it needs more time.

For sacrifices it was consisted of animals and agricultural corps ad winter and perfumes. The celebrations were holding every month. But the most important celebration usually was held at the bagging of every New Year and the sacred marriage celebrations and festival of king crowned.

Now she looked at temple walls which aged for more than thousands years. Besides its important role in worship, it presented the ministry of trade, in our modern language, for the peasants at the time were stocking what had been spared of corps and cereals. And it also represents a social location.

There were settees of sacrifices which would be submitted to the gods without silo and the god statues were based upon the sett between ziggurat and temple. Now she looked to the settee which covered with bricks and decorated inside and outside between the ziggurat and temple..

The archaeologist through down the dust which she pressed in with her hands on the ground and said Kassite had reached on to Mesopotamia during Hammurabi son ( Samso-ilona) who could back them off, but they success at last through trade specially houses which they knew by it. They were mountain people who came by Europe -Indians areas.

At these days our situation to live in such a solitary residence would be so hard. My daughter next year will be in her first year college. Every time I wake up to prepare breakfast for my family, all left but me and my small kid Jamal, who play around by himself!!

She already cried out on a sheep flock keeper who wanted to pass through the city, shouted angrily on him to move out. They really pissed

her off always, all the time they send off their flocks inside the green parts of the city. They did not get it, they have not right in doing so.

As she passed by between the huge settee and the temple, she was shocked extremely. There were some searches on the old walls that had been sabotage. There were four bricks written in Sumerian line. That goy in dropped disaster. Could she stop this insane?

The danger is not limited here , how many times these American soldiers who deliberately stole some Sumerian bricks with their knives, they said it is souvenir, how fool they are , she could not stop them doing such a horrible deeds.

Later she was hoping Akerkoof days would come again where school travels would not stop ever. Buses would come around from all parts of Baghdad, kids boys and girls with their school teachers they are visiting the clay stair, feel happy as they watching these old tracks and their shouts would give a life to these old sites.

Old silence enfolded over everywhere in Akerkoof, the huge mass of clay, the grim atmosphere would give a worried impressions around there. The sky clouded but its fog was moving stealthily.

Mrs Jinan has stated her morning tour around the antique sites. She left her boy sleeping in his bedroom.

“At my first of days of having this job, I thought I was so lucky to work as archaeologist, in such extraordinary place. But I have now new problems concerning me and my family.

That what she hoped always. The new generation could appreciate the importance of history and they love it not to impose on them. After some minutes her small boy said “Mother look her over there. There is a car coming to the Ziggurat road She could not believe her eyes. A school bus arrived with the visitors of boys and girls now she hurried up to meet them. ■■■

# A Story of an Iraqi Church

By Mufeed Waheed Al-Safi

**Father Nadhir in his chic black frock stepped in quietly on the right corner, now he started up to show in the parts of his church enthusiastically. But, he acknowledged preferring this interview He wished to be done after the last touches of the church' rehabilitation finished. The church is located at al-Nasara neighborhood, near by the great market of al-Shurja. As I pinned in inside I have seen behind the great gate of the old and high walls, there were a lot of huge boxes were put down, full of new marble bricks. Apparently it were lied down lately**

Father Nadhir approached the front entrance, began to read a sign of the basic marble. The sentence had been written on "Um al-Ahzan" (Mary mother of sorrows church):

"This is my word to you; love each other as I love you". This church had been established in 1843.

After giving a nice Iraqi welcome, he directly led me into a room in the second floor. Presently I realized the work of rehabilitation in this church was carrying on leg and arm.

At his room which was small and cosy one, I spotted some beautiful paintings of Jesus and Maria, I listened to Father Nadhir confident tone as he started to identify the history of his church: "The church , Mary mother of sorrows, You are in, was not so much totally in this shape, as it was before .

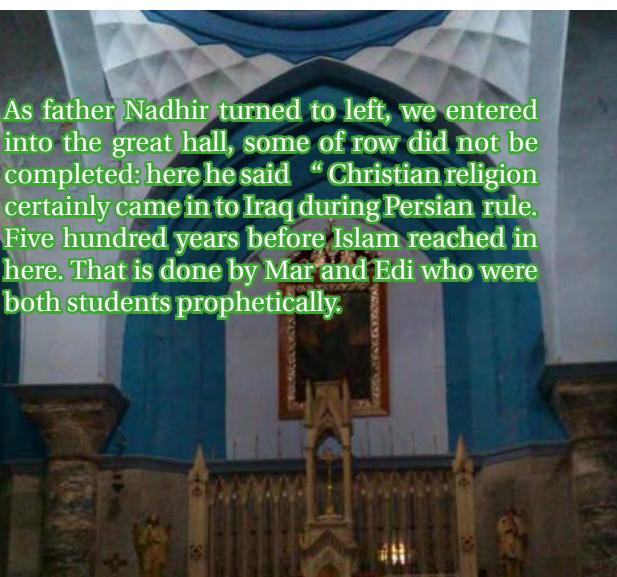
It was just a small church built of wood, lat-

er it had been broken down and enlarged as it outnumbered of the prayers in it. Then it was enlarged for the second time, after nearly next were being purchased so on till it was being rehabilitated for five times.

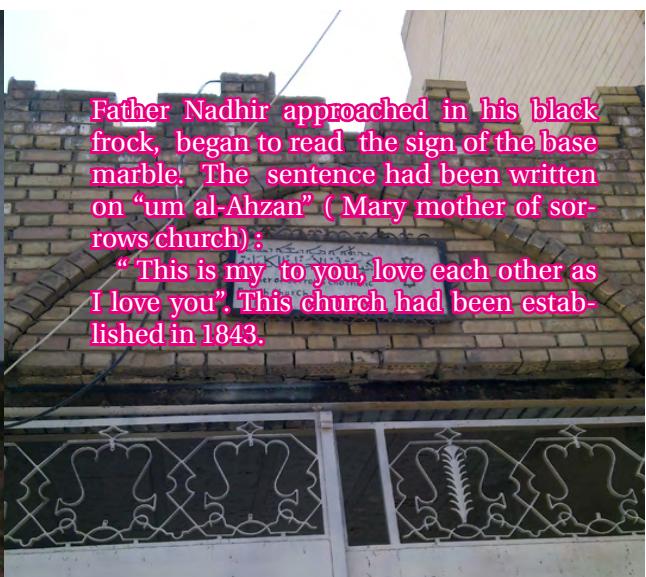
Father Nadhir now was looking through the small coloured window as if he was trying to recite the long history:

This cathedral or church was opened up in 1843. It was found out to be a pride to Chaldean church in Baghdad, and was built in Gothic style which is distinguished with splendour. Our church age totalled now to 107 years, during this period then a lot of change were taken place to it.

In his narration while we check up and made a short tour round the church corners. About which Father Nadhir accepted quickly. As we getting down the wooden stairs he said: "This



As father Nadhir turned to left, we entered into the great hall, some of row did not be completed: here he said " Christian religion certainly came in to Iraq during Persian rule. Five hundred years before Islam reached in here. That is done by Mar and Edi who were both students prophetically.



Father Nadhir approached in his black frock, began to read the sign of the base marble. The sentence had been written on "um al-Ahzan" ( Mary mother of sorrows church):

" This is my word to you, love each other as I love you". This church had been established in 1843.

church still is the eye witness to the nation and country days. It has a long history and very important for them .Many patriarchies had hands in its rehabilitation the first patriarch who built lay to rest over here. The period of its building spanned on five or six years.

As we descended we have huge inner opened sky yard, which very similar to the Baghdadi style of building, with numerous rooms, now he was saying "Before its inauguration by few months, the first patriarch passed always so he laid to rest in another church and after being opened up its corps retuned back and lied down in peace.

Father Nadhir confirmed in his saying: "Traditionally there was a custom of built on Churches upon some holy bones of holy and sacred and

breaks. The patriarchy chair in it represent the higher religiously authority Now father Nadhir went on giving some details on the Christian history in Mesopotamia.

As father Nadhir turned to left, we entered into the great hall; some of row did not be completed: here he said "Christian religion certainly came in to Iraq during Persian rule. Five hundred years before Islam reached in here. That is done by mar and Edi who were both students prophetically. The word on Christ prophecy went on. They reached on through south of Turkey upon their hands there were a lot of miracle appeared.

Now he opened some pages of history and said: "At the time a Persian king, heard of their miracles, who ruling over in Taq Caesar. Whose

daughter was so sick, so he ordered soon his servants to fetch them, bring on mar who was a doctor in boy and soul, with the blessing of God, he was able to heal the shah daughter let him live in his court houses, so he lived on there, nearly in 100 D.C. the first church was named ( Kukha) referred to huts which the period lived still its track to be seen at the east shore of Tigris river.

Father Nadir chose a seat in the long hall and said "Now that church location turned to be the right as the river changed its course. It is located nearer to Saliq city or Salmanbak still its track existed currently at a site called Tel omer. It is well known to archaeologist later Christianity spread throughout Iraq, every corner with temples disturbed.

As we lived on included Persian Empire, Christians believers kept on their privacy who distinguished them firm Christians who lived with Romanian empire, yes we may give them a name of eastern church owning to separate from orthodox east church in Russia , Belgium, Greece and Egypt.

Father Nadhir went on narrating Christian history in Iraq and said calmly: Church in Iraq named Easter church or Nestorian church named after priest Nestor who lived in a period

Father Nadhir now began to turn over so unhappy pages in eastern Christian history and he said : Our church had for long time come a long with Christians lives from the begging of the twenty century.



treasure were brought in from the holy territory in Rome, officially acknowledged in church. Father Nadhir Hinna Dik 33 old year. He was born in al-Mosul, now he was looking around confidently to the wide church corners.

"The church lived on in blessing with prayers of all these people to this day upon the sound people passed away. Undoubtedly for this church a sacred.. in the people hearts who are thirsty to the God. Spiritually of this side it carries on the holy figures bone and their prayers

nearly 350-400 D.C. He was a student to Theodorus.

In 1899 Catholicism came in to Iraq, al-Karmaleen, the barefooted, through Basra port and from there they were preaching for Catholicism. In al-Umara province there was built a church. It also named as Mary the mother of sorrows, and in Basra province there was another church in the same name. Although Catholicism had been came in to Iraq before this time, as it retuned back to 1400 years, But it took its the final shape by the hands of al-Karmaleen fathers.

Father Nadhir said as he was looking at the statue of the lady: " In 1450 D.C. one of the church patrons wanted to distinguish his Nestorian church of Chaldean church which is named by Iraqis during Babylonian time. Those people were they concerned so much with astronomy. So he had taken the name from a story in the Bible.

Father Nadhir now recite the famous story in the Bible which telling of three Chaldean men from the east who travelled to Bait Laham, just to ask about of new born of a new king during the time of Romanian ruler, Hiradus. At that event they said they had seen a star from the east.

At this time , Father Nadir certifying tone showed the origin of the Jesus followers in Iraq: By this our name in liked up to these three sacred men. Thus, we came in from the east to pray for Jesus. All this is documented in a letter sent to the Great seal in 19450, when He was in Athena and he admitted of them and registered it.

At this time I asked Father Nadir to go on to other sites;

Father Nadir now began to turn over so unhappy pages in eastern Christian history and he said: Our church had for long time mixed with Christians lives from the beginning of the twenty century.

The time was unforgettable of genocides which committed by Ottoman who lost war against Russia in 1910. All that was done because Russia was Christian and Armenians and Chaldean were Christian too.

At this time Father's tone coloured with some sadness as he go on in his words: "The Othman king wanted to murder all those people. Therefore, he started with Armenians and ended up

with us.

"Historians mentioned that Ottoman army had slaughtered Christian's people of eight parishes of villages belonged religiously to Chaldean and Nestorian church. They also confiscated their territories.

Now, Father Nadhir rose and stepped in before the temple, where the beautiful statue of Mary and her son Jesus, and he murmured with himself some praying, for few minutes. Later he retuned back to his seat and said: So, all Christians in these lands fled to the next areas in north of Iraq and Iran and Syria and Balkan countries and to Europe. And Christian families used to lie down their kids in Kalak (circular boat) at Tigris just to have them from inevitable death.

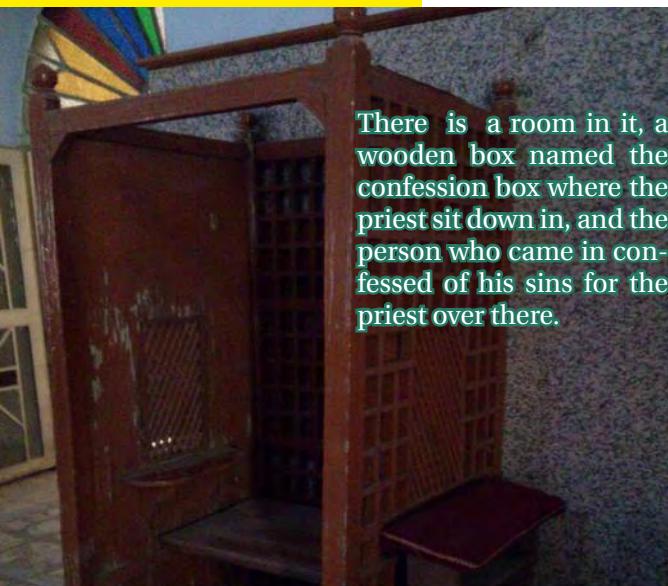
"Some of Muslim families brought up Christians kids with their children. There were a lot of Samaritan people amid them and for this Christians do celebrate on 15/8 at the holy virgin day. These Armenian will go on to the virgin church here in al-Maydan area as she gave hand during the misery days.

As we getting out into a space out of the alter hall we have seen some workers and young man playing with small football, and that did not bother Father Nadhir, trying to ease up the horrible events he narrated so he said:

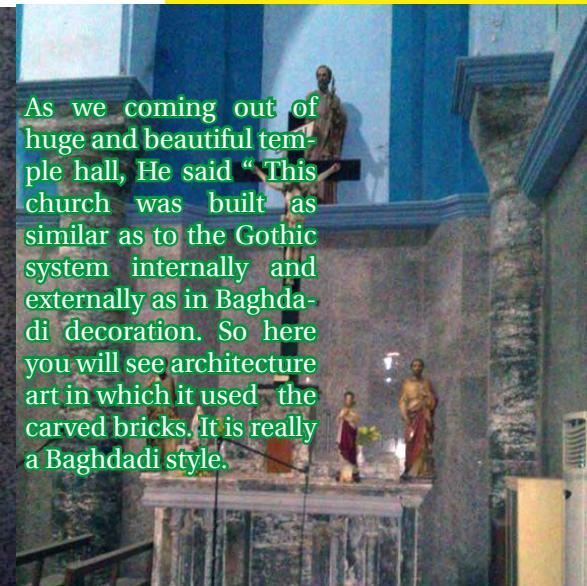
"To our church there Muslim women came in nearly every day when they want to ask the Virgin Lady for help. So they ask God by her intercession.

"I am going on to tell you an event that really took place before me personally. There was a station for Virgin Lady at the church yard. That place had an accident of fire at a part of its base. Due someone left a candle there, after lifting the statue in order make some decoration over there. I have seen behind a pile of letters, which written for the Lady by Muslim women, some of these letters were thanks letters. One of these letters was of a woman waiting for her chance to get married, but it did by Mary intercession

" Father Nadhir now exchanged some words with a young man who approached to him, though. Then we return back to temple. Here he said: Some Muslim used to spread on bread for blessing at its door as they gave omen. Surely they are poor and simple people but they have great faith. So God will look at them.



There is a room in it, a wooden box named the confession box where the priest sit down in, and the person who came in confessed of his sins for the priest over there.



As we coming out of huge and beautiful temple hall, He said "This church was built as similar as to the Gothic system internally and externally as in Baghdadi decoration. So here you will see architecture art in which it used the carved bricks. It is really a Baghdadi style."

"During 1950s and 1960s, this region was given a name of al-Nasara neighbourhood, as immigration from rural lands into urban so in this are several churches were built and number seven refers to catholic church and on the left there catholic Syrian and church and Latin church. So you find five churches on one street.

Father Nadhir began to make a new round in other parts and said " At festival days some believers may vow to visit the seventh churches. Particularly on pains Friday of parish in visits to Christians Jesus grave.

As we coming out of huge and beautiful temple hall, He said "This church was built as similar as to the Gothic system internally and externally as in Baghdadi decoration. So here you will see architecture art in which it used the carved bricks. It is really a Baghdadi style.

Father Nadhir stopped before a high decorated wall and said:" here you can see one the art of marble pillars and ceilings established with wood, both ways are used in Mosul.

Father Nadir pointed out at the second storey and said

"Right over there, the patriarch with attendants of priests and fathers were living together. In that house there eighteen priests with their head. Now they turned to be bishops and masters in theology. And some of them became virtuous and sacred.

Now he directed his speech to me and said;" "you can imagine how this place was overwhelmed with prayers and spirituality and worshipping to The Lord. In place this there lived

three patriarchs. Later they moved to live in mother Theresa church in al-Sinak area. Presently Father Nadir beamed as he said "Now I am living alone by myself"

Father looked at the Baghdadi decoration and portico and carpentry, and then he shifted his eye to crosses and ornaments, now he said: "Some sorts of these may date to the first period time of its building. Some parts rehabilitated over and over. Here you can see the Baghdadi zingeer, or the eighth sat.

Presently he pointed out to several old marks of humid and said "from these marks you can know the church had been drowned by water leak over the church level of building became lower than its roundabout. So, there were made a lot of rehabilitations to at the time of patriarch Police Shikho in 1966.

Suddenly Father Nadir cell phone rang, so he pardoned from me to make a contact with. But he talked with in different language I did not hear before. After few minutes and complete his phone I asked him what language he used, thus he said: with a smile: well, my friend, actually I have talked in Syrian language. This language is in the past considered as the first language in Iraq and in the eastern world. If we analyse the languages, it will be as following:

" First of all, the Sumerian language, then Acadian,

The Acadian language is the mother of Armenian language. And from the Armenian modern language is born The Nabtian language. And from the later born the Arabic, and Armenian,

and Syrian and Hebrew languages

"The language I presently talked with is the modern Syrian. Yes, it is the mother language for Christian's people. Despite most of them would not talk with it. They often talk in the language of the region they live in. Thus their mother language has disappeared little by little. But one could see some marks of it in their way of conversations or accents.

Father Nadhir did give more information about the languages and said: "most of the Christians who live in their own villages speak the Syrian language fluently. it is the language of Jesus. And the Arabic language is considered as a sister to the Syrian language. For example in Aramaic language, there is a word Shamish and in Acadian Shamish, in the same root.

Now Father Nadhir retuned back to the temple and there he appointed out to the rear side and

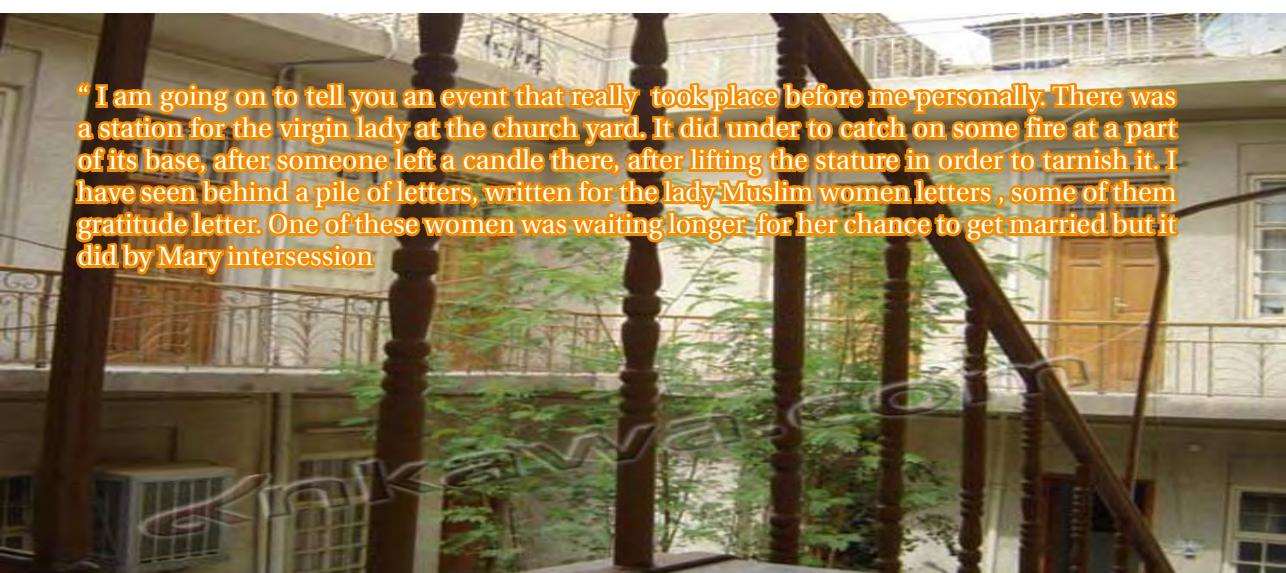
Father Nadhir gave more information in his words and said: Churches in Baghdad are named "khornat in plural. And a Khorna is in Arabic means the people who are practicing prayer.

Later Father Nadhir referred to most problematic issue the Christian community suffered from; "The active priest can do a large effect in his area. It doesn't matter either he cared for the younger or elder.

Either in his parish lives poor people or not. A priest should look after them. Some churches usually concentrate in its care on women, so you will find a lot of women go on there. Some churches have large numbers of believers. Some churches you'll in it find a lot of religious activity, and vice versa.

Father Nadhir added very important note and he said: "if we want to know why we call

**"I am going on to tell you an event that really took place before me personally. There was a station for the virgin lady at the church yard. It did under to catch on some fire at a part of its base, after someone left a candle there, after lifting the stature in order to tarnish it. I have seen behind a pile of letters, written for the lady Muslim women letters , some of them gratitude letter. One of these women was waiting longer for her chance to get married but it did by Mary intercession**



said: " from this side over there, usually come in the priests and patriarchs. So, this door is called the kingly door because it is Jesus door.

There is a barrier in seats which usually separated men from women. This is normal in east-erners' customs.

Then Father Nadhir talked about a pillar which linked with a stair escalator to ascending. he said about :"Here you see the podium which remind us of the century beginning and the way in which a speaker who staged the site, in order to let his voice be heard by listeners.

a church as distinguished, we can say. What is the church we believe in? As a matter of fact, we christens believe in a church. Is it because as it has sacred rocks? Because The Lord is Most Holy. Truly every church is a sacred by the name of the Lord. And every church is important.

At this moment, I tried to correct my question, and asked what are the churches Christians go on more than others, so he said; "That really depends on believers number, you may find in Bab al-Sharqi a small church, contained just a small room , but it was built early in the twen-

ty century beginning. This church is considered quite important church, but its region residents are not large in number. They might not more than twenty persons.

"And we have for another example the church of Ifram, behind Buratha mosque, with area four plus five meters. This church used to pray in than 700 hundred families, now turned to be just thirty families, and still do pray in it. And in the church of ascending, there we have four thousand Christian families"

Father Nadhir came to stress again as he said: "Yes, some of these churches have visiting sites, like the visiting site of Lady Virgin in Maskinta such as this church, Mary the mother of sorrows. In here the Christians live and it becomes part of them.

On the same high wall we stood before, father Nadhir pointed out to a sign in it and said: This grave we stand before belonged to a man, there are a lot of persons who came in saying they have blessing form God by the help of him. Usually in here came the believer which is named of the marts and praying before his grave.

At the beginning of the temple Father Nadhir said: "This place you see, it is named the sacred of the most sacred. It contains an alter and a sacrifice house. On Sunday it does the prying usually. And that place next to the sacred of most sacred a site names "al-Beem", which is the celebration stage and praying. I think the original word came for Greece language which means the normal land.

Father Nadhir went on in paraphrasing some of the Christian thought and said:

"The sacred of the most sacred means to the sky, and earth is linked up to the sky. There is also, "The Shaquna, which means the narrow road, due Jesus said "you will not enter the heaven kingdom, if you do not enter through the narrow road. And said" because it is narrow the way which leads to the kingdom, and it is wide the way which leads to perdition."

Later, he appointed to another place and said about;" the site you look at, it is the stage of "Kiraza" or baptism" or podium. And there is-also, patriarch chair, which is laid on the right of alter.

You should know, there are two alters in every church. One is specialised to a saint and the second is for Lady Virgin.

After some minutes, father Nadhir added:" we have a place which is named the martyrs house, for every person who died for Jesus and confessed of him. But over the numerous people who really died for Jesus, the place turned to be from just a room into a court.

Then he with his hand referred to a site and said: "Inside there is a room for changing clothes, named Skarsita or the service room used to prepare the priests and deacons. And we have too, a room for baptism in which the praying for baptism usually is practiced in. There is a room in it, a wooden box named the confession box where the priest sit down in, and the person who came in confessed of his sins for the priest over there.

Later father Nadhir gave more details about his church and said: "the church is not only a place for praying, but for learning as well. On the right we have classes for pupils provided with boards and chairs. In here usually the kids will come to have some of the religious lessons.

"Usually pupils coming from the religious school are less than 25 % of the governmental schools. Those who are from the later school often do not receive a special religious teaching. Therefore, we adopt the matter of the religious teaching.

Father Nadhir certified about the nature of this teaching and said: "On Friday morning and evening is allotted to the young men. And we have a room which is located to a committee to provide the food stuff and clothes and helping the poor. I am the general supervisor, with interior council, named the Khorna council. This committee has a list of poor and rich and kids names.

Later he did not forget to shed some light in this important matter and said;" whoever concerns of teaching may work in the teaching committee in the kid department, or young department. There is also some of physicists who came in to supervising the hospital we opened up in here, we actually did during the embargo time. The doctors' numbers reached to forty doctors. We treated in there Christians and Muslims. Most of the persons who came from the same region we live in. And of course we gave them medication for free.

Father Nadhir went on in showing the parts and corners of this church and said now. : Over

there, we have the office; it is the house of living which is not allotted for to the priests only. Due the house of the Lord is for all. And he who serves alter will eat from alter.

At this time I tried to ask him personal question, which he answered about: "if you ask me about the nuptial state I will say. In the eastern church, the priest has the right to take a wife, despite the in Paul Bible he said " I wish the priest will be unmarried, to let his service only for church. And we are being given the option. That is means; the priest has the right to marry. After two years of marrying, with an agreement of the wife and completing his theological studies. He will be considered as a married priest. But as for a monk, he has not a right to marry.

Then father Nadhir gave more personal details about his life and said: For me I am unmarried, by my willing. Actually I am in monastery since long years. I decided to give more, and I thank the Lord for this so much:

"By the way, my brothers are all married and my sisters as well. But I devoted myself to the Lord. There lot of persons who are fatherless and motherless. I hope God will reward me for this sacrifice, in order to be a father to whom fatherless and a mother to those who are motherless and give what the Lord already granted me.

In this time Father shifted the subject into the social and security situation in the country and said:" if you ask me about that ii say. Really the troubles we currently confront, is the immigration over the uneasy circumstances. a Christian in his mood is really ambitious person who are always seeking for peace and stability. And our country unfortunately never witnessed any quietness at all, over more than fifty years.

All these years our country spent it in wars and embargo. One day a disaster took place in al-Aima Bridge and the other day it happened in one of the mosques or churches. One day in al-Fallujah, another day in Erbil.

Father Nadhir tone seemed exhausted as he said later; " the immigration problem is not concerned with Christians people only, there a lot of Muslim people who are liking to leave their country, seeking for peace and calmness and serenity.

Father Nadhir reached to his deep point of view and said: The shortage in a church will be soon appeared, because our number is lit-

tle. And the shortage will be seen clearly more than Muslims. As a matter of fact, if you took something form the little thin, its shortage will be clear more.

Now father Nadhir pointed to another important problem and said: ' our largest problem is representing, besides the poorness and ignorance. The level of teaching in our country slowed down to a very bad level. We are very sorry about the scientific and cultural situation. We really notice that a lot of Christian students could no know how to read.

At the last moments I asked him if he has confronted of injustice treatment, he shook his head angrily, this question seemed upset him so much and he said finally: I don't know why this word is repeated on these days, I do not know! Christians and Muslims lived really like bothers before and now living like intimate brothers.

Therefore, why media always concentrates on such subjects, this is definitely untrue. Let us see. Kidnapping is committed and victimised Christians and also it is existed and committed against Muslims as well.

"Injustice is overwhelmed against all Iraqi nation against all is concentrated on all Iraqi communities. i say there a lot of injustice against the human beings in Iraq.

Personally I witness I receive respect by all Iraqis, probably I receive respect in Muslim community more than Christian's. Even if there a problem happened, I consider it a s test for me, And if the Lord is with us, who could be against.

It was the day which father Nadhir was waiting, people from all around comes to say their prayer, women, older and younger. The music in piano was so beautiful. Father Nadhir was receiving them.

At the front hall, people are asking about other families who left the country about their affairs, nothing will stop this church bell. ■

# Al-Qishla an Eye-Witness on Baghdad History

Mufeed Waheed al-Safi

**Mr. Adnan pushed wide one of al-Qishla's black iron gates to overlook into another world. Now he turned around left, took some steps, then stopped over there before a high dome, raising over his head. Here he gave a glance to the inner decorated wall with beautiful various sizes of brass flowers.**

Mr Adnan won't give up smiling on his face, despite all his horrible circumstances he was facing now. He now went on in his investigating looks, more and more, till the last point of Qishla dome. There he spotted over there those old marks of a bird nest. He remembered now with a sigh the large white stork over there. The people of Baghdad of fourteen neighbourhoods were talking about at that time.

One day that stork disappeared suddenly. Probably it feared the canon sounds which broke out by the dictator who was as crazy as loon at the first time he seized the power. It might there an accident happen to or realized that darkness would overwhelmed so the stork decided to leave al-Qishla walls and roundabout for good.

Mr Adnan al-Jabiri, 62 years-old, graduated from college of Art, archaeological department in 1969. Before opening up his words, he smiled a little as if refreshed his old information and said "first of all you have to know that al-Qishla building is established on the Tigris eastern shore by al-Sarai neighbourhood, opposing to al-Sarai building, next to librarians' bazaar.

Mr Adnan now said: We have to name the

day and press up time. In this place there were a lot of important events happened. But now let us go to language: Al-Qishla is a Turkish word, taken from the verb Qishla, which means get wintered, al-Qishla word turned to be an idiom represented soldiers camp, the where soldiers are camped and normally not heading to war during winter time.

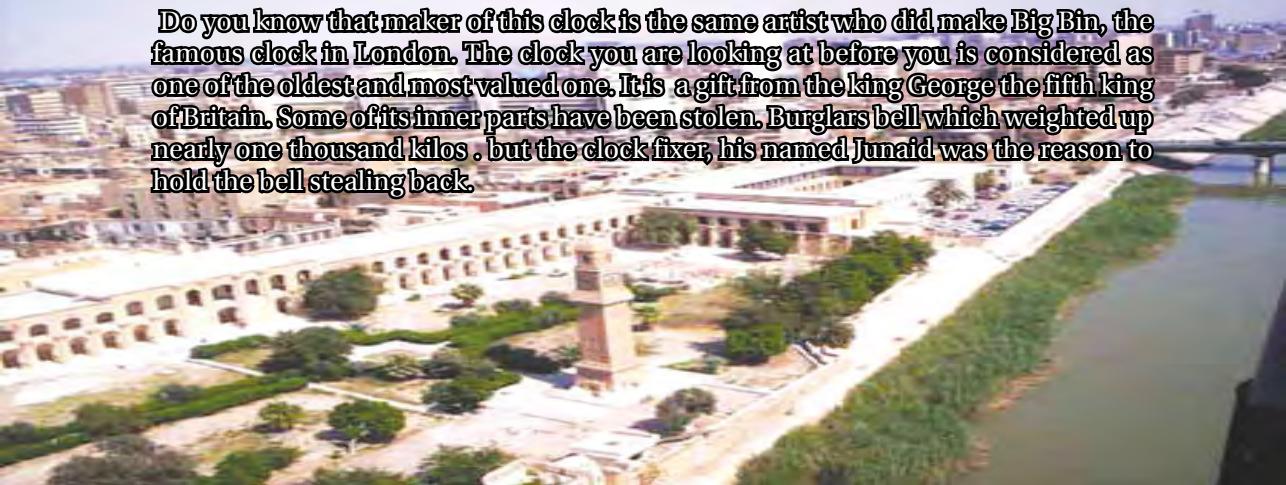
Mr Adnan moved on to face a long passage with several arches on it vault, till he came in to the large hall. Now he stopped a little, gave in some instructions to one of the workers who suddenly appeared.

Mr Adnan looked at the large yard which circulated around the site, and flanked at the shore with giant willow trees. At the yard, the first Faisal king has been crowned in 1921 at a big party attended by new state gentlemen and elite.

"There was so well-known photo for the king's celebration day. He was seen in his thin body, sitting uneasily down on a large armchair, and beside him there stood Abdul-Raheem al-Naqeeb, the first prime minister and some English senior officers.

Mr Adnan now went on in his wording up and said: The national government at that time used

**Do you know that maker of this clock is the same artist who did make Big Ben, the famous clock in London. The clock you are looking at before you is considered as one of the oldest and most valued one. It is a gift from the king George the fifth king of Britain. Some of its inner parts have been stolen. Burglars bell which weighted up nearly one thousand kilos . but the clock fixer, his named Junaid was the reason to hold the bell stealing back.**



of this large yard in al-Qishla as various places for ministers, and made it as a site for some of state offices, even it used one of its hall to be an Iraqi museum in 1932 in one of the halls at the first floor in the building works in the building went on by the government offices till it talks a decision to renovate as being description a historical and folklore in 1989.

He looked deeply at al-Qishla far parts and spoke seriously: As a matter of fact, an archaeological researcher may find out historians faults and unveiled many secrets. These constructions were undergone during King Faisal ruling.

And the history books told us Al-Qishla walls sunk down into the Tigris river, several coloured walls in green, particularly it emerged on ceiling at al-Karkh shore, Currently erupting on from the khadir side and causes down collapsed and demolished. The king Faisal was obliged that day to choose another castle in al-Admaiya.

Mr Adnan stepped up toward the great tower. As he reached, pointed out towards the huge clock which was established at that time. At inner yard to al-Qishla building at the Tigris shore as long as the optical level to the main entrances.

The tower top was reconstructed again due to collapsing down in 1950 of twenty century as result to such reconstruction, the balcony street over the clock was. There is some similarity between the Qishla clock and Abdul-Qadir clock tower, which is established by Abdul-Rahman al-Naqeeb in 1889 in it, was written on al-Taghra line style

As he moved on the yard, and gave his last directions to some new workers who were loading new bricks inside large halls, then he returned back to the clock tower

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Presently Mr Adnan stepped in toward the walls' house. The house lied on at the north side of al-Qushla. It was really a large house composed of many large rooms. There was a big garden, middle in with a spring. It has another large port overlooking to the Tigris River. Normally we who dealt with excavation and most of the time lived in places located out of cities; I hope officials listen to our problems. We might bear the low salaries, but we have no houses for our own!!How many times he submitted letters after letters, in order to give him a land for his big family after all these years of duty.

I am going to read to you one of my letters when I was in al-Madaen, I told the official in charge many times, that place was so dangerous. Her he showed our job at these days was so hard, I could not protect all treasure in land. As no power could protect us, that time they threaten us my kids in school, what I can do,

my children stopped going to school. They are afraid. I am sure they going to do more terrorist acts. We are all in the same boat.

Surely they were watching me when I usually go to work, that day as I was riding a small bus. I have spent most of life working in archaeological sites. And look at me till now I do not have my own house.

My senior son asked me to buy an agricultural land east of Baghdad, and I did that. Why do not our ministry assign lands for employees as most other ministries do? I am going to reach the pension age and still without a home for my own after all these years, is this right?

Now he said while a bitter smile presented on his face" believe me my friend, we are a camels as had a load of gold on its back but, they prickles and spines. Do not you see, it must have be a solution to our hard state!! The government must solve our problems!!

Now he moved to the left and held a hose of water in his hand and began to water the small trees which began to grow up.

I want my voice to reach the official to know my story. Mr Adnan, said : I did not know the reasons, to bother others of my personal affairs. Do you know at this age and I do not have a house for my own. Before this time, I was settling down in the panorama site at Salman-Pack. It was a house its possession belonged to the association of folklore and archaeology.

One day my house was attacked by a gang of terrorists. And under the arm threat, I was forced and my son to jammed in at the car box. And there was another car box for my brother and his sons.

We have taken into a secret site, coverer eyes and cuffed hands. Of course we thought that we will not see our family again. We really now we have in a real bad situation.

Later, my cousin made an important connection with the kidnappers. He saved us after contacting with some sheiks that belongs to the same tribe of his wife.

With two thousand dollars, the kidnappers accepted to realise us, as they ensured totally we do not have more many.

Before releasing us we have been ordered to leave the area as if be traitors. Then I had to leave the old town and settled down in a rented house in al-Dorah, but unfortunately the situ-

ation like jumping from pan to fire, so I made up mind finally to rent a house in al-Sader city.

Mr Adnan tried to cover his emotional feelings which overwhelmed over his face by indulging with some workers who saved him of his uneasy situation.

Mr Adnan went on giving more details of his tale and said: Now the ministry of culture decided to refer the rehabilitation affair to the ministry of tourism and archaeology, to keep up renovating the building which undergone to the looting and operations at the days of unsecured period. It started on the rehabilitations campaigns since on 15/1/2005; the dead line has to be on 15/9/2005. But owing to the storms and unstable security stations it holds back the works,

The main contractor who was in charge of the tender as most the contractors do, giving up the work to sub- contractors and so on. Some dealt with carpenter and some with blacksmith, and a third part with electric facilities.

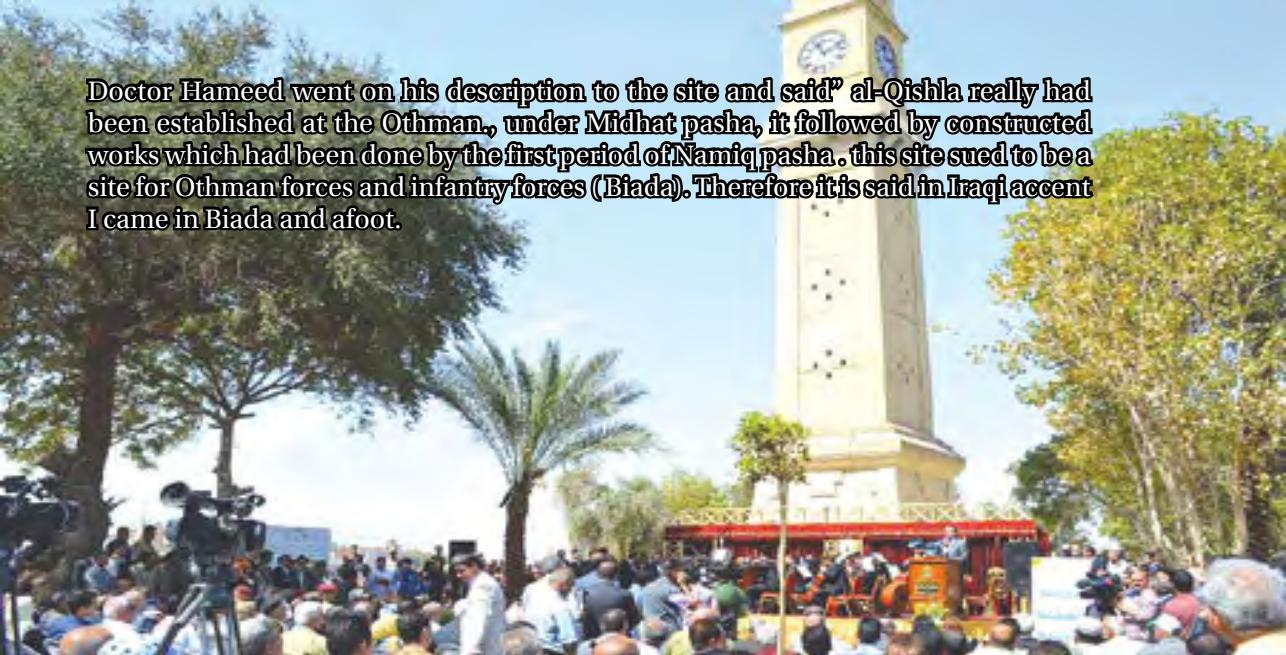
At the time, Mr Adnan talked with one of the carpenters who were peeling off bars of wood next to him. He then put it down in special bags. and said: rehabilitation works in this building costs nearly one milliard Iraqi dinar including decoration and furnish the wood and maintaining and bleaching the marble and doors and renovating the electric facilities even putting down a new bricks to the ground.

Currently we are supervising on the folklore maintaining works to the doors and decoration, focusing on maintaining the arches, doors and windows. Before days, it had been agreed to renovate fixing up the clock as costing of 22 million dinars by the fixer Junaid. Some of its parts have been stolen and the wooden,, and al-Wijdan company will be in charge of it renovating.

Mr Adnan now took steps to a location nearby an outer wall of the building where distributed rubble of old missiles and broken boxes were seen, he said here: over there what remains of the old museum where the authority keep Saddam white horse stuffed, it was the same horse wen sowed off with after the end Iraq – Iran.

After Kuwait occupation, these halls used to be a museum. The building and governmental associations were under bombing during the war. After it had been done for similar models,

Doctor Hameed went on his description to the site and said" al-Qishla really had been established at the Othman, under Midhat pasha, it followed by constructed works which had been done by the first period of Namiq pasha. this site sued to be a site for Othman forces and infantry forces (Biada). Therefore it is said in Iraqi accent I came in Biada and afoot.



we used it to keep up the English bus in which Mr George Galway had come in by.

At other site, D. Hameed Mohammed Hassan, folklore archives and scan department manager, began to talk about al-Qishla history and roundabout saying: the people of Baghdad had nothing with al-Qishla location. It was just wanted to gendarmes and soldiers dormitory. Those soldiers would wake up by the big clock sound to exercise in the morning, they have their leadership and systems and bases to the south of building, the other side of al-Wali house. Really it is very beautiful and wide house that amazed any visitors.

As the English soldiers occupied Baghdad they used it as headquarters for them owing to the large are and particular location. At eh 1980s the archaeological association used the location after it was related to the financial directorate. So that directorate had demolished the posted barriers and maintained the fallen parts and reshaped it till there tuned to be four halls.

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It composed of four halls, two from the ground floor and two for the upper floor. It used s dor-

mitory for Othman soldiers. At the south part there were some administrative department. Al-Biada Qishla is not similar to the canon Qishla which overlooked a port.

Doctor Hameed added up and said: people of Baghdad were listening to the clock sound at the time, owing Baghdad was not far distance at in our days.

It was composed of Bab-al-Sheikh neighbourhood, al-Doreen, al-Alawi and Rahmaniya and al-Utaifiya and al-Kuramat.

After Othman state fallen apart, the British forces used al-Qishla as a camp for them. In one of the chamber there was established the Iraqi museum. At the time, Iraqi national government decided to use its sites for some ministries, such as the financial and justice and information ministries. The whole offices were concentrated already here.

Now he met the guard who was an old man and told him Abu Ali, you have to be careful and lock up the small door, be careful the unleashed dogs may rushed in this site

It was used during Othman era as a site for their forces, because it really considered as secured area overlooking tot al-Karkh and Risafa shores. It would be as a point for soldiers who set off from the heart of Baghdad to going on the roundabout areas and neighbourhood. Al-Wali hose is still in such conditions. Al-Qushla used a site to some of governmental offices during the kingly days. There was a room for Noori al-

Saeed.

In an assembly which was held at the ministry of culture in March 2004 about al-Qishla in that past and future. It was attended by experts and engineers the construction phases in which al-Qishla had been passed into three phases.

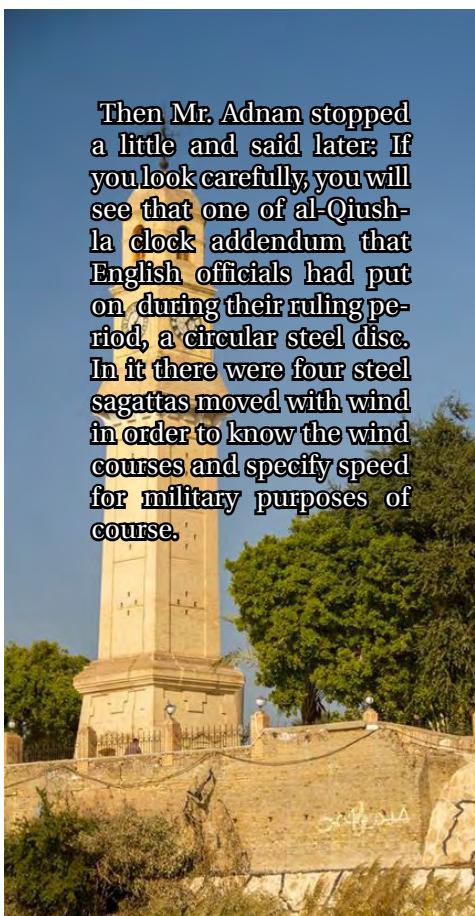
At Ottoman ruling, there mentioned the ground floor construction history at the time of Wali Namiq Pasha (1852-1851). It composed of a lump like Latin letter L, the long dimension is formed an extension to Hassan Pasha Street.

It is perfectly distinguished the archaeological character in clear tone from outside into inside. In such a construction style which had been used in this door, using the local material and roof with brick technique. While the first floor had been established under the Wali Midhat Pasha, and added up to the archaeological form, the clock tower at the level of main entrance.

Mr Adnan was an old hand, who liked so much his work. He said now: That night I won't forget all my life, the masked men in black suits broke in my house, with covered faces and harsh tones. I was between life and death. All the people know something. Baghdad's out skirts will be problematic always. Most of ex-regime supports were settling down there.

Yes I changed my place to al-Dora, but the terrorist acts and sectarian violence was not less than Al-Maidan. What I can do but to keep my family safe and sound.

As for this beautiful and important place I appeal the officials in the ministry of culture to open it for people. It could be used as a site of social activities as it is so close to the famous



Then Mr. Adnan stopped a little and said later: If you look carefully, you will see that one of al-Qishla clock addendum that English officials had put on during their ruling period, a circular steel disc. In it there were four steel sagattas moved with wind in order to know the wind courses and specify speed for military purposes of course.

book street, al-Mutanabi.

I am going to leave this job this year, what I going to do, I am going to buy car from my pension money and working as taxi drivers, her Mr Adnan laughed, do you think we are.

"I am sure this place will be so popular in case it will be opened as it was so close to al-Mutanabi Street. Next time if you come here, you will see better scenes and more people.

Mr Adnan confirmed that some of scholars hold on why archaeological office put on it a sign, on a al-Qishla building a wall of the governmental Sarai, complaining that writing on the Sarai building was located inside the beautiful dome, appositely to mosque of Jadeed Hassan Pasha.

Al-Qishla or al-Muwafaqiya school was established by Muwafaq al-Khadim. It was named after him. In 602

H, it was mentioned by some old resources at the bibliography written on Mohammed Bin al-Wazir, a minister to al-Nasirideen Allah passed away in 602h.

He was given tribute at al-Nidamiya school. Then he was laid to rest in peace at al-Muwafaqiya school, next to the grave of Muwafaq al-Khadim. He gave all his money and estate for this school.

Imam al-Dahabi, a writer from Abbasid era, touched it upon in his summary of history. And Bin al-Jozi, mentioned it, in his saying: he did study at al-Muwafaqiya which located at Zagi road.

The Zagi road was located easterly of Baghdad, currently lied upon al-Mutanabi street which leading to old civil courts building. It is named al-Qishla building. And Zagi road related to al-Muwafaqiya Bin Abdullah al-Khadim, of the lady Malikshah, a wife to the caliph al-Mustadhir Billah. As he was he slave and he

passed away at this school.

Then Mr Adnan retuned back to the history after he said: it is not easy to come here every day but I have to complete my duty.

He said let us return to history again: Namiq Pasha did started it and Midhat pasha complete it, well this phrase it definitely truthful, as the ruler, Wali Namiq pasha who kicked off establishing of one floor in order to be a headquarters for his ruling to Baghdad and a camp for his Turkish army, al-Biada, or infantry.

But he did not complete it. Later after him the new ruler the reformer Midhat Pasha ( 1869-1871) and successfully did complete it and adding up the second floor and al-Qishla clock tower, using the remains of eastern Baghdad fence in al-Risafa.

They did that in order to complete the huge building facilities, as there was no need for Baghdad fence! The military force reached to the best considerable state. So the idea of the clock was created. It was being gifted by the British king (the fifth Jorge to Baghdad city, after ten years only of setting up the famous big pin clock in London.

This clock is working by mechanic winding according to six clogged wheels, and switched on by great sized iron key. The governmental offices used to assign a special worker whose duty is switch on the clock and check up its timing and

maintained and fixed it from time to time.

Later, the building being accomplished which included the ruler headquarters and for his gendarmes. There appeared an important need for alarming the military force and waking them up in morning to make exercises and military duties, in lieu of using the old trumps

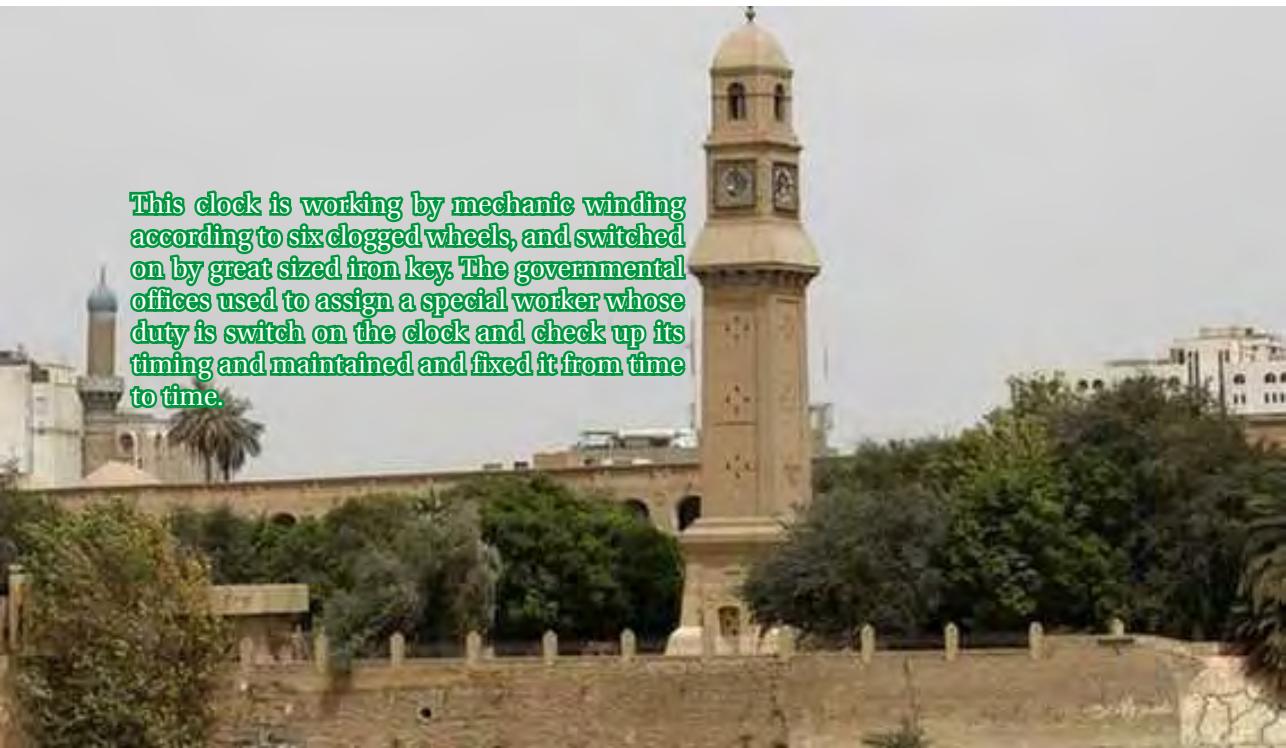
Then Mr Adnan stopped a little and said later: If you look carefully, you will see one of al-Qishla clock addendum that English officials had put on during their ruling period, a circular steel disc. In it there were four steel arrows moved with wind in order to know the wind courses and specify speed for military purposes of course.

Later they put on more addendum as they added up over the wind arrows in a small iron statue of a figure wearing Arabic uniform( Saya, Uqal and Kufiya) riding on a camel to commemorate the famous English leader (Lechmann) who has been killed by the Iraqi militant Sheik Dhari al-Mahmood in (khan al-Nuqta).

At the time of English occupation, al-Qishla roof was with bricks and steel pipes. it was ordered also rehabilitate the high part of the clock tower and they added to it at the same time a nothing suit used and a general work office.

During the national ruling, there was established on the constructing with and inner sub roofing in order to be fit with the various admin-

**This clock is working by mechanic winding according to six clogged wheels, and switched on by great sized iron key. The governmental offices used to assign a special worker whose duty is switch on the clock and check up its timing and maintained and fixed it from time to time.**



istrative functions.

In a study to Mr Yaseen Hikmat Abdul-Majeed published in the archaeological engineering magazine, volume 19, No 1 in 2000. He did confirm on the effect of construction by Italian renaissance period upon many facilities of the Ottoman at that period. From it the modernization tendency kicked off to the Othman associations.

The mass distribution style and the early done system which appeared in attraction to vision lines, in which it used most of the time in Italian renascence construction. Thirdly, it is forming the clock tower scene though the main entrance. This is relied upon mostly in models of civilization in Italian particularly.

This study went on showing the following through study and recent demonstration, it can be suggested steps and as well as practical in order to renovate al-Qishla building. The work method do not spoil up the historical values and architecture values which bases on. With realization can contain more one activitiy. It is impossibly method suggestion located at al-Qishla building without interfering to the are limitations, so we can say firstly to study designed suggestions to renovate the are all as al-Qishla building is part of it.

In beatified art school or particular museum, taking care and confirming upon the garden de-signing or overlooking the Tigris river ways suitably to the nature of archaeological design and enriching the building with linking it the indie with the outside.

In making up cleaning of operation and getting rid of all plus and spoiled parts located at the site currently. Secondly to return back to the location scan which had been already done by an Italian company with association with archaeology and folklore directorate?

Gathering up all documentations and investigation available done for the building. And pointing out the infrastructure and serviced so for the building. To study the method suggested and harmony with the location nature.

At the attendance in the assembly have agreed upon the importance socially, economically and historically in order to develop al-Qishla building and roundabout as an essence part of the renovation work of the common Baghdad city.

They do confirm the development with maintain by one hand and rehabilitation and function of thither hand. And all who been presented, it have agreed the importance to develop the infrastructure as first step, and came to conclude the following recommendations.

Gathering up all the recent documentations for al-Qishla and main group to do field measures for the whole region and building, making up to retune back each had been undergone the recent accidents at the unstable security period, making up to develop a designing method though forming a constant association as well as a particulate elite of the ministry of culture and Baghdad municipal and ministry of planning and progress cooperation and UNESCO and keeping up the debate.

Generally, in order to take advantage of the opinions concerned and foreign group the method to be mentioned into open universal completion taking part in it the Iraqi libraries and work upon received thoughts and taking advantage of similar universal experiments and choosing the suitable design which deal with folklore ...

Outside Al-Qishala building crowds of people who were crossing al-Shuhada Bridge could be seen from his point. And some of them did not forget to give pieces of bread to birds of gull which were flying up and down trying to catch its prizes.

Mr Adnan preferred so much to take a look at al-Qishla from al-Shuhada Bridge, having interested to the large clock tower scenes. He then said:

"At this point you can have the best picture for Baghdad, while he said so the gulls were hovering nearby up and down at the two sides of the bridge to pick up what the passengers throw out to then it will fly highly again to al-Resafa side and almost would impact of al-Qishla clock which seemed from this corner as a giant who confront time and immortality. ■

# Unveil a Hidden Underworld of a Baghdadi Neighborhood

Mufeed waheed al-Safi

**Before I made up my mind where I have to start off to unveil some pictures of a huge region as al-Bataween neighborhood, I had to use whatever lucky tools might bring on to me. Probably I was helped a little, with the idea that the neighborhood's road being for a long time, my way habitually which I used to reach into my job destination. Yes, vidi and Audi what usually took place before me.**

The public small bus, suddenly stopped at the last alley in al-Bataween that morning, at this time, I have spotted a very horrible scene. A crowd of people gathered around a white female in her thirties. She was fallen on the close pavement, with torn dress, and slightly long stain of blood on her face!!

Inside the bus there broke out a hot argument took place between two men in fifties, one said:

- These prostitutes would never stop doing their dirty job

And the second said:

- Why do you blame her? , you should blame the society who drove her to be in such a situation.

All other passengers did not participate in this conversation which ended up of a small verbal brawl between the two men.

That accident made me remember what happened before me, after about months of the

ex-regime falling apart.

At the morning I was guiding a South Korean journalist in Baghdad. Later few people stopped us referring they found a dead body floating on the Tigris River. Those days are like doomsday! No one care to get the body out, and no policemen were there to deal with the matter. So I tried to give a hand and take the unknown body out, with the help of our Iraqi driver, who worked for the journalist who was occupied in filming what was going on.

"At first instant, you my realize al-Bataween neighbourhood already divided into two worlds. There were the poor lanes which located at the beginning, beyond al-Umma garden, where workers and all kinds of job hired men. And the rich lanes which had big fancy hotels and clinics.

Initially there were uncertain rumours about this neighbourhood course. And truth mixed up

**It is they who cooperated with alcohol shops owners and prostitution houses in the lanes number five and seven. Really we do not say all the houses there indulged in such kind of business, but in each lane, there about six or seven houses, we do not say all the house are indulging in such a shame business".**



with rumours together, so it was hard to figure out its hidden secrets. A book titled (the historian origin to Baghdadi neighbourhoods for D. Emad Abdul-Slam) narrated what followed:

"Al-Bataween neighbourhood was one agricultural region at the east of Baghdad. It was related to al-Bataween where farmers immigrated from the village (al-Bat) nearby Baquba and Buhruz, then they resided there since nineteen centuries. Yaqut al-Hamawi brought up a village."

"It was a village between Baquba and Buhruz. Later, it turned to be a residence neighbourhood in nineteen thirty, extended to Al-Andalus square presently."

Another book titled "Baghdad in twenties for Abbas Baghdadi said: "al-Bataween, territory and beyond was just gardens for Iraqi Jews, before the Iraqi nationality dropped off them."

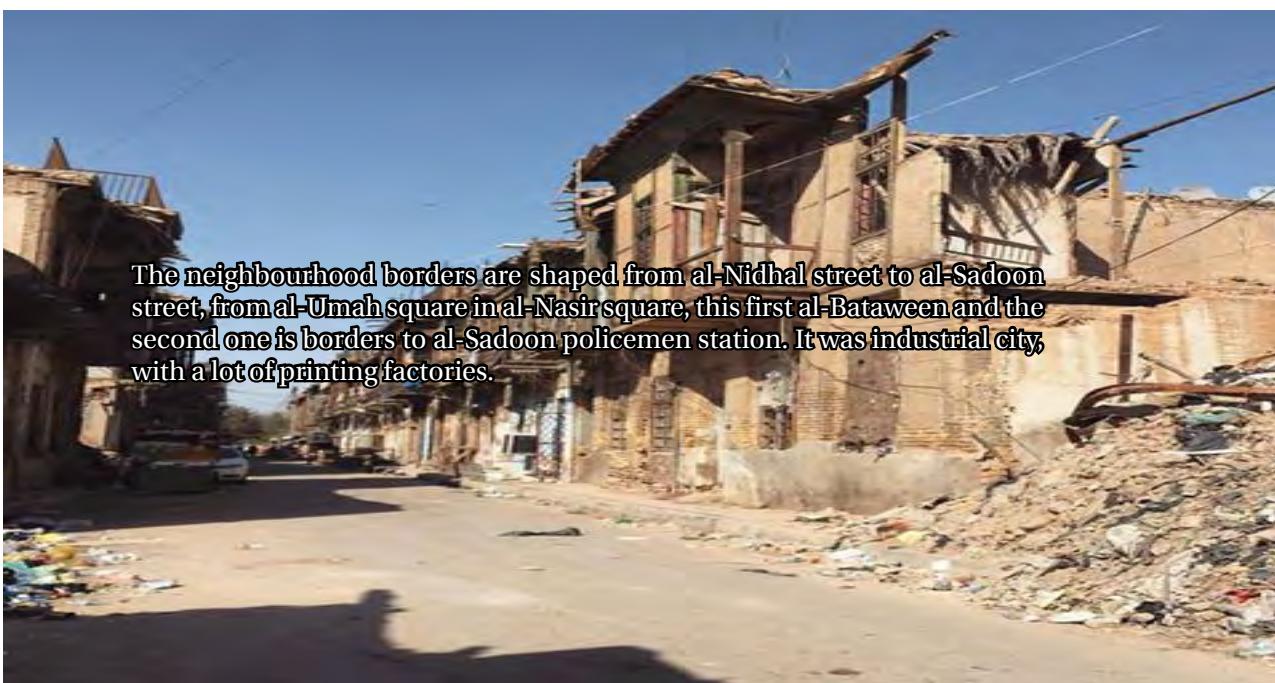
five or seven in order to know the reality.

The commissioner with them was bossing about. He rebuked his colleague and said I've to bring an official letter, in order to converse with them. Therefore, later I have no solution but to enter into a small café shop where its customers were planted on old wooden seats.

There were some young men watching passers-by, while elders either smoking argil or yammering on with friends about life affairs. I tried to have some information, and no one but a coffee worker came in voluntarily to answer my questions.

A coffee shop worker, 25 years old, spoke about the neighbourhood he lived in, saying "

"Almost our customers are of workers from all provinces, working in various jobs, renting rooms in cheap hotels. There are sport delega-



The neighbourhood borders are shaped from al-Nidhal street to al-Sadoon street, from al-Umah square in al-Nasir square, this first al-Bataween and the second one is borders to al-Sadoon policemen station. It was industrial city, with a lot of printing factories.

Presently, at the first alley of al-Bataween neighbourhood, I made up my mind to break out the wall of the sacred cow and approaching now to a foot patrol of policemen who were totally in arms. They stood over there at a corner. Later I showed them my identity and errand. I did not have but a brief comment of one of them. He pointed out that I have to go the lane number

tions that pick out high classified hotels. There tens of hotels around there.

"Even in such kinds of hotels customers often prefer special kinds depending on the province they came from! We usually work here till midnight. You may roam around here and see at night the lights of the hotels till morning. You can rarely hear of crimes being committed here! There is a lot of Arab, in particular, Sudanese

people working in various occupations, some in flea markets, selling watches or selling clothes. They keep good reputations and mind of their own business."

The neighbourhood borders are shaped from al-Nidhal Street to al-Sadoon Street, from al-Umma square in al-Nasir square. First al-Bataween and the second one border reach to al-Sadoon policemen station. It was industrial city, with a lot of printing factories.

It has four hotels end up with Tunis Street, its great problem was the prostitution occupation in some of lanes and that causes a lot of trouble! Those families work in prostitution occupation when to live in al-Kamaliya region but after the regime falling apart, there came in to this neighbourhood and came more and more troubles.

I've tried to ask some elders about al-Bataween history, but it seemed uneasy to have good information from them. Later then led me into a shop owner saying I can have some words with him.

Ahmed Saeed was sitting in his own shop, with two friends beside him. He said he had engineer degree, in his shop he was selling cigars and tobacco stuff, and. His friend Hayder AbudlHussein from al-Nasiriyah, graduated from college of education but he could not find a job yet for him in governmental offices, so he had to come in here. His second friend was Noel Nisan, 22-year a Christian guy, in first year.

The old engineer in emotional accent complained the situation:" Really I have been thinking of departing of this neighbourhood, although I've been working here in this lane for years! This neighbourhood, day by day, was losing its some kind residents, now its situation going worse and worse."

"Most people you may meet with who are working and residing in this neighbourhood, even my neighbour, a Christian photographer, decided to leave this neighbourhood, because the customers now hesitate to come to this lane, and prostitution business are being boosted.

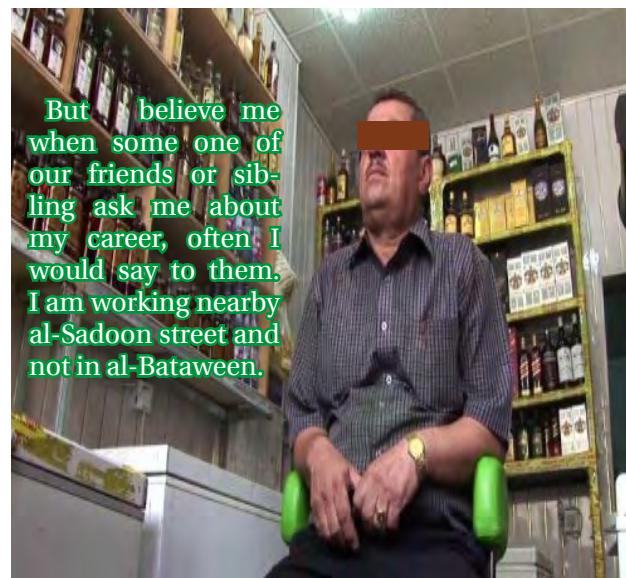
This time he was busied, so he pardoned me to leave a little, and he said in affirmed tone: "Some decided to leave the area despite it is so hard to find a new job in other places. I am engineer in agricultural and applied for a job in the governmental ministries, more than once, but no use."

"I am sure you could not write down what I am going to say, because what I am going to say probably against the policemen who are supposing to give service of protection in al-Sadoon station. They are bad policemen and corrupted."

"Unfortunately, it is they who cooperate with alcohol shops owners and prostitution houses in the lanes number five and seven. Really we do not say all the houses there indulged in such kind of business, but in each lane, there about six or seven houses, we do not say all the house are indulging in such a shame business".

"But, believe me when some one of our friends or sibling asks me about my career, often I would say to them. I am working nearby al-Sadoon Street and not in al-Bataween itself. Surely its name now turned to raise suspicion. His friend Nisan said: "my family made up their minds to leave this neighbourhood. Really we have been planning for such a move long time."

"We have been living here for almost twenty-two years ago. Prostitution business was not



existed in this degree, but now it weirdly extended largely. After the regime fall its people from so known neighbourhood do attack the prostitution area in al when ex regime was protecting them." He then added.

They run for their lives, and then it came gradually to al-Bataween neighbourhood. As it turned to be a proper place for the business, due

that is not unity in families here. Hotels projects receive customers every day and strangers, not all of them are singulars. Mr Ahmed Saeed added actually its submitted about ten complains to the ministry of interior but phone or letter to some functions, but no use, breaches done by police of al-Sadoon police.

It was a station clearly seen. We all knew that well but people feared them. They do not want to be involved in hard issue. I can assume your cooperation publicly and preceding between them and the police station to al-Sadoon then photographer Ayad Dakheel, 55 old started off to talk nervously, I can't stay here more you see that sight over there I put it to sell my shop.

"My residence was not here, I moved away from the corrupted lanes which people did not approach, but here no use. Customers could be attacked or robbed or maybe killed."

People movements still continued as he said to me: I was working since twenty-nine years lived with my family in al-Bataween since 1961 nearby al- Armenian Church which lied on al-Bataween borders, it was great neighbourhood before reside in it, quite respected Christian and Muslim families, living in harmony and peace long time ago.

By and large a lot of strangers come in daily to the neighbourhood from various Arab nationalities.

It's so danger to walk on road without check-up. We have seen a lot of gangs wanted captured and shown in T.V. The last one was so dangerous gang composed of eleven figures; they were blasted cars, committing a lot of terrorist acts.

Most of the Arabs are Sudanese then Egyptians and Syrians and Palestinians, most of them having Iraqi nationalities; you will be amazed that most of them do not work comparing to the amount of money they usually spend

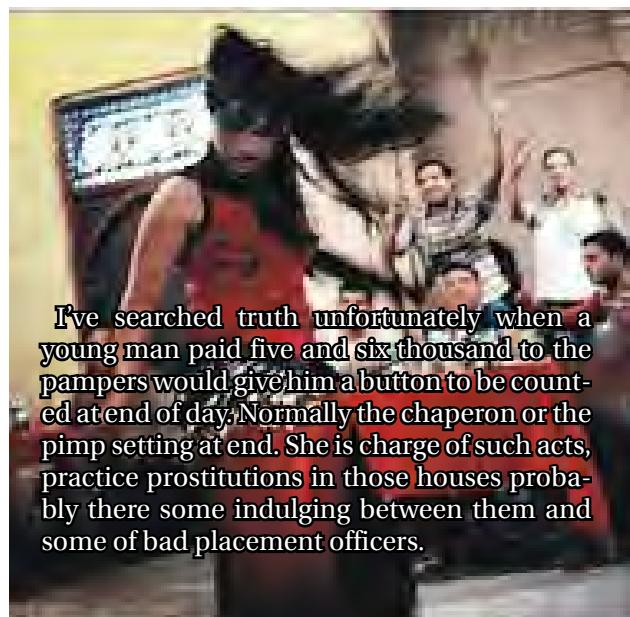
He then said: "They spend their times in gambling, sharing in lottery, buying expensive cigars! From where does all this money come? Mr. Ayad narrated an accident took place before him: a policeman car stopped and get down some figures Pepsi cola at a nearby shop, that happened days while still in Ramadan month, after a little time those police man seen a peddler who was a youth, and dressed in

expensive clothes."

He went on in his story: "So they stopped him and offended him asking, why he came here and why he smoking in Ramadan, then later took him to their car and drive off, then later after some hours, I have seen the same young man and there I asked him what did happen to him, he said those policemen released him for fifteen thousand, they accuse him of smoking during Ramadan, while they really corrupted and smoking themselves, breaching the law. Mr. Kamil Ihsan repeated his words again:

"I know you will not write down this, I've seen some policemen seizing a cell phone from one of the citizens by force, those persons who supposed to do and practice law, they violated it, therefore we called him charging the bad policeman in al-Sadoon Station and publish a word of what they say, while passing a lane then. I told them about."

"I spotted not once a youth gathering, before of almost deserted house, a plump woman in hot clothes, stood there she was dealing and wheeling, beside her there was her body guard with so



I've searched truth unfortunately when a young man paid five and six thousand to the pampers would give him a button to be counted at end of day. Normally the chaperon or the pimp setting at end. She is charge of such acts, practice prostitutions in those houses probably there some indulging between them and some of bad placement officers.

thick moustache; she announced her business publicly at her door"

Some young men I have seen hesitated a little, not preferring to enter and they eye were in another world, they wanted to ensure their mus-

cularity teenagers amid youth passing now.

When a young man paid five and six thousand to a pimp would give him a button to be counted at end of day. Normally, the chaperon or pimp was setting around at end. She was in charge of such acts, practicing prostitutions in those houses probably there some indulging between them and some of bad placement officers.

Then Mr. Sadiq Hassan, in his alias name said: the underworld here is too secret, but you may look at if you sit down and watch prostitution business. Hiring prostitute and go to customers houses at al-Kamaliya as they dubbed most of the girls working here as gypsies.

"In one of the hotels girls were bought and sold . At last that hotel unlawful business stopped when its management was changed, after the bad smell inhaled so much. These houses may receive precedent warrant, of the military forces which comes out of the region. We have noticed that, if there a patrol attacks of security or policeman, out of the neighbourhood."

He then said: "Girls who are working here will get informed and take a hide. Some of them were working twenty-four house snatching teenagers and youth who came here to the prostitution hours. Suddenly policemen loomed and trying to catch the youth, before the police station arriving, they were blackmailed to pay some money for releasing them."

It is a matter well known here. The engineer said: "Soon any one will realize that selling numbed pills, quite booming here so much and the beggars' scenes of children or wanted men, could be seen on all corners.

"I am sure some of beggars are not needy, you may come across some of didactic for alcohol. These people they afford peddlers after getting drunk for the sake of having some money came out at night, you will share for more a make and those did not appear."

He later said: "They were strolling at night and sleeping at day, no curfew was ordered but after two o'clock a.m. Also, there are some rumours of existing merchant who was dealing with excavations. Smugglers to some of gangs have been caught"

"People who reside temporally do not approach of over lanes. They came here for more reasons whither for asking or business or treat-

ment before few days or drunken man threatened peddlers with knives before police men eyes and ears".

"What police men do but laughing, believe me,! We do not accuse them falsely. We know there bunch of the bad policemen who did these bad acts, and we knew that great part of policemen do fight terrorism and its suppliers"

" Do you know service as a police man is distinguished so much. I swear there corruption in electricity office. Electricity power would not be cut most of the time, not like other neighbourhoods.

#### Another investigation

My colleague Ayad Atiyah made a short visit to al-Bataween and wrote about it as following: No my friend you must be careful to go there. Al-Bataween turned to be now a hotel and story house for drugs and prostitution. All bad things now stained around like hashish Bin laden. My rendezvous was with Waleed at al-Tahrir square gardens, appositely to Bab-al-Sharqi.

Waleed used to deal with him being sent off by some customers at a hotel, to buy some sort of hashish which is mixed up with argilla. It is the most boosted hashish in the market nowadays.

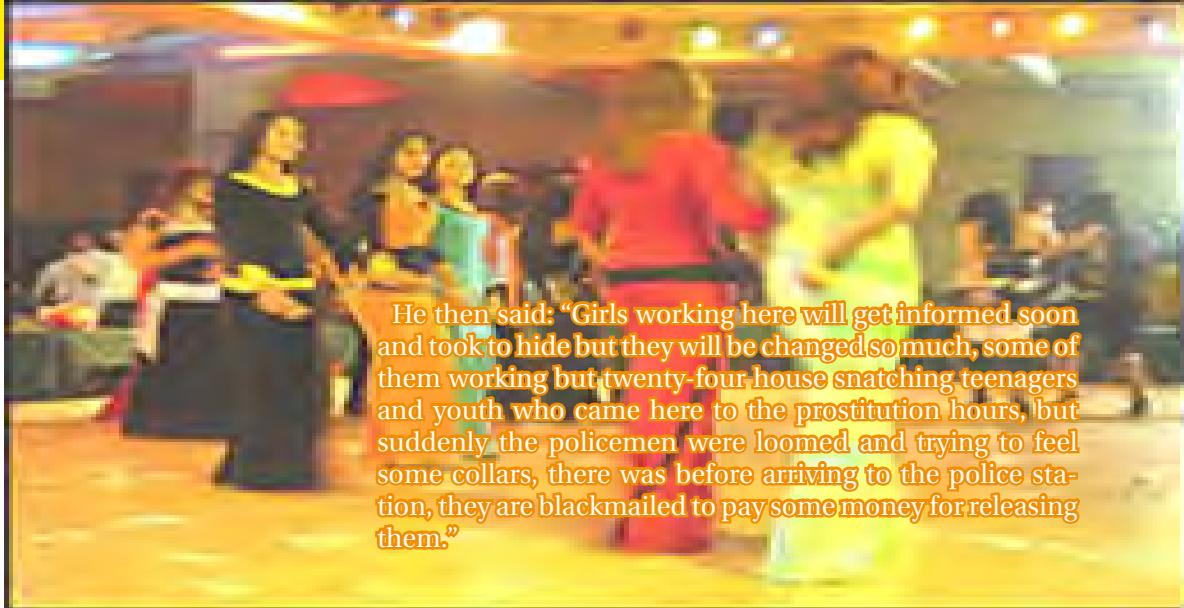
And it is considered the easiest ways to spread off amid customers in shop coffees and locations. Drug dealers do not use known names, but give it titles which often decipher to keep up secrecy. The next side we crossed appositely to al-Bataween. It is a neighbourhood is unique in its black markets.

In twisted and narrow alleys, I with Waleed passing through a distance. At near a shop coffee in the end of that alley led us into another. Before reach the required site, Waleed asked me to hold on some minutes at a safe distance.

So I have to oblige by his proposal. He said now he would talk to a guy, named him as Ahmed. He was carefully looking to me in his worried eyes, from top to bottom. Then Waleed appeared again and asked me: what kinda of it, you want? What a bad luck! Actually I did not know exactly what I should response, but I answered him back: what kinds of it you have?

My answer seemed not satisfy him totally. Now I have been invited by Ahmed to have a seat and smoke argil. And at that time the other guy disappeared for ever.

Al-Bataween, where Aristocratic neighbour-



He then said: "Girls working here will get informed soon and took to hide but they will be changed so much, some of them working but twenty-four house snatching teenagers and youth who came here to the prostitution hours, but suddenly the policemen were loomed and trying to feel some collars, there was before arriving to the police station, they are blackmailed to pay some money for releasing them."

hood settled down and known families from various social classes in Baghdad were the elite of its residents. They were the leading in society, politics and art. For long decades of the last century, it turned to be a poor and unhappy neighbourhood, whose houses were tattooed with craves built in Baghdadi bricks, broken down, demolished.

The chic and clean al-Bataween neighbourhood was the centre of Baghdad now fell down during the last two decades to be a house hold for baggers and vagabonds. Its real residents left their homes willingly or unwillingly.

So, its names related always to homeless groups, using and trading with drugs and taking part in violence and crimes. That neighbourhood was used by unclean riff raff, renting it houses and departments out of law control.

That Morning in al-Bataween was clearly unlike other neighbourhoods. As you enter the neighbourhood's alleys, you will find yourself in another world! Where people there gathered from all around country, birds of the same feather, the society dregs, bunches of losers.

Usually that guy you look at would zonk out on street pavements, after being high and injecting with drugs and having alcohol. He was really passed two years in Law College unfortunately. That time he was dreaming to graduate and defends for poor's rights. But all that was gone with the wind.

With some unlucky events, which showed up upon his road, albeit de struggled hard but in vain. The first step he was forced to give up some

of his principles just to sail his ship safe. But at the end he found himself lost a lot. And little by little depression came and had upper hand on him, driven him to the most hellish tracks. So you find him over there on al-Bataween unclean pavements. That what Ahmed, Abu Ali a coffee shop worker said.

Now he was spending most of his days, high numbed of poisonous things. Now he was spending his days, high numbed. After being useless to keep up his rights to find stranger guy, who has seen him his life like a close friend to him friend of fate and vagabonds, even he did not read or write, but he would be a good hand for him.

Drinks and drugs immediately were serviced. This guy has alias name, as Muaid. Abu-Khalid who pumped his wife and kids, did not hesitate at get at him, with a loop of words to and how he left his beautiful wife who was of a rich family" top "as dubbed her according to his low language.

But Abu-Khalid did not give back any answer, nothing but wine and drug could be his consolation. Now living his days and working at one of the disrespected hotel in al-Bataween. In a hotel in which prostitution the main earning, He usually does clean floor and guard, for the sake of having a satisfied turn of drug and cheap alcohol.

for him is enough to let him sleep like a bear before he returned back to life again and wonder around at al-Bataween streets and more than one agreement, I have been made with

him, Abu-Khalid, but as soon as we agreed last-  
ly, suddenly he would deny it and ward off of  
what he said before few minutes.

I could fix up his reluctance, albeit he was un-  
happy and short breath as his feeling had been  
frozen. With little money he would buy for him  
packet of cigars. As I keeping him a friend as  
he who knew a lot of al-Bataween underworld.

I saw a sign of tourist hole. One must not be  
frowned over such signs at al-Bataween most  
hotels, but you have to know; sometimes there  
you would go to unclean hotels that lack of the  
simplest condition of any suitable hotels, the  
vomiting smell. Here the word tourist means,  
you can have hot hours with some girls who  
would show to you till you satisfy with one.  
Again with the help of Abu-Khalid who could  
enter to nay hotels with his nice reputation!!

Through the old alleys I passed and saw a  
house of the beautiful time. The houses in  
al-Bataween were amazingly distinguished. It  
was established at the mid of 19930. In such  
harmony, and being similar ways in construc-  
tion as decorations cove up all the façade. There  
nothing you might look at garbage tons which  
hid it scenes as today.

The beautiful construction and fancy scenes  
as easily as could be seen. The amazingly deco-  
rated skilfully on its doors and facade reflecting  
it residents taste and nature. Albeit you enter  
a solitary and secluded house you can see the  
small slits and windows were built in a way  
which easy up the scorching hot sun summer in  
Baghdad.

At the house middle an open yard' al-Hosh" when by it you can look at sky around it there  
were several rooms and a stair which leading  
you to the upper floor. It is similar to the ground-  
ed floor. There was a long portico surrounded  
by other nice rooms. Its gates were overlooking  
on the grounded yard. The houses were built  
of special kind of Baghdadi bricks used only in  
1960s.

One of most estate dealer in al-Bataween said:  
there two events which were totally considered  
as disastrous to al-Bataween community. The  
first when there was a Jewish deportations and  
looting their properties in 1948. The second  
event when the Christians of al-Bataween, most  
of them decided to leave the neighbourhood.

As there arriving new residents in, people

who are not from the same prestige and people  
tradition, so that pushed the famous families to  
move on into another neighbourhood in Bagh-  
dad.

You can go and see over there al-Orfali family  
house and Baghdad police manager, I remem-  
ber he was one of the residents near Abu-Nuwas  
street there still stood Zuha Hadeed the Iraqi fa-  
mous architect .

It was much more than once and the Iraqi po-  
licemen would announce of arresting drug pills  
dealers and porno discs in al-Bataween. But the  
civil society organizations accuse the police-  
men in al-Sadoon area of protecting the gangs  
there for huge amounts of bribes.

The official speaker in behalf of Baghda-  
di municipal, Abdul-Hakeem Abdul-Zahra:  
al-Bataween is definitely is an important neigh-  
bourhood, lied upon the heat of Baghdad but  
according to the Iraqi regulations. Al-Bataween  
did not considered as traditional areas, such as  
al-Rasheed and al-Nahar Street.

He then followed up and said: but albeit the  
importance of al-Bataween area and its ap-  
proaching of the traditional period, all is to be  
one of the prior attentions. as it has been settled  
down by families that played an important role  
in Iraq history, such as al-Orfali family and Zuha  
Hadeed family and other of political amid artis-  
tic characters

Later after my feature was published and as I  
returned back to my newspaper site, the recep-  
tion guy stopped me, and said with so admon-  
ishing a tone in his voice: "Sir, some policemen  
were here and asked about you. And I asked  
why. He said they were so angry due to what you  
have written about them. They were talking as  
if there were ants in their pants, so be careful".  
After his word I never passed on in al-Bataween  
for four months hoping those policemen will  
forget what I have written about them

Note: Most names mentioned here have been  
changed for security reasons ■

# Who is the Bully in This Neighbourhood

By Mufeed Waheed Al-Safi

**Hajji Fuad Ali Al-Qaisi dragged his short steps slowly inside al-Fadhl n, sat down on arrow alley , heading to its famous mosque, Although it was rather cold, but he apparently seemed rather accustomed to such kind of interviews. He definitely came to this life at this undisturbed neighborhood. He could not remember one day he thought of leaving it. Why he would do that? It is certainly the home of his father and grandfather before.**

Dashing in the empty mosque, at that Baghda-di morning, really at that time, I was in fear not from God, but for my ski I stepped in this unwelcomed neighbourhood, after the ex-fallen regime. All residents around realized the social tensions getting so worse.

Before Hajji Fuad was coming, I took some steps around, Al-Fadhl great mosque. Really it was built in a very smart way. In this neighbourhood you could see new aspects of Bagh-dadi antique city. Could it remind you of Abbasid golden time and Haroon al-Rasheed? Now he looked to sky and spoke to a huge cloud: You cloud pour on your rain what whatever you rain, your fine money would come back to me. What contrast present scenes now!

One of the neighbours who departed early told me, after he realized how the violent gangs presently drew in fresh young men. It began with video films of propaganda on its members from Chechen al-Qaqa al-Checheni, then taking a head to planning blasts and bombs before American patrols then the third level; they would target the Iraqi police men and army. Later they headed to ordinary people. Then it ended up robbing banks and jewellery shops to fund their evil activities. They would now force other sects to depart this

neighbourhood.

Some waves of dusty wind would shake on some parts. You could hear the sound of Taxi drivers, shouting for their turns. From time to time you could see drunken men who addicted to alcohol, or beggars whom you can distinguish them so easily. A woman I often see under that building with her unhappy face, selling some bonbon and chocolates and gums. . How many times I passed here. But I never saw her once smiling. As if sadness was only her feature.

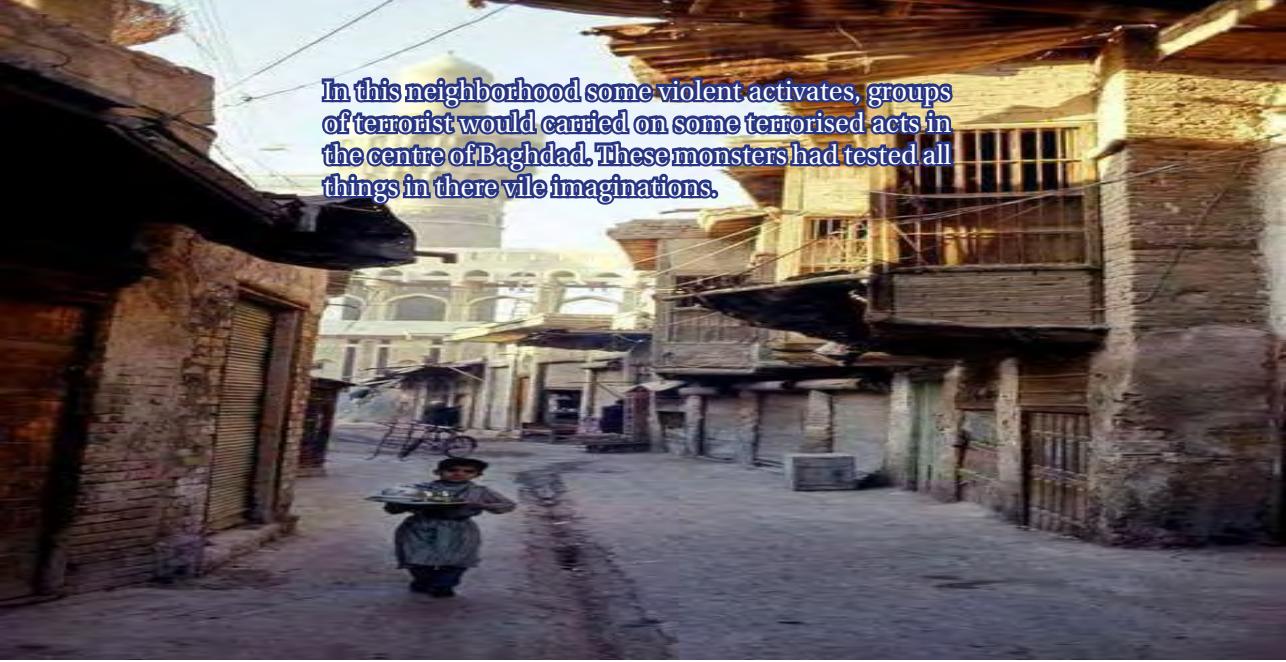
Hajji Fuad came in his slow steps, and he would not like to unveil in what sectarian belonging he is from, as most Baghdadi people. He was born in neighbourhood. He knew that ministers and bullies really left this neighbourhood long time ago. He said: Here lived the prime ministers Noori al-Saeed pasha, all people knew that. This neighbourhood had great figures in its history. Of the bullies you can say, Khaleel Abu-al-Hob, he was named the prince of the needy in his time.

After the regime falling apart, he would listen to hot political discussions which sometimes broke out in the public buses of. And sometimes the debate would end up with a battle in nails and teeth.

Once I was sitting in the bus and men who were sitting next to me, indulged in hot discus-



**In this neighborhood some violent activates, groups of terrorist would carried on some terrorised acts in the centre of Baghdad. These monsters had tested all things in there vile imaginations.**



sion politically. The first told him he is an employee. And the second said he had not to go to his office, and when He asked him way. And when he asked him why the other told him because you have to show your objection to the American occupation!!

At this time there was gas small cart selling iron containers to houses, what sad tune coming from the cart. Later the sound passed away little by little.

As you close in into this neighbourhood, Still inhaled the nicely breeze of the Baghdadi alley. You will see from the signs of election what its residents prefer.

From time to time, I see little kids bouncing on from the doors of their houses to school. Their mother in their Abays would run after them, shouting at them to go to school. Fathers did not come back from work. And the houses would be clean.

Hajji Fuad al-Qaisi 76-year-old started up on the mosque which the neighbourhood named after" If you want to know the story of this neighbourhood you should began from this mosque: "This mosque named after Imam Mohammed Bin al-Fadhl Bin al-Yasar al-Esrafini. He was a religious scientist, born in Mecca, learned jurisprudence in al-Madeena al-Munawara. Later he came in to Baghdad for the sake of having religious studies, turned out to be one of the highly qualified scientists in Baghdad.

Our neighbourhood like most of Baghdadi neighbourhood hit its roots long, long time ago. At this moment he sighed a little as remembered his childhood as he looked at the garden in front of the high wall with four curved large windows. How many times he played hide and seek here when he was a kid. In the garden there were a palm tree and orange and vine trees. They were small gathered around the empty urn for water.

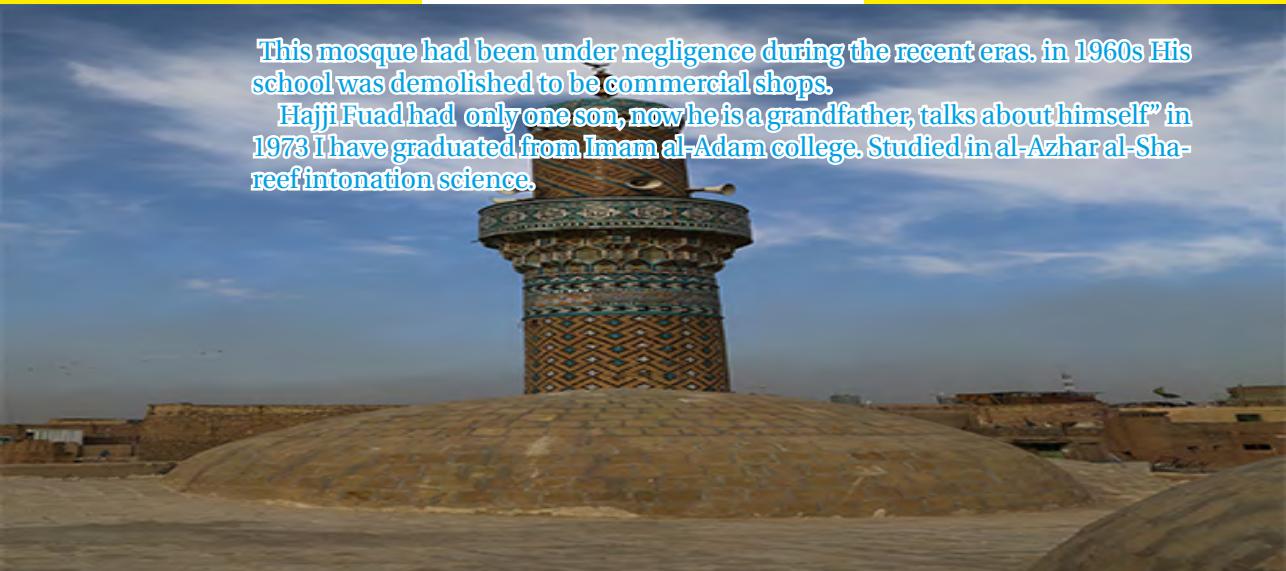
Hajji Fuad went on and said: after Al-Fadhl's last breath, he was laid down next to his school, which is now well-known of al-Fadhliya school. In al-Madeena he was a believer of al-Maliki thought, but in Baghdad he converted to Imam Abu-Haneefa thought. He was issuing forth fatwas on faith with all other Islamic sects. At the last time of al-Abbasid era and at al-Mustadhir caliph days, he who ordered to established a mosque next to his shrine honourably to his name.

"Then people used to live beside his shrine. And this is normal in Iraq. All the sacred cities in Iraq is simply extended close to prophet or imam. Till it turned in to be a quite populous area and even this neighbourhood named after him."

Hajji Fuad went on in is woes and said: In 1209 Hegira date, an operation to rehabilitate of this mosque has been ended up. The mosque since then used to be a religious school- presently this school was not existed. From here graduated highly classified scientists and jurists and litera-

**This mosque had been under negligence during the recent eras. in 1960s His school was demolished to be commercial shops.**

**Hajji Fuad had only one son, now he is a grandfather, talks about himself" in 1973 I have graduated from Imam al-Adam college. Studied in al-Azhar al-Sha-reef intonation science.**



ture men, like Maroof al-Risafi and Jameel Sidqi al-Zihawi, of the scientists who graduated from was Imam Mohammed al-Jawi from Indonesia.

Of its teachers was the late sheik Mahmood Shukri al-Aloosi( Abu-al-Thana) and the scholar sheikh Abdul-wahab al Nayib and his brother Sheik scholar Saeed al-Nayib, both were respected religious men. In the very mosque cemetery were rest in peace with some of their sons.

This mosque had been under negligence during the recent eras. In 1960s its school was demolished to be commercial shops.

Hajji Fuad has only one son, and three grandsons. Now he talks about him" in 1973 I have graduated from Imam al-Adam College. I studied in al-Azhar al-Shareef intonation science. In 1966-1968 I have graduated from the high institute for Quran in al-Azhar University. I have a certificate signed by Abdul-Basit abdul-Samad and sheikh Abu-Ainain al-Shuaisha and Mustfa Ismail.

In Baghdad I have been taught by the late sheikh khaleel Ismail and the late Hajji Mahmood Abdul-Wahab. Al-Awqaf did not one day ask about me as I have working in this mosque since I was five years old. Had not the people taking care of this mosque, it really would be in extreme negligence.

Hajji Fuad took steps around the large yard in the old mosque, having a glance toward the settee, the summer praying location, with an area nearly 300 meter cubic, roofed with a wide cover of metal sheets. It really produces a long shadow in summer.

Now he advanced to the manly Haram, stopped

near the wooden rostrum which lied down at the middle with its direction into Kiblah. How many speeches said nicely here? Then he read al-Fatiha verse of Quran before the grave of Imam Mohammed al-Fadhl, his words were murmured slowly, before the rostrum there was a box of natural wood in as cocoa colour as the Awqaf directorate had confiscated the original box that had been of wood.

He hesitated a little then said. "That box was not given back to the mosque since a long time. To the right it was womanly Haram in which women do service of praying especially on Fridays.

Later, he got out into the yard again. He pointed out into the minaret and said quietly: This minaret as you see so beautiful, still kept it up its splendour. It was re-built in 1209 H. It had more than fifty meter long. There were drawn Islamic shapes in three places in yellow and blue. Look at how nicely to look at, and the harmony with the blue sky.

After this time, before entering into a small cemetery which lied upon the east side of the mosque, hall as he hesitated a little he then read in a sign of white marble. It was written on it six verses of Arab poet Maroof al-Risafi when he was still a student in the school announcing the death of his teacher the genius Abdul-Wahab al-Nayib who used to teach in the mosque school said. Well done o grave of what you have in. It is the most generous man, but now he is under of the Lord merciful and gracious.

Who used to enliven up heart in sermon... and who guide the one who wants and be in.. he

was really a statue of morality.. And for purity was the first one.. The school of knowledge is crying for you.. I swore to God the is the best lost. All morality had withered after you.. Impossibly it will bring as you. In the meadow of paradise he went. Surly he was so happy there.

As he returned back to reality he said about the small graves of eight religious men: Here rest in peace the late Sheikh Abdul Wahab al-Nayib, this nick name he had acquitted during the time of Othman state. The grave of his sons like Sheikh Fuad and Hassan al-nab and Sheikh Othman al-Nayib and the grave of Saeed al-Nayib a brother to sheikh Abdul-wahab and his sons sheikh Jalal al-Nayib and Alaa al-Deen al-Nayib and Sheikh Baha al-Nayib.

Now Hajji Fuad turned around to find some elders who gathered already, spoke with them a little, then he wanted to confirm his words saying: "if you start off from the north of neighbourhood as their small neighbourhood linked up to it like Khan Lawand and al-Iza and Joba and Hori shop coffee and fadhwat Qart Shaban, then Saeed Abdullah and al-Mahdiy and Sheikh Hadeed and Sit Hadayit. It is said she a daughter to imam al-Kadhim. Then one could see the Public bath al-Malih and Ghargool and Kurd.

Hajji Fuad walked on slowly before Mohammed Bin Saeed al-Naqshabani's house, in Bagh-dad here all the great sounds of Sufi methods born here. Yes he was the most distinguished Sufi.

Fortunately al-Naqshabandi grandson was the apple that did not drop far away from the tree. He tuned to be a sheikh, Baha al-Deen al-Naqshabandi. But he entered into political road and reached the Iraqi parliament, when other next countries did not know what mean of parliament.

At the small restaurant

These three old men gathered around here, I chose a solitary table, to listen to them carefully and be bothered with customers who are coming and going.

Hajji Fuad and, with his friend Abu Saeed, a retired taxi driver, and Abu Youssef a retired school teacher were gathering around the table Hajji Fuad, was the first who opened this debate, he could give you more details about the life in this neighbourhood, and from time to

time, some others guys who came in and salute them: Abu Saeed, the old taxi driver went on saying:

"Our neighbourhood al-Fadil was really a great neighbourhood. it participated in making Bagh-dad history, this is no doubt in it, In here lived a lot of great families who effected the political situation in Iraq.

The restaurant members was serving its customers with the famous Beans with oil and egg, but those who gathered on my table sufficed with tea only

Hajji Fuad went on in giving more details about his neighbourhood. He seemed so enthusiastic in narrating such kind of tales. I shared in the conversation and told them;

I remembered as I was crossing the street. I have seen a brawl; one could not forget easily, there was shouting and very crowd people. It was very hard to pass through amid people. What is going on suddenly thee to old taxi pulled over and there was guy in his forties, he was shouting

- Who hurt my nephew, who did it?

And as soon as that poor driver got out of his car the furious man dealt with him with a punch on his mouth while still keep shoutingThat made blood gushing over his mouth. I was looking an innocent look upon his face. So I tried to get out of the crowd.

Hajji Mihsan in his six decade said: That is happening everywhere. But if you asked about the bullies in our neighbourhood, listen to what I would say. Sometimes the three old men participating together in telling the same story in short sentences, but I tried to take information from each one of them

. Here Hajji Abbas al-Deech was really one of famous wrestlers. How many untold stores these capitals have? Do not forget Bab al-Tulisim. This site was built since Abbasid time.

And Khaleel Abulhob was Robin Hood in Bagh-dad, taking care of the poor, khaleel Abu-al-Hoob, they said he was affiliated in a communist party, but later some members from Baath party has assassinated him

At Othman era they used it as arms arsenal. At the modern time, it was used for bullies shelter and a test for their strength and not being afraid. I remember Tahha Bin al-Khabasza, his mother crafted as a baker. His secret word when trying to show up, he would say: we are of Bab-

al-Tulisim sons, as he is not afraid of death and haunted sites.

Al-Aza and al-Qaisi which are almost tribes settled down in this neighbourhood. It was not too far from al-Qishla where the Turkish military base. It was reportedly tribe they were brought in by Ottoman just to protect the military roads. It was permitted to settle down by Othman. They fought against Safawayinn. When other fancy neighbourhoods were built, the rich families would leave older neighbourhoods, as if they did not been there for one day.

Shop coffee everywhere here, this truly normally in Baghdad, as you pass there, you could smell the kitchen food smell, and if you have a smart nose, you could recognise what they cook for that day.

The school teacher, Abu-Yousif said trying to change the subject: The modern sounds of Haqi al-Shibli, father of theatre in country still there, then their tow important figures in art, painters, Jawad Saleem and Faiq Saleem. What great names this neighbourhood has really.

Hajj Fuad said: I used to do some service often to the scientist Mustafa Jawad as he settled down our neighbourhood. He was my personal neighbour after he came in with his mother from Diyala. He worked as a teacher; his mother was really very kind woman; God have mercy on their souls. She used to drop visits always. And when her son retuned back we told her your son Mustafa had retuned back. Later they moved on into al-Waziriyah neighbourhood behind the old Egyptian embassy.

In 1941 Colonel Kamil Shibeb, he participated in a military coup. And colonel Abdul-Azeez al-Sheik he was killed at British base walls in al-Habaniya in 1942 he also from al-Fadhil neighbourhood for military side, you can find a lot of military characters. That pilot who led his plane from Great Britain directly to mother land.

Mr. Mustafa used to send me into Mr. Ali al-Wardi, The famous socialist scientist. I was young and be so happy to do that or to Abdul-Razaq al-Hasani, the historian. Whatever he asked from them some books he got interested in. God have mercy on his soul really he

was very highly morality. No one has seen him do any amoral behaviour.

Hajj Fuad now get out of the north door through the wall which rose highly, after he send his greetings to those who attended in the shop coffee which were gathered a lot of persons who were having Iraqi Hot tea, next to them the was a bakery shop the smell of nice break issued forth from, not too far some of the posters of Iraqi new factions which did not affected by the yesterday pouring rain.

Really it is ideal Baghdadi neighbourhood. Then he disappeared suddenly as he first steps near al-kifah street, and you could not distinguish him as he passed the shops there and his last width was" can al-Awqaf

Give this mosque of the inherited shops which had been built up in lieu of its old school.

If you ask me about the bullies in this neighbourhood, gangsters, who bully others, I am going to say. They have the same term as "Fituwa" in Egypt and Qabadae" in Syria. In Iraq is probably we can distinguish, between two kinds of bullies, the good and bad.

The bully he would support the needy and the weak. , Having money from rich to give it the poor like Robin Hood, and the bad guys who stole and attack others for money. The good would not trespass the red lines in any neighbourhood and people customs like flirting neighbourhood women. There are roots on Arab land. as they were called al-Saleek.

. He controlled al-Fadhil neighbourhood and whatever close neighbourhood like al-Iza, al-Joba and al-Midan.

Hajji Fuad knew so well things have been changed dramatically in this neighbourhood. Moving his steps difficulty sometimes he realized his turn is coming to depart. He still comes every morning to pray in this mosque.

As he depart his cosy house, he would hear the murmur of his neighbourhood would recite in him all memoires, some happy and some are not.

Hajji Fuad's only son was married in the same house he was born. This is a metrical in Baghdad, as the people of Baghdad always accustomed to leave their cites, all the time.

Now he has two grandsons. His son is working in al-Shurja market, he worried about him. Some things really are going on very hard.

He seemed as if he was forgotten in this mosque. Al-Sunnite Awqaf has left him here. He liked his grandsons so much. They are the joy of his lonely life. His Neighbours that time came and complain to him that a paper was thrown to before his door. : You have to leave soon otherwise you will be killed.

Noori al-Saeed chaired as prime minister more than ten times. In case you enter the history of this neighbourhood in Baghdad into the neighbourhood of Khan Lawand an al-Barodiya and Hamam al-Malih.

Most people no won't sell their hoses in lesser prices but to move in to more quite neighbourhood. Now the spread sewage made it hard to pass and move between the allies

In this neighbourhood people there would eat the fish of which Shiite would ne4ver get approach as it Haram in though. Smoke fly over, check point, no more beautiful decoration at the old wooden houses façades. Crowds and car jams, garbage are spread here as municipal worker fear to come into this alleys of neighbourhood. But despite of that you could see Sayid Abdul, son of imam of Shiite., In the open restaurant" Anker" the most famous and Kuba Amam , the most famous one.

During Ottoman era there appeared a Shaqi figure out the good guy or the bad guy. As Othman needs Shiite tribes to protect caravan's army from being attacked there lived and let lived suite tribes al-Qaisi and al-Ubaid and al-Qaisi but during fall the social and economic conditions it appeared.

There was one so famous bully he name was kirdash, fierce man. He had seen his two sons

Shihab and Mahmood. He said the original meaning of bully one who got wrong doings, came from a-Mutnabi greatest Arab poet lines when he said once. He who has minded lived in paradise in misery...

And he who is ignorant lives happily in misery life. A guy who would be known for his virile strength and appalling presence in a neighbourhood and protect neighbours. When he broke out skirmishes with other neighbourhoods.

In Bab al-Muadim there were neighbourhood like al-Hayder kana and al-Tob an al-Fadil. There appeared the family of Ahmed Kirdahs. He is a man who came from Kirkuk.

In 1870 he came to Baghdad and settled down there. And married a Baghdadi girl who born three boys to him Shihab and Mahmud and Abbas. He was really known for his bullies and courage and human stands. As he helped the poor and needy and widows and confronting strangers and aggressors who want to harm the people of is neighbourhood.

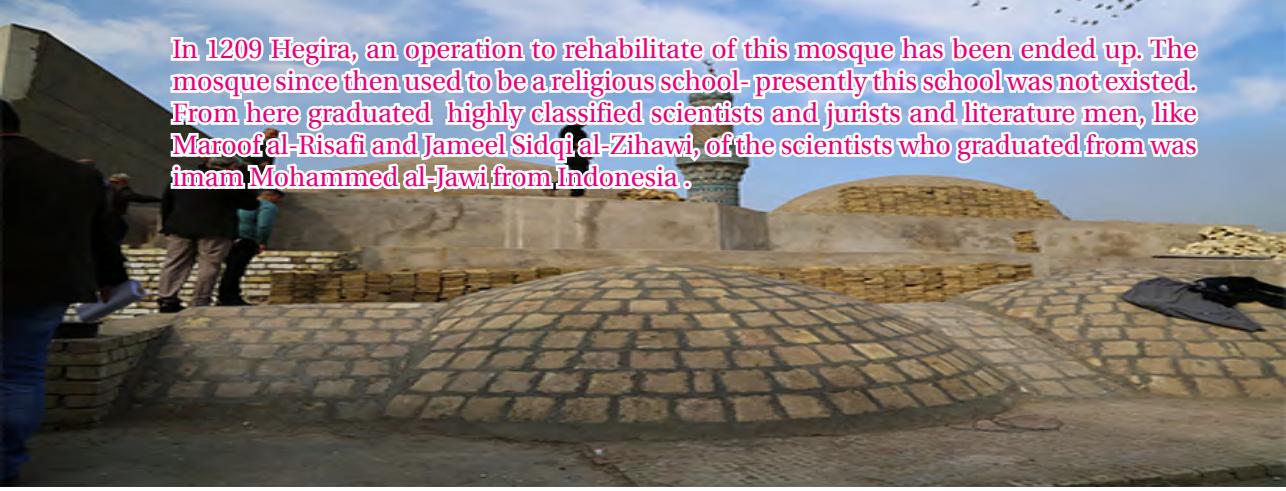
One of his famous witty stories about this bully, I am going to tell you. In the hot summer days, Ahmed Kirdash breaks in, with his bunch of group into the house of Jewish trader. Ti was night.

Time is passing here so quick, and those old men could give more stories and more as if they were sharing the one thousand night and night stories.

Abu-Mazin went on in his story:

A Jewish trader was sleeping with his wife at the house roof as most Baghdadi do that. So Ahmed Kirdash ascended to the house roof. He found nearby the bed of the Jewish man, a palm basket which covered to pots small in Rice and Bamiay

In 1209 Hegira, an operation to rehabilitate of this mosque has been ended up. The mosque since then used to be a religious school- presently this school was not existed. From here graduated highly classified scientists and jurists and literature men, like Maroof al-Risafi and Jameel Sidqial-Zihawi, of the scientists who graduated from was imam Mohammed al-Jawi from Indonesia .



cooked she he liked to have something from it, and eat and full, the he drank from the mud clay "Tingha" which was put on the roof fence.

Later he descended hurriedly to his gang to find them collecting material and stuff which they wanted to steal. Here he ordered them to leave it all and return it back to its older places. He told them: I have eaten from this house and there turned to be between us rice and salt, so I have to respect that. In our code there is forbidden to steel from the house you eat in it.

So we have not to steal anything which belongs to this house. Truly we are bullies and we do not fear anyone but we fear God.

And our way of living and traditional morality we have to do this. Then he used to threaten anyone who disobeys him: I am going to cut his chest with this dagger. So they left the house safe and sound.

Abu Mazin went on and said: His son, Shihab, had been executed in 1940 over killing to a policeman. His second Mahmood was an athletic in lifting weights in Zor Khana (building body site) next to Hassan Ajami coffee shop. He never quarrelled or hurt others. And as in one in night club eh was spend his times with the son of Prime Minister Noori al-Saeed. There was skirmish between them and the police interfered and arrest him. But after few days the prime minister had released him. He ordered his son to give up his right.

Later he was accused of killing a person named Jabbar Abu-Pacha. Then he was convicted of twenty years in prison. After he spent three years, they found the real killers, then he was appointed as a driver in fire-fighters office and stayed in this duty till retirement.

Al-Baghdadi narrated a beautiful story about a bully named Mamoodi. Who liked to hear stories and tales at shop coffee as most people do of that time, listening to it by the narrator or Qusakhon, during the time there was not TV in houses.

One night a story normally narrated on Abu Zaid al-Hilali the folkloric, famous in Arab communities. When the narrator reached to the moment as Abu-Zaid was coped by the hands of his enemies and put to jail. The narrator stopped here

So, he postponed the rest next night and went home. But, as he reached home, he get sur-

prised, when he found the bully Mamodi waiting for him with a long dagger in his right hand, so he jumped in asking:

" It is better for you to release Abu-Zaid from person now? Thus under an oil lantern light which the municipal of Baghdad used during these days, the narrator opened the book stories and complete his story in a low voice.

How the hero Abu-Zaid could break out of his cell roof and run always from prison.

Here the bully Mamodi relaxed and walk out to his business. While the narrator was laughing with all his heart and returned home safe and sound

Abu- Mazin he had to leave his residence in Al-Fadhil, after he was received several threatening papers, ordering him to leave his place, and Now he asked his friend Hajji Fuad about his house condition and the new residents who rented his house.

Those thee friends did not expose their sectorial roots to me, but I understand, that Hajji Fuad is Sunnite, Abu Mazin is Shiite while the school teacher.

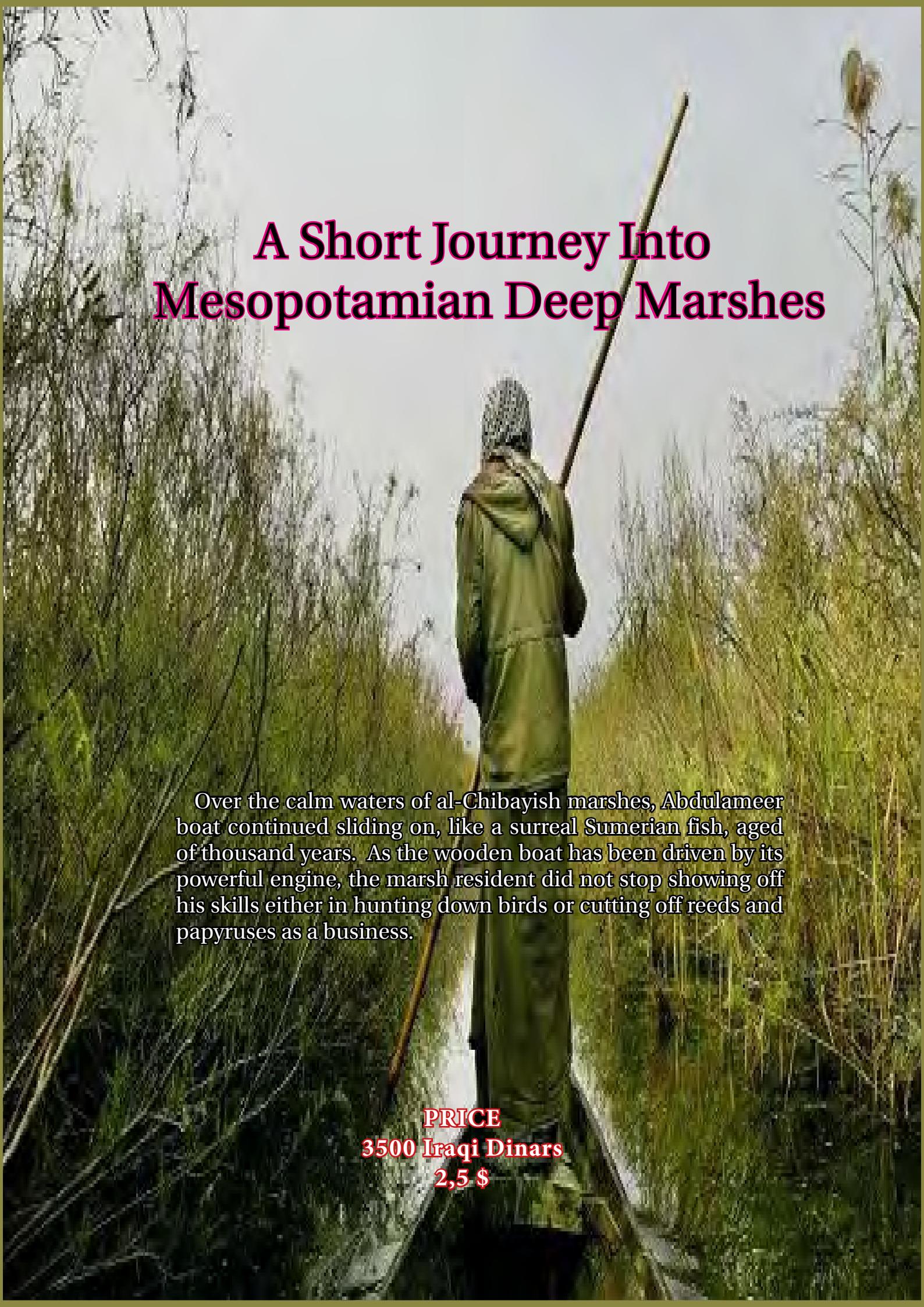
Why he asked him that. What he could do to him? Yes there were some brawls that took place. But to totally normal Baghdadi neighbourhoods, it could not reach into that level. Now he passed before that house. Jawad here could not know what sect he belonged to. His neighbour, Abu-Mazin his neighbour told him. An American patrol came to check up the house and find a rifle machine gun. They left it with him even give him ammunition: and said: if there militia men storm your house, you cool defend yourselves.

Hajji Fuad always was in fear about his son safety. We prayed to God to return back safe and sound. Some new faces did display, he did not see them before into this neighbourhood.

Reported by Younis Saeed







# A Short Journey Into Mesopotamian Deep Marshes

Over the calm waters of al-Chibayish marshes, Abdulameer boat continued sliding on, like a surreal Sumerian fish, aged of thousand years. As the wooden boat has been driven by its powerful engine, the marsh resident did not stop showing off his skills either in hunting down birds or cutting off reeds and papyrus as a business.

**PRICE**  
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