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DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY PATTERNS
IN THE
ASSYRIAN COMMUNITY

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of Beirut College for Women
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Bachelor of Arts

by

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To

My Father and Mother

Biographical Sketch

The writer of this thesis was born in Baghdad, Iraq, of Armenian and Assyrian parentage and raised in an Assyrian community. She attended three elementary classes in the Assyrian School in Habbaniya. Her father was the principal of that school at the time. Due to the change of her father's occupation, her family changed residence and came to live in Baghdad. At the age of 10 she entered the third elementary class in the American Girls' School where she received her elementary and secondary education, thus graduating with a high school diploma in the year 1953.

In the same year she came as a freshman student to the Beirut College for Women. She obtained the Associate in Applied Science degree in the year 1955. During the last two years she worked for the Bachelor of Arts degree in the field of Child Development and Family Life.

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Table of Contents

Biographical Sketch	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Introduction	v
Part I: Historical Background	1
Part II: Influences: Geographical and Cultural	10
Part III: Family Patterns Before the Christian Era	13
Part IV: Family Patterns After Christianization	27
Part V: Report of the Writer's Investigation	39
A. Religious Laws - marriage, divorce, inheritance, legal responsibilities and guardianship of children	39
B. Results of the Survey	45
Background of Subjects	45
Courtship and Marriage	46
Size of the Family and Educational Achievement	52
Attitudes Towards Children	56
Authority or Control	58
Between Subjects and Their Parents	58
Between Subjects and Their Children	59
Relationships	63
Finances	65
Division of Work	69
Leisure Time	69
Loyalty to Family	70
Family in Society	71
Divorce - Social Attitude	72

Arts	72
Emotional Behavior	73
Food	74
Health	75
Beliefs and Superstitions	76
Some Attitudes	76
Opinions on the Present Assyrian Condition	78
C. Reports from the Iranian and American Families	80
Part VI: General Observations and Conclusion	92
Appendix - Questionnaire	102
Bibliography	113

Introduction

This thesis attempts a study of the family patterns in the Assyrian community in periods before Christianity and after Christianity with observations from the present day.

To clarify as to who the Assyrians are, the writer has presented a brief historical background of the Assyrians since the birth of their civilization in 1450 B.C. till the twentieth century A.D.

After presenting this background the writer has attempted to describe the family patterns in the past. The thesis is handicapped in fulfilling the description of the ancient family patterns due to the limited knowledge found in the books. As there were no available primary sources the writer has consulted reliable secondary sources written by German, English and French authorities on Assyrian history. "The sources from which we derive our knowledge of the Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations which flourished in the Tigris, Euphrates plains before the Christian era, are almost exclusively the inscriptions and monuments of the two civilizations together."⁽¹⁾ "Before the decipherment of the inscriptions our knowledge of the Assyrians was confined to a few biblical references and to the legends preserved by classical authors."⁽²⁾ For example 2 Kings xvii 6.

This thesis is also limited in its description of the family patterns after Christianity for the very same reason. The two main sources that have been used are Wigram's The Assyrians and Their Neighbors and a translation from Rosenberg's Lehrbuch Der Neusyrischen. An interview

(1) L. Delaporte, Mesopotamia, p. 1.

(2) S. H. Longrigg, Chambers Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 700.

with an elderly Assyrian lady has proved to be helpful here.

As to the description of the present family patterns the writer has presented suggestions as to how the family patterns seem to be. These suggestions are the result of a survey carried out with the cooperation of 43 Assyrian families in Iraq, four families in Iran, and six in the United States. In the survey the writer has used a pre-tested questionnaire. She has also included letters from outstanding Assyrian religious leaders. In the survey **three** generations have been taken into consideration; the husband and wife questioned, their report of what their parents did and their expectation for their children.

Wherever suitable, the writer has given her own impressions of the Assyrian patterns being an Assyrian herself and having been born, raised and educated in the Assyrian community in Baghdad.

DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY PATTERNS IN THE ASSYRIAN COMMUNITY

I

Historical Background

"The Assyrians are a) the inhabitants of Ancient Assyria, and b) are today the Nestorian Christian community in Iraq."⁽¹⁾

Assyria was the center of the great Oriental empire which existed during the second and the first millennium B.C. In the Assyrian inscriptions it is referred to as "The land of Ashur." The Persians call it Athura. Ashur was originally the name of a city founded on the bank of the Tigris River. The city was given the name after the great deity, Ashur.⁽²⁾

The Assyrian empire reached its greatest limit about 650 B.C. The empire extended from the Median mountains in the east to the Khabour River in the west; from the mountains of Jebel Djudi in the north to below the junction of the rivers Tigris and Zab in the south. The subject districts included in the Assyrian empire during the seventh century were Lydia, Cyprus, and Egypt on the west; Elam and part of Media on the east; Babylonia and part of Arabia on the south. The furthest of the empire in these outlying regions were uncertain.⁽³⁾

The first capital of the empire was Ashur. Nineva, near present Mosul, was their later capital. It was called after the god Nina.⁽⁴⁾

(1) S. H. Longrigg, Chambers Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 705.

(2) Ibid., p. 700; A. H. Sayce, Assyria: Its Princes, Priests and People, p. 21; Will Durant, Our Oriental Heritage, p. 265.

(3) George Smith, Assyria, p. 7.

(4) Durant, op. cit., p. 265-266.

Historical Background

"The Assyrians are a) the inhabitants of ancient Assyria today the Western Christian community in Iraq." (1)

Assyria was the center of the great Oriental empire which during the second and first millennium B.C. In the Assyrian it is referred to as "the land of Ashur." The Assyrians call Ashur was originally the name of a city founded on the bank of the Tigris. The city was given the name after the great deity, Ashur. The Assyrian empire reached its greatest limit about 600 B.C. The empire extended from the Median mountains in the east to the Taurus mountains in the west; from the mountains of Jebel Djudi in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south. The southern part of the empire included in the Assyrian empire during the seventh century was the land of the west; Elam and part of Media on the north and part of Arabia on the south. The furthest of the Assyrian outlying regions were uncertain.

(2)

The first capital of the empire was Ashur. Nineveh, near Mosul, was their later capital. It was called after the god Ashur.

(1) S. H. Langley, *Chambers Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 705.
 (2) *Ibid.*, p. 700; A. H. Sayce, *Assyria: Its Princes, Priests, and People*, p. 21; Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 17.
 (3) George Smith, *Assyria*, p. 17.
 (4) Durant, *op. cit.*, p. 282-283.



The Assyrians are originally of a Semitic stock.⁽¹⁾ Their language, culture, and race is related to those of the Babylonians. In fact, the Assyrians inherited the Babylonian civilization, added little to it and transmitted it to the victorious barbarians.⁽²⁾ What they originally contributed was their foundation of the military empire in history.⁽³⁾

"From beginning to end they were a race of warriors, mighty in muscle and courage, abounding in proud hair and beard, standing straight, stern and stolid on their monuments....Their history is one of kings and slaves, wars and conquests, bloody victories and sudden defeat."⁽⁴⁾

The religion of Assyria was originally Babylonian. Occasional adaptations were made to meet the needs of a military state.⁽⁵⁾ They worshipped a number of deities. The chief deity and head of state was Ashur. They worshipped him "as the great god, king of the gods, and father of the gods,...they called him 'The god who created himself'."⁽⁶⁾ Two other favorite deities in Assyria were Nebu, god of the scribes and of wisdom, and Ishtar, goddess of heaven and of love. Religion played an important part in the Assyrian history. It was associated with all aspects of their life. It recognized magic and it entered into medicine. They offered sacrifices and had official forms of worship.⁽⁷⁾

Like every other nation the Assyrian empire fell in due time. Other empires rose and took its place. From the south there came the descendants

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- (1) Smith, op. cit., p. 10; W. A. Wigram, Assyrians and Their Neighbors, p. 5; "Assyria", Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 338; Sayce, op. cit., p. 24; Zenaida A. Ragazin, Assyria, p. 4.
 - (2) Durant, loc. cit.
 - (3) Wigram, loc. cit.
 - (4) Durant, op. cit., p. 266.
 - (5) Ibid., p. 272; Smith, loc. cit.
 - (6) Ibid., p. 10-11.
 - (7) Ibid., p. 12; W. H. D. The World Book, Vol. I, p. 462.

of the Chaldeans or Babylonians followed by the Medo-Persians from the North and East. In spite of these conquerors the Assyrian stock "was by no means exterminated--at least there is no evidence of such destruction--and seemingly continued to exist in its old home"⁽¹⁾ around the old capital in northern Iraq. From then on the Assyrians have been under the rule of one nation or another--Greeks, Persians and Mongol came and went.⁽²⁾

During the Parthian period 240 B.C. till 240 A.D.⁽³⁾ the Assyrians seem to have been left to their own customs.⁽⁴⁾

From the two similar tongues, the Hebrew and Assyrian, there derived the Syriac language which became popular all over Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. It is said that Jesus "spoke it habitually."⁽⁵⁾

"It was in this period of Parthian rule...that Christianity was first preached in Assyria. The faith was brought by teachers who arrived in the country from Edessa on the Euphrates."⁽⁶⁾ Any traveler from Syria to Adiabene (the ancient name for the province of Mosul) had to pass through Edessa.⁽⁷⁾ From the church of Edessa the missionaries went to the land of Adiabene. Traditionally the names of the first two teachers have been kept, viz., Adai and Mari. "Belief held that Adai was either one of the twelve Apostles; or at least one of the 'seventy'...."⁽⁸⁾ He seems to have lived in Adiabene. "Mari went further, evangelizing the land of Babylonia...."⁽⁹⁾ Christianity spread very rapidly in the Persian province of Adrabene in the north of the land. There, the peasants were of the old

(1) Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 12.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 17.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 26.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 27.

(6) *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 34.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 35.

(9) *Ibid.*

Assyrian stock...."(1)

"The coming of Christianity had given to the old Assyrian stock a focus on which they could unite their old national feeling, and which could arouse in their people a sense of union."(2)

Before the end of the Parthian rule the Old and the New Testaments were available in Syriac version. The Church was organized and self-governing.(3)

By the fall of the Parthian Empire the Assyrians became subjects to the rule of the Sassanid Kings of Persia in the period 225-640 A.D.(4) In the early period the Christian Nestorian Church was left alone.(5) Later, many years of persecution followed when Constantine made the Roman Empire officially Christian. The Assyrians were persecuted whenever there was war between the Persians and the Romans.(6)

The Persian empire was overthrown by the Arabs.(7) The Assyrians could do nothing but keep quiet.(8) They were given the right to practice their religion.(9) They settled down to the life of a 'millet' under the Mohammedan rule. They had their own Patriarch. There was occasional massacre when anything happened to irritate the authority.(10) The Christians during this period were the only educated class. Through them the Greek learnings were made known to the Arabs. The Assyrians had their colleges at Nisibis and at Seleucia. Plato and Aristotle were taught in Syriac and later in Arabic.

(1) Ibid., p. 36; J. Stewart, Nestorian Missionary Enterprise, p. xxx.

(2) Wigram, op. cit., p. 39.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid., p. 41.

(5) Ibid., p. 49.

(6) Ibid., pp. 50-71.

(7) Ibid., p. 71.

(8) Ibid., p. 75.

(9) Ibid., p. 76.

(10) Ibid., pp. 78-79.

Arabs became acquainted with Greek learning and then they, the Arabs, passed this same learning to Western Europe after the dark ages. (1)

The Church was at its greatest extension. The Assyrian or Nestorian Missionaries were very active. They reached India, Ceylon, Central Asia, Burma, Siam, Turkistan, China and Japan. Christianity was first introduced in China during "Tsung" dynasty (500-900 A.D. approx.). (2)

After the year 1000 A.D. the Assyrians were under the rule of Seljuk Turks. They were living as quietly as circumstances would allow. (3)

In 1241 when the Assyrians were under the Mongol rule they were appointed as ministers to Kuyuk, grandson of Jenghiz Khan, who was inclined to Christianity. (4) Later on the conditions were very bad. What had been built in ages now was destroyed by the Tartar flood. There were general massacres. The Assyrians suffered as others did. With the decline of civilization and the lowering level of life, the Assyrians went down too. (5)

Before the close of the fourteenth century, the lands were conquered by Tamerlane, Timur the Tartar. He was very destructive, and merciless to Christians. The Assyrians left Adiabene and were swept to the mountains of Hakkiari which became their home until the twentieth century and the First World War. Others lived in the provinces by Lake Urmi in Persia. (6)

After Tamerlane the Ottoman Turks came to power. During this rule the Assyrians lived in the Hakkiari mountains under feudal conditions, each tribe remaining on its own estate or province. "Ashirat" tribes were subject to their Patriarch who had now become a great mountain chief. The

(1) Ibid., pp. 82-83.

(2) Ibid., pp. 83-85; Stewart, op. cit., p. 307.

(3) Wigram, op. cit., p. 104.

(4) Ibid., p. 121.

(5) Ibid., p. 132.

(6) Ibid., pp. 142-145.

word "Ashirat" is used to mean "tribal".⁽¹⁾ These tribes lived among the Kurds. The Assyrians were better fighters than the Kurds but unfortunately they did not unite together against the common danger. They were as quarrelsome as of old. In the year 1847 disaster fell upon them. Bedru Khan Beg, the Amir of the mountain district of Bohtan, was a fanatic Mohammedan. He attacked the Christians. Instead of holding together, each tribe hoped to save itself by remaining neutral while others were destroyed. There were fearful massacres. The Patriarchal House escaped. The Kurds saved some Christians from destruction. They were kept to cultivate the land.⁽²⁾

The Assyrians who were residing in Persia passed through similar treatment but in milder form. In 1896, the remnants of the Church submitted to the Mission sent to educate them by the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russians gave them protection as long as their power to protect anyone lasted.

In 1907, equal rights for all Ottoman subjects were proclaimed. Yet that did not solve the problem. Those left of the Church in the Ashirat districts of Turkey appealed to Russia. Seeing the example of their kin in Persia, they wanted to submit to Russia.⁽³⁾ Then Turkey entered the Great War. Promises were made by the Turks to protect the Christians but these promises were never kept.⁽⁴⁾

"A new chapter in Assyrian history began in 1915 with the revolt of the Assyrians against their Turkish overlords when the Russians invaded the Van area in Turkey in that same year."⁽⁵⁾ The Assyrians asked Russia's

(1) Ibid., p. 169.
(2) Ibid., pp. 171-173.
(3) Ibid., pp. 175-176.
(4) Ibid., p. 211.
(5) Longrigg, op. cit., p. 705.

help that had never been given. The last appeal was made when the Patriarch Mar Shimun left his people in the mountains and went to Urmi, in Persia, to appeal to the Russian commander of that city. His mission was not successful so he came back to his people. Through courage and to the surprise of the Russians and Turks the Assyrians migrated to Persia. There the nation was safe for the moment. The Russian authorities recognized them as allies and gave them regular status in the war. "Mar Shimun received a decoration of a high order from the Tsar, and there seemed to be a real prospect of deliverance for the nation when the war should end in the victory of the Entente."⁽¹⁾

The British were now in possession of Baghdad. By the British advice the Assyrians made an alliance with the Armenians and also with a Kurdish chief, Simko. They wanted protection from Turkish attack.⁽²⁾

With the collapse of Russia everything changed. Simko joined the Turks and Persians. He murdered the Assyrian Patriarch. All of a sudden the nation found themselves helpless among their enemies but they had enough munitions to defend themselves against any Kurdish, Turkish, or Persian attack for some time.⁽³⁾ The duties of leadership were carried over by a woman, Surma Khanim, sister of the murdered Patriarch. The military headship was in the hands of Petros of Baz.⁽⁴⁾ Now just as the munitions were about to finish help came from the British. Some 40,000 were saved by their flight into Iraq. They lodged in the refugee camp of Baquba.⁽⁵⁾ The British authorities took care of them and the Assyrians

(1) Wigram, op. cit., p. 215.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., p. 216.

(4) Ibid., p. 220.

(5) Ibid., pp. 216-218; Longrigg, loc. cit.; David Perley, Whither Christian Missions, p. 7.

restored their health.⁽¹⁾ The British realized the military value of the Assyrians. They formed the Assyrian Levies in Iraq. They were given the task of policing the native Arabs on Britain's behalf. This aroused feeling of resentment and revenge among the natives.⁽²⁾

In the years following 1918 there were attempts to settle the Assyrians in Iraq. The attempts made to settle them at Amediya on the Turkish-Persian border failed. In 1921 a few thousand settled in the Amediya, Dohuk, and Mosul areas. In 1924 the Assyrians were driven further into Iraq due to Turkey's invasion of the land.⁽³⁾ Other efforts were made to resettle the Assyrians but the Anglo-Iraq treaty of 1930 did not promise much. The telegrams sent by Mar Shimun to the League of Nations were unheeded. The Iraqi-Assyrian feeling became worse.

In July 1933 certain Assyrian representative leaders with some hundreds of their men left Iraq seeking settlement in Syria. The French Mandatory Power advised them to return to Iraq. As they crossed the border the Iraqi army fired on the Assyrians who naturally reciprocated.⁽⁴⁾ "These few hundred Assyrians could not have been the aggressors; they had their families in Iraq."⁽⁵⁾ The result was the "massacre of 320 unarmed Assyrians including women and children by the Iraqi troops at **Simel**, the looting of nearly all their villages by tribesmen and further butchery by Iraqi soldiers."⁽⁶⁾ Again efforts were made for resettlement and there was fair progress. "Lively interest was expressed at Geneva and efforts made internationally, but never successfully, to find a new Assyrian home

(1) Longrigg, loc. cit.

(2) Perley, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

(3) Longrigg, loc. cit.

(4) Perley, op. cit., p. 21; Longrigg, loc. cit.; "Assyria", Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 463.

(5) Perley, loc. cit.

(6) Longrigg, loc. cit.

outside Iraq."⁽¹⁾ A big number of the Assyrians emigrated to Syria. They settled in the Hassacka district.⁽²⁾

"If the Assyrians are accepted as an element among the subjects of the Kingdom of Iraq, there they may perhaps have a future, and begin a new chapter of their long history in the land where that history began."⁽³⁾

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Wigram, op. cit., p. 239.

II

Influences: Geographical and Cultural

In order to understand and evaluate the family patterns in a certain nation it is important to consider the geographic environment where the nation grew up and the culture into which the families were born.

"Mesopotamia is 'the Land of the two Rivers' ("Beit Nahrein"), Tigris and Euphrates. It includes the alluvial plain from Baghdad in center of Iraq to the Persian Gulf. Mesopotamia means now not only the 'delta district' of the Tigris and Euphrates, which is Iraq proper, but also all the province called by the Arabs "the Island" (Jezireh) or the lands between those rivers, from the point where they issue from the mountains of Taurus to the sea."⁽¹⁾ Ashur was situated in the central Tigris valley.⁽²⁾

Mesopotamia is known as one of the original, maybe the oldest, hearths of civilization. The land still keeps the old types of customs⁽³⁾ "...the people are still the people of Babylonia and Assyria of old, and up to the dawn of the twentieth century the village life was still that of four thousand years ago. Many changes in the position and surroundings of the people have taken place. The customs could not resist these influences. So what had lasted for such a long time was passing away."⁽⁴⁾

The soil of Assyria was fertile. The two rivers flooded and nourished the land. Method of ridges and canals controlled the overflow. The Assyrians were agriculturors more than they were merchants. The

(1) Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

(2) Addai Scher, *Histoire de la Chaldee et de l'Assyrie.*, p. 3.

(3) Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

products of their cultivation were crops, fruits, olives, garlic, onions, lettuce, cress, beets, turnips, radishes, cucumbers, etc. They also cultivated flowers.⁽¹⁾

Besides agriculture various trades were practiced in Assyria, such as weaving, dyeing, manufacture of iron, copper sculpture, building, etc.⁽²⁾

The weather was hot in summer. That affected the style of their buildings. "...The coolest room in the house is often below the level of the courtyard, and receives very little light."⁽³⁾

The arts known to the Assyrians were painting, sculpture, carving, embossing, etc. In painting they used brilliant and well harmonized colors.⁽⁴⁾

The Assyrians excelled in their literature. They had libraries full of clay tablets. Most of our present knowledge of this civilization is from these tablets.⁽⁵⁾

The government of Assyria was monarchical. The king's power was absolute. He was the head of the army, the supreme judge.⁽⁶⁾

As mentioned in the historical background the religion of Assyria was worship of deities. They had the priesthood which formed a privileged class. They lived on the offerings of worshippers and on the revenues of the temples. A portion of the spoil from wars was given to the temple. The priests used enchantments in curing diseases and driving away the evil spirits. Astrology was practiced in making decisions. The Assyrians had a number of feasts but the most important were the "Sabbaths" which were adhered to by the Jews as well.⁽⁷⁾

(1) Smith, op. cit., p. 13.; Durant, op. cit., p. 274; Scher, loc. cit.

(2) Smith, op. cit., p. 15.

(3) G. Maspero, Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria, p. 218.

(4) Smith, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

(5) Ibid., p. 16.

(6) Ibid., p. 13.

(7) Ibid.

The Assyrian laws were arranged and written on clay tablets. They resembled the laws of the Israelites and other oriental nations.⁽¹⁾ A large portion of these laws dealt with offenses by or against women and property and rights of women.⁽²⁾

The family plays a vital part in preserving the achievements of the past. As long as the Assyrian families continued to live in the northern part of Iraq where nothing occurred to disturb their habits of life, the customs were preserved even through the period after Christianization. The Great War brought in the changes, migrations, massacres and even assimilations that altered the life and customs of this ancient Race.

In the following pages some of the family patterns pertaining to the pre-Christian period are presented. This presentation is a combination of the laws, customs, and traditions of the people in that period. Following this is a discussion of some of the similarities and changes of the early Christian era which have been recorded. Finally, we can observe the changes which have come to the families of a people, divided by distance and religious belief, still holding to what they can from their ancient heritage but striving to survive and grow stronger by adapting to their present environment.

(1) Ibid., p. 14.

(2) G. Driver and J. Miles, The Assyrian Laws, p. 12.

III

Family Patterns Before the Christian Era

Marriage laws and traditions

In Assyria the social structure of human life was crystalized. The family was rigidly cohesive.⁽¹⁾ Marriage was "both an art of civil law and a rite of domestic worship."⁽²⁾

Theoretically, monogamy was the rule but practically concubines chosen from among the slaves were tolerated.⁽³⁾ A concubine's position was always inferior to that of the legal wife.⁽⁴⁾ She had no right to wear a veil which was the distinguishing sign of a free woman.⁽⁵⁾ The concubine had certain duties to perform with respect for the legal wife. She carried her chair when she went to the temple and helped in her toilet.⁽⁶⁾

There were two forms of marriage. The most usual form was the ordinary patriarchal type. The wife would leave her own family and live with her husband. Her position would be subordinated to her husband's. The wife would bring with her a dowry and often a trousseau.⁽⁷⁾ The second form was the matrilocal type. The wife would stay in her father's house. The husband would either go and live with her or he would visit her occasionally. Her position in this case would be more free. The husband would give her a sum of money toward the maintenance of the house.⁽⁸⁾

(1) L. Delaporte, Mesopotamia, p. viii.

(2) Maspero, op. cit., p. 226.

(3) George Contenau, Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria, p. 15; Durant, op. cit., p. 275; Scher, op. cit., p. 17.

(4) Contenau, op. cit., p. 17.

(5) Ibid., p. 16.

(6) Ibid., p. 18.

(7) Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 135; Contenau, loc. cit.; Delaporte, op. cit., p. 282.

(8) Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 136; Contenau, loc. cit.; Delaporte, loc. cit.; Durant, loc. cit.

This form of marriage seems to have been either exceptional or temporary. Suggested reason was the age of the contracting parties. There is evidence of child marriage among the Assyrians in the rule which fixes the age limit of marriage for boys at ten years.⁽¹⁾ Another reason may be when the bride's family is of higher rank. Instead of accepting their daughter to live in an inferior position they take the couple in until the husband is able to support her. Or the reason may be that a man with no son adopts his son-in-law and leaves him his property after his death, etc....⁽²⁾

Marriage was preceded by the ceremony of betrothal during which the bridegroom elect poured perfumes on the girl's head. He gave her presents consisting of jewels, various objects, and provisions. After this ceremony the bride elect became fully a member of her father-in-law's household. If before the marriage the husband elect died or disappeared she would marry one of his brothers of marriageable age. If he had no brothers then she would marry one of his near relatives. But if none had reached the legal age which was ten, only then her father would resume all his rights over her. He could give her in marriage to another family provided he gives back all the presents that she had received except those consisting of food.⁽³⁾

Marriage was a big event. The parents played a big role in their children's marriage. The mother of a young man, rich, good-looking and with an honorable profession found no difficulty in seeking a bride for him. Such a young man could choose almost any girl he liked. The mother was usually concerned about the best fashion of marriage for her son.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 140.

(2) Ibid., p. 141.

(3) Delaparte, op. cit., pp. 281-282.; Contenau, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

(4) Maspero, loc. cit.

She would try to avoid buying the bride. She would try to find a rich girl for her son so he wouldn't have to pay for her or settle a dowry. On her visits she would look for a family which has a thirteen year old daughter, tall, slender, with bright red lips, large eyes, thick black eyebrows, meeting above the nose; who knew how to manage a house, sing, play the harp, embroider without a pattern, and read and write fluently. Her father would be a good, honest and respected man. The young man's mother would meet the girl herself and arrange the marriage with her. There would remain only the official request to be made for her.⁽¹⁾

The young man's father, looking his best, having powdered and scented himself and wearing his best robe would go to the girl's house. After a few compliments with her father, he would ask her hand. The girl's father would give an affirmative answer. They would start settling the dowry. In spite of the two men's generosity and richness they would bargain being businessmen themselves. Finally they would agree on a reasonable dowry, including silver, servants, a trousseau and furniture. They would fix the wedding day. They would start preparing for the big day. The girl has already woven and embroidered all the materials needed for her clothing and for her room. Now the girl would try to look her best to be admired by her husband. She would "bathe herself, carefully anoint her body and hair with essences, dye the palms of her hands and her nails red with henna, powder her cheeks, and darken her eyebrows."⁽²⁾ During the days of waiting, the happiest in a woman's life, her friends would gather around her, assisting and counseling her.

On the morning of the wedding day there would be a big gathering of

(1) Ibid., p. 228.

(2) Ibid., p. 229.

friends in the bride's house. The scribe would be there to draw the marriage contract. The astrologers had already been consulted and it had been declared that the day was a lucky day. The men would be gathered in the reception rooms, while the women would be grouped around the bride in the harem. Then the usual formalities would take place. The bride's father would rise and make his offer aloud. The bridegroom's father would accept the offer and would announce the dowry he would be giving. The people would murmur approvingly. The bride would enter with her friends and women of the two families. She would stand beside the bridegroom. The groom's father would seize her hand and that of his son, lay them palm upon palm, then he would tie them together with a woolen thread as the emblem of the bond which from then on would link the wife to the husband. Then he would call upon the gods and pray for long years of happiness to the couple. Such symbolic ceremony could only be conducted by a free man. After the prayer all those present would join their blessings to his "carefully blending with them all the formulas considered infallible in averting the evil eye and all the malignant influences from the young couple....."(1)

All the time the scribe would be watching the scene seeing that everything was going on alright. Then he would start to write the formal marriage contract on a clay tablet.⁽²⁾ The witnesses would place a nail-mark or a seal upon the tablet.

"The prayer which follows the binding of the hands has invoked the blessings of heaven upon the union of the two young people; by it, and by it alone, is religion blended with marriage."⁽³⁾

(1) Ibid., p. 230.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., p. 231.

Following the reading of the contract the bride's father would command that tables be brought in and he would invite the guests to eat and drink. "The remainder of the day is passed in banquets and amusements, dancers, singers, players upon the harp and upon the flute, jugglers who perform feats of strength, story-tellers who relate fables or merry tales."⁽¹⁾ The house would be opened to whoever wants to come. The people in the neighborhood would come to congratulate the bride's and the bridegroom's parents. In the evening the bride would prepare to leave her father's house. She would weep, cling to her mother, and delay the time of departure, as every well-bred girl must do. Finally she leaves on foot, surrounded with companions. The women would make sounds of piercing cries as sign of their joy. People would be gathered to see the procession pass "with its musicians and jesters, its train of slaves, furniture and chests preceding the bride."⁽²⁾ The groom would be waiting with his groomsmen. He would welcome her upon the threshold of the house. Then the festival would continue, wine, banquet, musicians. It would go on even after the couple had gone to the harem. In fact, the rejoicing would continue for several days. Then life would be usual in the two houses. The bride would soon be accustomed to her new environment. The mother-in-law would congratulate herself for the good choice.⁽³⁾

The bride had the right to keep the presents that she had received, the dowry, etc....and they were guaranteed to her children. They were not transferable and her brothers-in-law had no claim upon them.

The bride might receive a marriage jointure. If she accepted this she became jointly answerable for the debts or obligations of her husband.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., p. 232.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Contenau, op. cit., p. 17; Delaporte, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

Divorce

The laws concerning divorce give the husband the right to put his wife away. He was not even obliged to give her anything by way of divorce money if his wife had been living with him no matter what the ground of divorce may be. It seems that the property brought to the household by her would remain at the disposal of her sons. If the divorced wife was living in her father's house the husband could take back the gifts that he had given her personally but he could not claim what he had given to her father or her family.⁽¹⁾

No grounds for the divorce are given in the documents. The husband was entitled to divorce his wife at will and send her away with nothing.⁽²⁾ "...and she 'shall go forth' empty."⁽³⁾

As to the right of the wife in putting an end to the marriage there is no hint of that.⁽⁴⁾

In addition to divorce the wife would regain her liberty if the husband were absent or missing for more than five years. The death of the husband also set a wife at liberty but not in all cases. In certain circumstances she had to marry her father-in-law, or one of her brothers-in-law or even one of her stepsons born of a different union. The widow was expected to live in her late husband's house. His children supported her. If she were the wife of a second marriage and had no children her step sons would support her. If she had children of her own and the step sons did not want to take responsibility for her then she would serve her own sons in return for food.⁽⁵⁾

(1) Delaporte, op. cit., p. 286; Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 271; Scher, op. cit., p. 17.

(2) Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 268.

(3) Ibid., p. 269.

(4) Ibid., p. 271.

(5) Delaporte, op. cit., pp. 286-287; Contenau, op. cit., p. 18; Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 415.

Childlessness was looked upon as a great misfortune even a disgrace. The law disapproved of the childless widow. It dismissed her--'she may go where she will.'⁽¹⁾

A widow who would go out into the street should have her head covered.⁽²⁾

It can be seen that a good woman was highly prized but she had no safeguard against any cruelty of her male relatives.

Inheritance

At the death of the father the family might divide the property. Sometimes it remained undivided among the sons. Sometimes the father while alive might give to one of his sons an advance on his inheritance wholly or partly if the son wanted to build a house on his own.⁽³⁾

Of the land the eldest son could choose and take two portions as his share. His brothers one after the other would choose and take their portions.⁽⁴⁾

A concubine's children had no claim on property if the late husband had one or more sons by his legal wife. If they were the only children then they would divide the whole inheritance among them.⁽⁵⁾

When the wife is living under her paternal roof and her husband dies, the ornaments become her son's property. If there were no children the husband's brothers would claim them. If, "having no sons, the deceased had already received his share of his paternal estate,"⁽⁶⁾ the ornaments including jewelry become the wife's property.

(1) Contenau, op. cit., p. 18; Scher, loc. cit.

(2) Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 407.

(3) Delaporte, op. cit., p. 289.

(4) Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 427.

(5) Delaporte, loc. cit.

(6) Ibid., p. 289-290; Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 397.

Upon entering her husband's household whatever possessions the wife brought or received from her father-in-law would belong to her sons. The brothers-in-law could not claim them.⁽¹⁾

Equal Work Laws

The work of the Assyrian woman was to knead the bread, prepare the cooking, wash the linen, and hang it out to dry. If they had slaves they would sit on cushions and chat or embroider in the open air.⁽²⁾

Towards the end of the second millennium a married woman had no definite right to engage in any business not carried by her husband, sons or brothers-in-law. She might not receive anything by way of loan from persons outside the family. Any man who engaged with her in business was considered as a criminal, even if he swore that he did not know she was married. In the first case the husband received a sum of money. In the second case the accused man was thrown into the water. If he did not drown then the husband would punish him the same as his punishment for his wife.

In the period of Sargonids (722 B.C. -) the wife had a more extensive civil personality. It is recorded that one was the proprietress with two men of an individual house and sold it without the intervention of her husband.⁽³⁾

The wife was tied more or less to the house. She would see that everything was done well. Maspero in his description of a merchant's family writes:

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- (1) Delaporte, loc. cit.
(2) Maspero, op. cit., p. 217.
(3) Delaporte, op. cit., p. 283.

"...When the merchant returns home from a long journey, his wife tells him everything that had happened during his absence--the conduct of the servants, the quality of materials that they have woven and dyed," ...and the investment that their son had made. "The father expresses his satisfaction."⁽¹⁾

Authority or Control

The family life was based strictly on patriarchal lines. "The family was constituted under the rule of a single head--the father or, on his death, the eldest son."⁽²⁾ The mother did not possess any right unless the children were minors and fatherless, fulfilling the function of guardian. The head of the family had absolute power and every right over his children. He had the right to sell them. This involved giving the child as a pledge. The father could deposit the child with a creditor as security for the repayment of a debt. He might also devote the child to the service of the temple. In other words, the head of the family had every right even to put his children to death. In the case of a daughter the father had complete authority in her marriage.⁽³⁾

Husband-Wife Relationship

The husband was dominant over his wife. She belonged to him after marriage. There were many laws that dealt with the married women and the punishment they would receive if they acted in a dishonest way. Adultery was severely punished. If a married woman was found at the

(1) Maspero, op. cit., p. 221

(2) Delaporte, op. cit., p. 288.

(3) Ibid.; Contenau, op. cit., p. 18.

house of her lover, she and her lover would be put to death. Flirtation with a married woman would bring her only unpleasant affects but if it extended to adultery both the woman and her lover would receive the same punishment.⁽¹⁾ On the other hand the husband might loose his wife and if he, for example, had visited a girl, such a girl's father would take the man's wife and give her to outrage and not return her to her husband.⁽²⁾

Parent-Child Relationship

Little is found concerning the immediate relationships between parents and children. In general children were considered as an asset to their family. It is mentioned that as the son "grows up the father confides to him the management of his fortune whilst he is absent on his journey."⁽³⁾ The son would do that successfully. Upon the father's return a report would be given by the mother as to how much has been accomplished during his absence and the transactions that the son had gone through.⁽⁴⁾

The girl was dependent on her father for getting married. He would be her protector until then. He had complete freedom to arrange her marriage exactly as he thought fit. In case of death a brother or brothers substituted for the father as a girl's protector. If the daughter had neither father nor brothers and she was in the service of another person as security for a debt of her father's then the creditor was free to dispose of her as he wished.⁽⁵⁾

(1) Delaporte, op. cit., pp. 283-284.

(2) Ibid., p. 287.

(3) Maspero, op. cit., p. 221.

(4) Ibid.

(5) Contenau, op. cit., p. 15.

Abortion

The Assyrians had strict rules concerning abortion. It was a crime that should be punished in all cases. If a woman had employed such devices on herself and was convicted of having done so, she was cursed and condemned. If she died before the intervention of justice, she was deprived of burial.⁽¹⁾

Adoption

Whether the family contained children by the legal wife or by the concubine who might be a member of it, the family had the right to adopt other children who would consequently acquire the same rights of inheritance as the other male children in the family. The ceremony of adoption made in some public part of the city was legalized in the presence of witnesses. The adopted child would obtain in his new family all the rights of a lawful descendant. In return for that he would give his new father a small present. The father acquired extensive rights over his adopted child.⁽²⁾ The adopted person was required to respect the adopter.⁽³⁾

In adopting a girl there is a rule that the adopter should not ill-treat her or dishonor her. He should give her in due time in marriage and receive a wedding gift from the bridegroom.⁽⁴⁾

Entertainments

The Assyrians' important feature of entertainment was music. They enjoyed singing and dancing. The form of dancing was "two lines of dancers

(1) Delaporte, op. cit., p. 285.

(2) Ibid., p. 289; Contenau, op. cit., pp. 18-19; Driver and Miles, op. cit., p. 222.

(3) Ibid., pp. 223.

(4) Ibid., p. 224.

face each other, alternately advancing and retreating while the spectators accompany the music with cries and clapping."⁽¹⁾

The Assyrians were also fond of games played both individually and in groups. Their games resemble the modern draught.⁽²⁾

Another field of interest was hunting and shooting at targets. They used the bow and arrow in shooting francolins.⁽³⁾

There is no indication of women's taking part in such entertainments. However, women and children were admitted to attend the festivals held after each triumph in the war. In fact, all the inhabitants of the city were invited to eat and drink on the king's expense. For seven days the palace gates were open to all comers. Food and drink were available. They drank more than they ate. "The Assyrian is sober in ordinary life, but he does not know how to stop if he once allows himself any excess."⁽⁴⁾

Food

The Assyrians used to eat much and drink even more. They used to eat a lot of fish, both fresh and dried. Their staple food was bread. The poor people were contented to eat bread with vegetables prepared with salt and oil.⁽⁵⁾

There was no special room for dining. The meals were eaten from a tray placed on the ground or on a low table. They did not have a fixed hour for meals. They used to eat whenever they felt hungry.⁽⁶⁾ Each house had a baking oven built in one corner of the court.⁽⁷⁾

(1) Contenau, op. cit., p. 131.

(2) Ibid., p. 132.

(3) Ibid., p. 133.

(4) Maspero, op. cit., p. 368.

(5) Ibid., p. 218; Contenau, op. cit., p. 76.

(6) Ibid., p. 71; Scher, op. cit., p. 16.

(7) Maspero, loc. cit.

Beliefs and Superstitions

Amulets were put in every corner of the house. They were "intended to protect the inhabitants from the evil eye and evil spirits."⁽¹⁾ The Assyrians used to believe that the world ~~was~~ full of demons who try to catch men. They were not seen but they were believed to exist everywhere, in the air, on earth and at the bottom of waters. They were many "as numerous as the motes of dust which dance in a sunbeam."⁽²⁾ To get rid of these demons they used to make small statues which represent them. A charm was graven on their portrait to keep them away.⁽³⁾

"Everyman at his birth was placed under the protection of a god and goddess, whose servant, and almost son, he then becomes...."⁽⁴⁾ This deity would take care of him if he continued to fulfil his responsibilities towards it and if he led a good life. "The gods will grant him numerous descendants, a happy old age...."⁽⁵⁾ But if he were impious, violent, unfaithful "the god will shorten his days, and give him to the demons which will torment him with disease."⁽⁶⁾ Charms were used in treatment of disease.⁽⁷⁾ They believed that the patient was the victim of witchcraft. The disease was a revenge taken by someone whom the patient had hurt.⁽⁸⁾

In cases of death the expressions of grief were very noisy and disorderly. The women used to tear their clothes, scratch their cheeks and chest. They used to utter loud sounds of sorrow. The Assyrians believed that life was prolonged beyond this world. They believed that only one

(1) Ibid., p. 218.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., p. 219.

(4) Ibid., p. 233.

(5) Ibid.

(6) Ibid.

(7) Ibid., p. 234.

(8) Ibid., p. 240.

part of the elements composing life was dead; the other would continue to exist. (1)

There seems to be nothing in these superstitious beliefs which would elevate the woman's role as mere chattel.

It has been the purpose of the foregoing discussion to suggest to the reader the Assyrian family patterns before the Christian era. We have seen the family as joint and usually monogamous but sometimes polygamous. The family was patriarchal and strongly authoritarian centered upon the theme of male supremacy. The father had complete dominance. His sovereignty extended to every aspect of family life. The status of the female was low. She had few rights before the law. Only through the death of the male relatives could she become the head of the family. Education and training in development of skills were apparently the opportunity of all family members.

These regulations and customs seem to have given strength and solidarity to the home and family life even though at the expense of a woman's freedom.

(1) Ibid.

Family Patterns After Christianization

At the beginning of the Christian era the Assyrians were found to be living in the same lands in the northern part of Iraq where in the year 600 B.C. the Assyrian stock had been established.⁽¹⁾ "Their traditions affirm that they are of the old Assyrian blood, with passible intermixture of certain Babylonian and Chaldean elements."⁽²⁾ There was also some intermixing with the Arabs, Turks and Persians though it was not approved.

The Assyrians are "the heroic remnant of the once mighty empire of Ninevah and a Christian element of a most ancient and illustrious traditions."⁽³⁾ They lived the life of highlanders. They were courteous in their own way.⁽⁴⁾ As a general rule the women were not annoyed.⁽⁵⁾

The Assyrians use a form of the same language and script--they alone among the Christian nations use the Aramaic language, the language which Christ spoke.⁽⁶⁾

The Assyrians have the same physiognomy as those of past. They claim geneological continuity.⁽⁷⁾

The Assyrians accepted Christianity in its most primitive and early form. They were apt to keep that form of religion in its primitive shape.⁽⁸⁾ They lived for centuries unchanged. They kept the old Semitic customs and until the year when the World War took place they still lived the life of the old Testament "Bible Customs".⁽⁹⁾

(1) Wigram, op. cit., p. 178.

(2) Ibid., p. 179.

(3) Perley, op. cit., p. 2.

(4) Wigram, op. cit., p. 204.

(5) Ibid., p. 206

(6) Ibid., p. 184; Ibid., p. 181; Longrigg, op. cit., p. 705; Perley, loc. cit.

(7) Wigram, op. cit., p. 184. Longrigg, loc. cit.

(8) Wigram, op. cit., p. 195.

(9) Ibid., p. 185; Longrigg, op. cit., p. 701.

Customs of Engagement and Wedding Ceremonies

In describing the traditions concerning the marriage, a translation from the book Lehrbuch der Neusyrischen by I. Rosenberg is applied here. The book is meant to teach the Syriac language. However the customs discussed are such as those practiced not very long ago. In an interview with an old lady, Mrs. Nazlo Elia, born in 1858 and whose wedding took place in 1872 in Urmia, Iran, I found her description the same as described by the author. I have added comments that she had made.

If the girl is from the same village, the boy would see her and talk to her secretly, but if she is a stranger the boy's relatives would tell him of her, that such and such a girl is a good and respectable girl: her parents are respectable, important, and wealthy people. The girl can cut and sew well. No one has heard her voice in the street. She is a member of the church and she is educated.

The boy would try to see her one way or another, or he would visit her home for some business or she would come to be seen by him. He might even talk to her and ask her. If he liked her he would send a woman to talk to the girl and her relatives. If the parents indicated their approval then another day two or three men would go to get more definite word. The girl's parents would set a date a month later to give their answer. When the month is passed the men go again and say, "The month is passed. What do you say?" If the parents are willing, their answer would be positive; if they are not willing, they would say that this year they have no daughter to give in marriage. The girl's parents would ask about the boy and his home or they would go to his home and see it.

Now if the answer is positive, the engagement date would be set. The boy's parents would pay for all the expense that occurs. They buy the

jewelry. On the engagement night seven to eight men would dine at the boy's home then they would go to the girl's home. The girl's parents would be gathered. They would eat and talk. The boy's people would bring with them candies or chick peas, raisons mixed, a cake of sugar, a little money for traditions' sake, a veil for the bride and a pair of shoes. After they are served they would open the subject. One man would be appointed as the leader from the boy's side and he would say, "We have come to ask for the hand of your daughter for the son of so and so." Someone from the girl's relatives would say that the person in charge of the girl is so and so (referring to a far relative). This would refer to somebody else until all the girl's relatives are asked each one in turn referring to another until they reach the nearest relative, the father, mother or brother. They would say, "We give her." One of the boy's people would kiss the hand of the father and all would clap. Then the priest would say, "We should ask the girl herself." They would choose two men and two women who are trustworthy. These would take the ring to the girl and tell her, "Your parents and all your relatives are willing and if you accept, then you should wear this ring." These four people would bring back the word that she has accepted. Again all would clap and say, "She may be blessed." The priest would say a prayer, then he would break a little from the cake of sugar. The best man would take a little from the sugar cake, free or with money, or he would buy it with a cock. Then he would either sell the cock or give it to the groom, who would invite some of his friends. Then candy would be offered to the people. Each one would take and say, "Congratulations, she may be blessed."

When leaving, the boy's relatives would kiss the bride and would place some money in her hand. In the days that follow they would visit

the girl's home and take breakfast and cakes, etc., with them. They would visit on specific days. The groom and his friends are called as guests.

I am not sure whether this means that the boy could see the fiance but Mrs. Elia said that she had been engaged for six months, and she hadn't seen her fiance until the day of the wedding. Meantime some women relatives of the boy would visit the girl's home taking cakes with them. Then they go and buy the materials.

The author does not mention about the dowry. Mrs. Elia said that a dowry was paid to her father who put the money into a chain and hung it around her neck. (I did not get the occasion on which that was done.)

Then the wedding preparations would be made. The boy's parents would pay all the expenses of the wedding. The time would approach when they come to take the bride to her future home. A group of people would come to the bride's home and eat. The women who are the bride's attendants to take money. While taking the bride out of the house one of the brides men relatives, brother or cousin, would stand at the door and would not let the bride get out until he receives a sum of money. On putting her on horse back or in a carriage, her parents would kiss her and cry. The groom's relatives would throw raisins or money on her head. A rider would leave earlier and announce the news to the groom's household. The groom with his friends would be standing on the roof with a stick about a yard square all decorated with dates, pomegranates, apples and all kinds of fruits (jimlana).

When the bride would arrive she would be stopped at a distance below. The best man would take an apple and give it to the groom. This would make the sign of the cross with the apple, kiss it and would throw it at the bride. He would be given wine by the best man. The throwing of the apple

would be repeated three times. Mrs. Elia said that making the sign of the cross meant the groom was swearing that the bride was for him only.

Then the bride would be brought in with clapping and dancing to the door of the home. From there she would be invited to the home of the woman who was attending her.

Next morning before breakfast the wedding ceremony would take place. Mrs. Elia said that in the morning the bridal party would go to the church. After that they would return to the groom's house where the ceremony would be performed by the priest. Mrs. Elia said that during that ceremony the bride's face was covered and the dress was not necessarily white. After the ceremony the women would come and kiss the bride. The men would kiss the groom and put their hand on the bride's head and congratulate her. Gifts would be brought by people. Money (*sabakhta*) would be collected for the groom. It was the habit that the priest and the deacons would be served "hasida" (made of butter, flour and molasses cooked together).

The best man should always sit next to the groom. If he would go for a while he should leave his hat in his seat, because if others would sit in his place they would not leave it until they receive money.

The bride's trousseau would be opened. A relative of the bride would not accept the opening of the chest unless she received money. The trousseau would usually contain one rug, clothes and "simawar". One woman would say aloud what the bride had brought.

The celebrations would continue for three days. There would be eating, drinking and dancing. The entertaining music was "davoola and Zoorna" (drum and flute). On the seventh day the bride's parents would come to bathe their daughter. Then they would visit her regularly on specific days. After a few nights they 'steal' her. They invite the groom and

give a present to the bride.

Mrs. Elia said that after the wedding she did not go out for some time. There was a religious festival. Friends and relatives came and took her out to the forests where they were having festivities like a picnic. They brought her back home with dancing and singing. The second day she could go out to the stream and get water. She also said that till she had her first child she was not allowed to uncover her head and part of her face. When she would have a child, her mother with some other women would come and bring a crib with all its equipment.⁽¹⁾

Other Evidences of Continuous Customs

Among the old pre-Christian customs there was the habit of using ancient magical arts. Nearly every village inhabited by the Assyrians would have an old person who had knowledge in the matter of spells. In addition to this way of foretelling the future there was the way of the "numbers of the name." There were ways of ascertaining whether the course of true love would run smoothly. One fashionable way was the method of fasting. The young man would fast for three days. He would not eat or drink anything. The "Rogation of the Ninevites" was a favorite time as the fast mentioned lasted three days. After the fast the person would eat but not drink.⁽²⁾ "He must eat three handfuls of parched barley, mixed with a like amount of salt, and then sleep, if he could. Under such circumstances he was pretty sure to dream of the water for which every cell in his body was craving and it was to be hoped that the damsals who was his destiny would come in his visions and give him to drink."⁽³⁾

(1) I. Rosenberg, Lehrbuch der Neusyrischen, pp. 128-140; Interview, Mrs. Nazlo Elia, December 28, 1956.

(2) Wigram, op. cit., pp. 186-188.

(3) Ibid., p. 188.

Young people today still do this. I know it from my own observations.

Medicine was mostly magical. There was also the belief in the "Evil Eye."⁽¹⁾ This belief still exists amongst the undereducated people.

Another practice that existed in the ancient pre-Christian days and was kept up by the Assyrians is that of animal sacrifice. The animal was taken to the church. The ceremony was somewhat parallel to a sacrifice of the Old Testament habit.⁽²⁾ In my interview with Mrs. Nazlo Elia she said that the sacrifice was offered in an elaborate ceremony. It was a family centered festivity. Old and young people, men, women, the whole family together used to attend the 'shara'. The animal was cut and the meat distributed to the poor. From my own observation the offering of animal sacrifice is still practiced nowadays, though not in the same elaborate way. The trend is that the animal is not necessarily taken to the church but is cut at home and the meat distributed amongst the poor families. However, it still continues to be a family centered activity.

"In an ordinary house the ways of life in the year 1900 were still those of the scripture."⁽³⁾ Every house had its own oven, the centre of the household, where the daily bread was baked. "To have to use another's oven was shame and disgrace for any self-respecting housewife."⁽⁴⁾ "The oven was a deep pit in the floor, with the fire at the bottom of it, so that the sides on which the dough was stuck for baking in big flaps would naturally be impregnated with soot, however high polished they might be for cleanliness sake."⁽⁵⁾ I have known families who have used this kind

(1) Ibid.

(2) Wigram, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

(3) Ibid., p. 194.

(4) Ibid.

(5) Ibid.

of oven but not so much importance is given to it now. There was cooperation between families in using their ovens. Now this oven is being replaced. The families buy their bread instead of baking it at home.

In my interview with Mrs. Nazlo Elia, I obtained the following description of some of the family patterns and customs fashionable at her time toward the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The people were very religious. They used to go to church very regularly. They fasted and carried it willingly. They fasted before annual feasts, e.g., the fifty-day fast before Easter. Most of their entertainments were religious festivals. As mentioned before the 'shara' was a big occasion for entertainment.

There were strong family ties. Families were usually big. All the sons with their wives used to live with their parents. It was a disgrace for the son to leave his parent's house even after marriage. The father was the head of the family. All the sons and the daughters-in-law used to obey him. They used to say that God is big up in the heaven and the husband is big on the earth. The wife should not disobey him. They rarely punished the children as children used to obey, but if punishment was needed the father did that. Both mother and father worked together in disciplining the children. The mother as a homemaker enjoyed a high degree of reverence and love. She was respected by her husband and children.

The family used to live on the farm. There was plenty of food. The sons used to give the money to the father and the mother who would spend the money for all the family including the daughters-in-law and the grandchildren.

The most important characteristics of the young girl were that she respect and serve her in-laws. She would know sewing, handicraft and cooking. There was respect between fellowmen also. One should not say fool to another because it is not respectful in God's eye. The family used to enjoy visiting and singing.

Divorce was very much despised. There was no divorce. But if it so happened that the wife divorced her husband the people put her on a donkey facing backward, she holding his tail. Her face would be covered with black. It was a big disgrace.

They used to believe that the church would cure them from their illness. The priest used to pray and tie a knot in strings, then he would tie the knot on the wrist of the patient. The lady mentioned ascertained me that all her life she had not been to a doctor. She does not believe in them. (1)

One of the questionnaires was filled by an elderly lady through the help of her grandson, Mr. Ashur Jamliel. In a note he writes, "...this questionnaire has been so filled in as to depict the state and views of an Assyrian middle-aged woman living in Turkey around the year 1914." I have recorded this lady's answers separately from those of the others because of the difference of age between her and the other subjects. This lady, Mrs. Jamliel, was born about the year 1860 in Qudchanis, Turkey. She belongs to the Ancient Church of the East. She had no schooling.

Her wedding took place around the year 1874 at the age of 13. She did not know her husband before marriage. It was not necessary that the young people love before marriage. Their marriage was arranged by their parents

(1) Interview, Mrs. Nazlo Elia, December 28, 1956.

in the old manner. There was no religious ceremony associated with their engagement. The news was announced and spread quietly among the villages. The engagement was concluded in a gathering of their parents and a small circle of close relatives. The dowry paid was 5 goats, one ox and one golden coin (Ottoman coin).

The wedding ceremony was performed by the village priest and three deacons. It took place at the church and was attended by near relatives and friends. Celebrations to which all members of their villages were welcomed, besides relatives and friends invited from neighboring villages, followed and continued for three days. Food and drink (wine and arak) were offered. The entertainment music was "dawoola and Zoorna" (drum and flute) assisted by songs in Syriac, Kurdish and Turkish languages. They expected the wedding celebrations of their children to be in the old Assyrian manner as well and to last for at least three days.

The subject had seven children, five sons and two daughters. Of those only four had survived. She indicates her preference to educate their children to the highest level then available. They expected their children to be farmers.

She lived with her in-laws and her brothers and sisters-in-law. They used to depend on the joint family's income. All the elders of the family shared in planning the expenditure, but it was the husband alone who did the actual purchasing, including the wife's needs. The total income of the family was about 300 golden coins (Ottoman coins).

The family had three employees who helped in farming and cattle rearing. The house work was done by the wife assisted by her mother-in-law, sisters-in-law and her own children. The husband helped too.

For the leisure time they spent the evenings in family gatherings

at which songs in Syriac, Kurdish were sung; tales were narrated and stories from the Old Testament were read, etc.

Divorce regulations were very strict. There were not many divorces then. The authority and control seems to have been in the father's hand. There was complete obedience and respect from both the wife and children.

One of their beliefs is that one would fall seriously ill if he or she bathed or did non-essential housework on the eve of the Sabbath or a religious holiday or during such days.

Their health was very good (if not excellent). In treatment of illnesses they used to follow an elderly relative's advice. For curing colds the subject described what they used to do: make the patient sweat well, dry the body and change the clothes. Then give patient hot fruit soup or hot milk and other specially prepared hot vegetable and fruit recipes.

They used to eat three meals during the day. All the family would eat together regularly. They had a short prayer before eating. They used to observe the religious restriction of excluding meat from their food on Wednesdays and Fridays and they used to adhere to it absolutely.

In conclusion the subject had given her opinion as to whether the Assyrian family is happier now than two or three generations ago. She had said, "True that a good many of the Assyrian families are materially better off now, but their status is regrettably that of an unsettled, homeless people totally uncertain of what the future has in store for them."

In this description, we have pictured the family as a joint, stable family. Christianity was from the outset the champion of strict monogamy. Against all plural marriage, and sex outside marriage, the Church took a

decisive stand. Also, it early declared its stand against divorce and in favor of the indissolubility of marriage. We have seen the continuous parental responsibility for children's marriage. There was increased strictness in association of boys and girls of marriagable age. The family was patriarchal but with more respect for the wife. She shared the responsibility in training and disciplining the children. There was continued importance given to education and training of both boys and girls. The family social activities mainly centered around their religion.

The migrations the communities were forced to undergo were probably responsible for the simplification of engagement and wedding ceremonies but probably increased rather than decreased the strength of the family bonds and the necessity for the complete dominance of the father.

Report of the **Writer's** Investigation

A. Religious Laws

Before giving the results of the survey the **writer** thought it advisable to give specific and authentic information on the marriage and divorce laws of the different Christian sects represented in the Assyrian community. As a resource for this information two letters from the Protestant and Catholic religious leaders were used. Another letter concerning the Nestorian sect was used. The material about the Orthodox sect was not available.

Presbyterian

Marriage.

1. "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman, neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time. Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:3.
2. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent, yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore, such as profess the true faith, should not marry with a Moslem, or infidels, or other idolaters, not even to those who are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresis. Gen. 24:57, 58; I. Tim. 4:3; Heb. 13:4; I. Cor. 7:39; II. Cor. 6:14-18.
3. Marriage ought not to be within the degree of consanguinity (blood relationship) or affinity forbidden in the word, nor can such

incenstuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. Lev. 18:24-28; I Cor. 5:1; Mark 6:18.

Divorce. It is lawful only in case of adultery or fornication.

1. Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead. Matt. 5:31, 32; Matt. 19:9. Matt. 1:18-20. Rom. 7:2-3.

2. Husbands and wives are to love each other since they are of one body. Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6.

3. Wife should submit to her husband as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife. And she must respect and reverence her husband. Ephesians 5:21-33.

...Inheritance and other responsibilities of man and woman, etc. generally are ruled out by Civil Jurisdiction according to the laws of the State, where the individual or so called member of the Church, is living."⁽¹⁾

Catholic

Marriage. "The marriage is the sacrament which unites a Christian man and a Christian woman as husband and wife and gives them grace to fulfill

(1) Letter, Mr. Korosh Shlemon, March 14, 1957.

Mr. Shlemon is a lay pastor of the Assyrian Presbyterian Church in Baghdad, the only Assyrian Protestant Church in Baghdad. Mr. Shlemon is also the principle of the Assyrian School mentioned by the questionnaire respondents.

the duties of the married state. It is a sacred contract, i.e., a binding agreement by which two baptized persons, a man and a woman, undertake to live faithfully and affectionately together as husband and wife, from that moment forward until parted by death. 'Between those who are baptized a valid marriage is always a sacrament.'

Divorce. No divorce in the Assyrian Catholic Church. Marriage is indissoluble or unbreakable, i.e., the bond of valid marriage cannot be loosened either by the contracting parties themselves, or by any human power. 'What God has joined together,' says Jesus Christ, 'let no man put asunder.' By these words Christ abolished the permission given for divorce under the Old Law. The Church never dissolves a marriage entered into by Christians, if the parties have actually lived together as husband and wife. She sometimes grants a separation of husband and wife because of cruelty or adultery, but cannot permit either to marry again during the lifetime of the other. 'Marriage of its own nature and as a contract is one and indissoluble as a sacrament has a divine quality, its oneness and indissolubility is divinely confirmed.'

Guardianship of Children. It "depends on the father and mother. As parents, husband and wife are bound to provide for the health and physical well-being of their children, but are far more strictly bound to provide for their spiritual needs. They should bring up their children in the fear and love of God, and have them educated in Catholic schools. The parents should be more careful to give good example to their children.

The Christian education of the children belongs by the divine obligation to the parents. 'Not only the parents but all those who hold their

place have a most grave obligation of seeing that their children get a Christian education.'

Legal Responsibilities of man and woman to each other:

1. The husband is bound to support his wife in suitable comfort: if he is rich, he should share his richness with her; if he is poor, she should be willing to share his poverty with him.

2. A wife is under grave obligation to submit to her husband as the head of the household. The Holy Spirit says: As the Church is subject to Christ so also let wives be to their husbands in all things. Both are equally bound to each other in the duty of dwelling together, and the duty of marital affection, and in giving good example to each other by mutual love and loyalty, and thus to save their souls.

Inheritance. In the case of the death of the husband his property should be divided among the widow and the children, according to the Church and state laws. "There are no state laws that supercede the Church laws in the matter of the marriage as a sacrament."⁽¹⁾

The Apostolic Catholic Church of the East (Nestorian)

Marriage. "Marriage is the union or wedlock under the Sacred laws of holy matrimonial rite. With the good will and honest love between the male and the female to live a clean life of true marriage, to guide the children with the fear of God. Marriage is sacred. The bed of husband and wife is clean.

((1) Letter, Rev. Fr. Gabriel Koda, March 30, 1957.
Chaldean priest of the Habbaniya Parish.

...The boy should not be below the age of fourteen and the girl below the age of 12 years....

Divorce. Husband and wife cannot divorce each other except when one of them is found to be guilty of adultery....Christian sorcery, blasphemy, and murder. On the testimony of two or three faithful persons, the guilty can be divorced.

In case the husband or wife has been seen going and sleeping many times in a house whose occupants are under the suspect of bad and immoral name and they have no ties of relationship or friendship with her or him, on the testimony of faithful persons the guilty can be divorced. If one of them has been heard blaspheming or renouncing his Christian creed, on the testimony of faithful persons the guilty can be divorced.

In case the wife has no children and her husband is living in a foreign country and for three complete years he has not helped her financially and has not written to her, on the testimony of faithful persons she can divorce him. If he is living in a foreign country and has kept contact with her through letters but has not helped her financially, if she wants, she can divorce him. If he is far away from her for a period of seven years and he has sent her letters and money, again she can divorce him if she wants. If he has been far away from her for a period of ten years and they have one child and he has helped her financially but if she wants she can divorce him.

If they have been living together for a period of ten years and are not having any children, by the Council of the Heads of the Church they can divorce each other.

In case one of them has a physical defect or sickness which was not

revealed before the engagement or matrimonial ceremony the guilty can be divorced at once.

In case one of them is an aggressive fighter and with dirty language... so that life becomes unbearable, by the Council of the Heads of the Church they can be divorced.

Inheritance. At the death of the father the property will be divided among his children. The son will receive two shares and the daughter one share. In case the mother wants to live with one of her sons she will receive a share of one eighth of her husband's property. In case the children are grown up and self dependent and the mother does not want to live with them, she will not have any right to anything of her husband's property except her own belongings and what her husband has willed in writing or in the presence of few faithful persons before his death. That should be moveable property or money but not land....If the husband has no children his property will remain to his brothers. If he has no brothers then to his very close relatives and so on.

Guardianship. As long as the parents are alive, it is their duty to look after their children, to give them and make them grow with the fear of God, and with good manners and right conduct and give them a sound education. In this field the mother's responsibilities are more than the father's. In case the parents die and the children are still young, then one of their close relatives, e.g., uncle will take the responsibility of being their guardian. In case the orphans have no close relatives...then it is the duty of the Church to look after them."⁽¹⁾

(1) Letter, Mr. J. Jacob, Baghdad, May 18, 1957.

Mr. Jacob, an active member of the Assyrian community, was, for a number of years, the Principal of the Assyrian School in Habbaniya, Iraq.

B. Results of the Survey

The survey was carried on 43 Assyrian families living in Iraq, on six families living in the States, and on four families living in Iran. The following is a report of the responses to the questionnaire. The Iraqi answers are given first followed by those from the families in Iran and the United States.

The questionnaire was meant to be answered by both husband and wife. Out of the 43 copies, 22 were filled by both husband and wife together. fourteen copies were filled only by the husband and seven were filled by the wife. There were few questions which were not answered by all the subjects.

Background of the Subjects

Most of the subjects were born in Iran: 23 husbands out of 36, and 13 wives out of 27. The names of birth places in Iran given were Azerbaijan, Chamachi, Urmi, Salamas, Rezaieh, Gawilan and Karmanshah. Ten husbands and twelve wives were born in Iraq: Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk, and Basrah. Three husbands and two wives were born in Turkey.

At present all the subjects are living in Baghdad with the exception of two: one husband living in Basrah and one wife living in Habbaniya. They are found to be living in Baghdad after the immigration of World War I.

The year of birth among the husbands ranges from 1894 - 1932, giving the age range of 25 - 63. Among the wives the birth date ranges from 1902 - 1932 giving an age range of 25 - 55.

The age of the husbands when they were married ranges from 19 - 33, the mid point being 23 and the average 25. The age of the wives when they

were married ranges from 14 - 30 the mid point being 17 and the average age 18.

It appears that none of the subjects had any previous marriage.

According to their answers to the questionnaires as to how much schooling each subject had had, 5 out of 36 husbands and 6 ^{and} of 26 wives had no schooling. Nine husbands and 13 wives had elementary education. Seventeen husbands and seven wives had secondary education, some having finished the fifth secondary class, others having only attended a few classes. However, three husbands said they had had college education and two other husbands show professional education.

As to the kind of school or schools that the subjects had attended, the responses show that the majority had attended private rather than government schools. The Assyrian school had the highest attending score, then came the American and British schools consecutively. A few husbands had attended French and Russian schools. Only three husbands and two wives have indicated that they attended the government school.

The religion of the subjects studied varies, showing adherence to the different Christian sects. Orthodox and Protestant rank the highest among the husbands' religion. The Catholic and Nestorian come next. It was interesting to note that the Protestant religion was predominant among the wives; Catholic, Orthodox and Nestorian religions followed consecutively. Not all subjects answered this question.

Courtship and Marriage

By the word courtship is meant the period in which the two persons are permitted to become better acquainted with each other and to decide if each is adequate to the need of the other. From the data collected, it appears

that courtship did not exist in the meaning just stated. Nine out of forty couples admitted the absence of courtship as their marriage was arranged by their elders. The others mentioned the length of time they had known each other. Their answers ranged from two months to "all their life long" being relatives. The young people saw each other on family visits or on social occasions, etc., but they had no opportunity for the testing out of each other's personality.

A few of the subjects tend to be liberal with their young boys and girls but still the majority is conservative. Out of the 36 answers, 26 indicate their refusal to allow their boys and girls to have dates. Ten answers were in positive. Two out of those who agreed mentioned the necessity of having a chaperon with the young people. However, 32 out of 36 husbands seem to agree that love is necessary before marriage. Twenty-six out of 27 wives also agreed. As to the statement concerning the relationship between courtship and permanence of marriage the response shows a positive attitude. Twenty-one husbands agreed, seven disagreed and eight were uncertain. Of the wives 18 agreed, four disagreed and seven were uncertain.

	Husbands			Wives		Un-Certain
	Agree	Dis-Agree	Un-Certain	Agree	Dis-Agree	
- It is necessary that the couple love each other before they marry	32	4		26	1	2
- There is a strong relationship between the length of time a couple has known each other before marriage and the permanence of the marriage	21	7	8	18	4	7

The subjects seem to be very conservative in matters concerning religion especially in intermarriage with non-Christians. To the question as how they would feel if their son or daughter decided to marry a non-Christian almost all the answers were in objection to the idea. Only three out of 39 subjects answered that it was alright provided the partner became a Christian. To the question concerning marriage with a non-Assyrian but a Christian there was some objection. Seventeen out of 39 subjects indicated that it will be against their will. There was practically no objection to their sons or daughters marrying an Assyrian but of a different Christian sect. The strongest objection seems to be with intermarriage with Moslems.

As for the age appropriate for a boy to marry, of the 38 husbands responding 19 (50%) felt that he should be married by the age of 26; 14 by the age of 30 with only three in favor of later marriage. The 26 wives would have the boy married at about the same age; 15 (57%) in favor of marriage by the age of 26; 10 by the age of 30 with only one in favor of waiting longer. (See table next page.)

Of the 32 husbands responding to the question of the girl's age, 18 (57%) would have her married by the age of 20; 10 by the age of 22 (29%) while only three suggest waiting until late twenties. Of the 28 wives responding 14 (50%) prefer marriage before twenty; 8 by the age of 22 (27%) with 6 in favor of later marriage. (See table next page)

There is a tendency here for the women to suggest earlier marriage age for the man and later age for the girl than the man does.

What do you think is the best age for a young man to marry nowadays?

<u>Age Groups</u>	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
Years		
18 - 20	4	2
20 - 22	-	2
22 - 24	5	4
24 - 26	12	7
26 - 28	2	2
28 - 30	12	8
35	2	-
40	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	38	26

What do you think is the best age for a young girl to marry nowadays?

<u>Age Groups</u>	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
Years		
16 - 18	4	8
18 - 20	14	6
20 - 22	10	8
22 - 24	-	4
24 - 26	2	1
28	1	-
30	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	32	28

To the question, "How well off should a young man be before he should marry?" thirteen out of thirty subjects suggested that he be well off financially. Twelve suggested that he be well educated and have a good stable job. The last five said that he be able to support a wife. On the other hand, to the question, "What training should a girl have before marrying?" all suggestions appear to be in favor of the girl's knowledge in homemaking--know how to bring up children, general education, sewing, cooking, handicraft, housework, etc.

The subjects were asked to describe briefly the ceremony associated with their formal engagement. There seems to be a tendency towards simplicity. Twenty-one out of the thirty subjects admitted the lack of formal ceremony yet there were few, eight subjects, who celebrated their engagement according to the old Assyrian way. Three subjects answered that they had no such thing as they were refugees at that time. There is one subject who said that his engagement and wedding took place at the same time.

From the subjects' description of their wedding ceremony and celebrations there seems to be variation from staying with the old Assyrian traditions to very simple wedding celebrations. All the subjects answered that their marriage was religious followed by celebrations. The year in which the wedding took place seems to indicate the change in the pattern. For example, one subject married in 1919 says, "Our wedding was according to our traditions: Bride's face covered, people drinking and dancing for one day, music provided by a two-person band "davoola and zoorna" (drum and flute). Another subject married in 1953 says, "After the religious ceremony we had a small dinner party for our friends." In the later years in which the subjects had married there is mention of the European

dancing along with the native Assyrian dancing. Two subjects married in 1932 and 1943 mentioned that. It is interesting to relate what one subject married in 1938 says, "We had a simple wedding followed by a short honeymoon." Another subject married in 1948 describes the native dancing "people holding hand in hand forming a long line." Of a wedding which took place in Turkey in 1927, the subject says, "All the village was invited." Another one married in 1929 says, "To our wedding were invited Germans, Assyrians, Turks, Persians, Arabs, and Americans...." It is interesting to note that elopment was practiced. One subject, married in 1920 and living in the refugee camp at Baquba says of his wife, "I eloped her with force."

The trend in customs seems to be well brought up in the subjects' answers to the question, "What would you like the wedding celebrations of your son or daughter to be like? Eight of 38 subjects suggested having a full religious ceremony followed by a big party, if possible. Seven suggested that they have modern wedding celebrations. "Modern" wedding seems to include religious ceremony attended by numerous witnesses followed by a short cocktail party and off to a honeymoon. Nine subjects suggested a "simple reasonable wedding." Four subjects said, "As they want." Only three subjects said, "In the old Assyrian way." One subject suggested, "The present Assyrian way" by which he seems to mean a religious ceremony followed by a dinner party in a club building with both European and native dancing.

The subjects were asked ~~whether~~ there was payment of dowry when they got married. Twenty-nine out of 42 said No. The remaining 13 said Yes. The amount paid ranged from D 10.000 - D 150.000. The amount paid seems to have depended on the money value. "D 10.000 in 1932 was a lot of money."

says one subject. Another subject mentions having paid 100 pieces of gold. Still two subjects mention the amount in rupees, 100 and 1000.

To the question, "Should a girl have a dowry," 31 out of 40 subjects answered No. The nine that answered Yes suggested that the amount be reasonable.

The answers to the question, "What assistance were you given at the time of your marriage," tend to show that young people received no assistance. Twenty-four out of 29 subjects indicate their independence on their own. Two subjects say, "We were refugees during the World War. We had bad time." The four subjects who answered Yes were given financial assistance either by parents, friends, or relatives.

On the other hand, these subjects seem to be willing to assist their sons and daughters financially, i.e., if they are able. Three subjects show their willingness to give any kind of assistance. Yet another three of these answering say No.

Size of Family and Educational Achievement

The number of children in families ranges from 1 - 7. The mid point and average being 4. It is interesting to note that in the 41 families, the number of boys is 70 and the number of girls is 69. The age of the children both boys and girls ranges from 1 - 36 years. The class of those children at school ranges from kindergarten to the college level. The sons and daughters who now are ^{too} old to be in school had their education till the primary or secondary classes. A number had completed the secondary school. Out of the number of boys there are two recent engineering graduates. There are also four boys still attending college, one being a fourth year medical student, the other being a fourth year commerce student.

The same pattern of educational progress applies to the girls. There are five girls attending college today, one being in the **pharmacy college**, another in the medical college, a third studying secretarial training.

The type of school the children had or are attending varies. Out of the 62 boys who had attended or are attending school, 20 boys had their education in government schools, the nationality being Iraqi. Forty-two boys show their last year attending private schools. Among the private schools attended, the American school ranks the highest followed by the Iraqi, Assyrian, French and Latin schools consecutively.

From the total number of the girls 20 had attended or are attending government schools, the nationality being Iraq. Thirty-seven girls had or are attending private schools. Twelve out of 37 had or are attending French school (Nuns). Attendance in the Assyrian and American schools rank high then comes the Iraqi nationality.

From the answers we can compare the children's education with that of their parents. Every child is given the opportunity to attend school. There is a tendency now for higher education for both sexes. As there are no Assyrian institutions for higher education in **Baghdad**, children are attending government schools and colleges.

The family tends to be more biological than joint family. Twenty-seven of 42 families said they were living alone, husband, wife and children. There were 16 who said they were living with others. The **answers** show that out of those the majority had their elderly mothers living with them. Quite a number had husbands' brothers and sisters living with them. The number ranged from 1 - 7. Two families had the wife's mother and two brothers with them. Along with others, one subject answered that he had a nephew who lived with him.

From the subjects answers to the second question in the table, the majority seems to prefer the young couple to live alone. Next highest response was for the couple to live with husband's family. (See table p. 55.)

In the next question the majority of subjects prefer that the couple live with the parents for some time. The suggested conditions for such joint living were, "Until they can afford living alone;" "Until a young brother is able to support the parents." Those who answered always made a phrase, "...if they can get along." "...if possible." (See table p. 55.)

The 27 subjects who are living alone answered that the husband's family lives either in another country or in the same country. Suggested distance in miles were given. They range from "same district" to 600 miles. Three subjects had their parents in Iran. The same applies to the wife's family. The distance ranges from "neighborhood" to 1,500 miles. Two had the wife's family living in Syria and Iran.

Responses

Do you live

1. With your partner and family alone	27
2. With your parent(s)	11
3. With your in-law(s)	1
4. Others	
a. Brother and wife	1
b. Nephew	1
c. Sister	<u>1</u>
	42

Should a newly married couple live with

1. Wife's parents	1
2. Husband's parents	16
3. Live alone	21
4. Other	—
	38

Should a newly married couple live with wife's parents of

husband's parents:

1. Always	9
2. For some time	18
3. Never	9
4. Other	—
	36

Attitudes Toward Children

From the data collected it appears that both husbands and wives have no special preference for boys and girls. From those who did show preference it was for boys. (See the table)

Most of the parents tend to agree that boys and girls should be allowed different privileges. Yet they contradict themselves when they again agree that all the children in the family should have the same privileges. The majority of the parents also agree that boys are allowed more privileges than the girls.

The majority of the parents agree that parents are concerned how their children's behavior will look to the neighbors. The majority also agree that most parents interfere too much in the affairs of their adolescent children. They feel that the youth today are lacking in courtesy and consideration and that they don't respect their elders as young people a generation ago used to do. Youth needs strict discipline.

Do you prefer?	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>No Special Preference</u>
Husband	10	4	22
Wife	11	2	16
Boys and girls should be allowed			
different privileges.	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
Husband	18	16	2
Wife	18	11	-
All the children in the family should			
have same privileges.			
Husband	31	4	1
Wife	26	2	1

	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
Boys in the family are allowed more privileges than girls.			
Husband	19	16	1
Wife	15	10	4
Most parents are overly concerned about the way their child's behavior will look to the neighbors.			
Husband	21	10	5
Wife	16	7	6
Most parents interfere too much in the affairs of their adolescent children			
Husband	25	7	4
Wife	19	6	4
Teen agers are lacking in courtesy and consideration			
Husband	21	10	5
Wife	17	8	4
Young people today are not as respectful of their elders as young people a generation ago.			
Husband	28	6	2
Wife	23	2	4
What the youth needs most is strict discipline			
Husband	27	5	4
Wife	19	5	5

Authority or Control

Between subjects and their parents. From the answers it seems that the parents' discipline of the majority of the subjects was considered reasonable. There was an interesting variation as eight of the husbands said that their parents' discipline of them was very strict. Five husbands said that it was much too strict.

The parents' answers show that they considered that they had received enough guidance before they were married. Of the subjects that had answered in negative, a few had commented that they were orphans since very young.

It appears that the majority of the subjects had little independence as they wish they had more opportunity to do things their own way as they were growing up.

Was your parents' discipline of you as a child:	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
1. Much too strict?	5	2
2. Very strict?	8	6
3. Quite strict?	3	3
4. Reasonable?	22	8
5. Not strict enough?	-	2
6. Very lax?	-	-

Did your parents give you enough guidance in making important decisions before you were married?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Husband	22	7
Wife	17	7

Did you wish for more opportunity to do things your own way as you were growing up?

Husband	33	1
Wife	17	6

Between subjects and their children. The majority of the subjects seem to agree that parents should be more strict with their elder children than with the younger ones, though there is a number also who disagreed.

From the answers it appears that the majority disagree as to the independence of teen agers in choosing a vocation and yet the majority agree that it is normal for adolescent boys and girls to want to be independent of parental control. (See table below.)

From the answers, the family seems to be authoritarian. The majority say that the children should obey without question. They agree that obedience and respect are the most important virtues children should learn and that rules and regulations are set for the children so they will recognize authority. Their attitude is that children depend on them. As to punishment being the best way to make children behave the responses are varied. Nineteen^{out} of 36 husbands agreed while 16 disagreed. Fourteen out of 29 wives agreed, 14 disagreed and one was uncertain. (See table p. 60.)

Most parents should be more strict with their

elder children than with the younger ones.	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u> (1)
Husband	20	14	2
Wife	14	9	6

Parents should let a teen ager follow the vocation of his own choice.

Husband	10	21	5
Wife	9	16	4

It is normal for adolescent boys and girls to want to be independent of parental control.

Husband	18	16	2
Wife	15	9	5

Children should be taught to obey without question.	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
Husband	26	8	2
Wife	22	5	2
Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.			
Husband	35		1
Wife	28		1
Most parents should set rules and regulations for their children so that they will recognize authority.			
Husband	32	2	2
Wife	23	1	5
Children want their parents to tell them what to do.			
Husband	29	3	4
Wife	25	2	2
Punishment is the best way to make children behave properly.			
Husband	19	16	1
Wife	14	14	1

Father and mother seem to decide for the family. As seen in the table (p. 62) quite a number of families said that the children also have part in making decisions in the family. Almost all agreed that training the children is the responsibility of both father and mother.

On the other hand the majority of husbands and wives agreed that the father should be the disciplinarian in the house. Yet in contradiction the majority also agreed that the wife should be the disciplinarian in the

home. The majority agreed that she is more likely to know what is best for the children than the husband. These points need consideration as they show variable responses. (See table next page.)

The majority of the subjects agreed that the most important function of the home is to provide physical care for children until they are grown. To the question, "How much education do you wish each child to attain?" there was a variety of answers. Out of 42 subjects, 11 answered "the highest I can afford." Nineteen subjects answered "college education." Five subjects seemed to be contented with "high school education." Four replied, "As they wish." Two subjects wrote "As much as God leads them." and one subject indicated the importance of learning the Assyrian language first of all and then seek knowledge as much as possible.

The parents show their interest in their children's vocation. The majority disagreed to the statement that parents need not be concerned if a teen-ager shifts his vocational interests. They agreed that the adolescents should follow their parents' advice in choosing a vocation. Suggestions were given as to what occupation do they expect their children to assume. It was interesting to note the occupations suggested for the sons and those for the daughters. The majority indicated their children's freedom to choose. The following are the expected occupations for the sons arranged in order of high responses: engineering, medicine, business, Evangelist, accountant, pharmacist, chemist, author, pilot, farmer. The expected occupations for the girls in order of high responses are: teacher, nurse, principal of school, doctor, homemaker, secretary.

When there is a decision to be made concerning the family,

who does it?	<u>Responses</u>		
1. Father	5		
2. Mother	2		
3. Father and mother	16		
4. Father, mother and children if old enough	13		
5. An elderly relative	-		
6. Numbers 3 and 5	4		
7. Numbers 1 and 5	2		
Parents should work together in training children.	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
Husband	36		-
Wife	28		1
The father should be the disciplinarian in the home.			
Husband	30	5	1
Wife	25	3	1
The mother should be the disciplinarian in the home.			
Husband	26	10	-
Wife	20	7	2
The wife is more likely to know what is best for the children than the husband.			
Husband	26	6	4
Wife	24	1	4
The most important function of the home is to provide physical care for children until they are grown.			
Husband	31	2	3
Wife	25	2	2

Parents need not be concerned if a teen-ager shifts

	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
his vocational interests several times.			
Husband	9	22	5
Wife	5	19	5

Adolescents should follow their parents' advice in
choosing a vocation.

Husband	22	9	5
Wife	17	10	2

Relationships

From the answers it appears that the father's authoritative position in the family still prevails: **17 out of 36 husbands** and **11 out of 29 wives** agreed that the husband's will should prevail. Yet it was interesting to note the change in the attitude as **12 husbands** and **10 wives** disagreed. The rest were uncertain. In regard to the wife's obedience to her husband the majority of husbands and wives agreed that she should obey him without question, but the husbands that disagreed numbered very near to those who agreed. (See table next page.)

On the other hand it appears that husband and wife talk freely with each other as in matters of sex problems. The majority of the subjects agreed to that.

As to the parent-child relationship, the majority of the subjects disagreed with the idea that the adolescents regard the opinions of their friends more highly than those of their parents.

In the matters of sex education the majority of the subjects agreed that the school is responsible for that. **Out of 43 subjects, 34** said No to the question whether they discuss sex matters with their children. **Nine**

answered Yes. Those who said No gave the following reasons: "They are not old enough to understand sex matters." "They will be taught at school." "It is customary not to." "It is shameful." "Will understand as they grow up." (See table next page.)

From the answers the mother appears to be closer to the daughters than the father. While in the case of the sons both father and mother are referred to in case of trouble. Second highest number was for the mother.

Thirty-nine of 42 subjects expect their children to support them in their old age. (See table next page.)

When husband and wife disagree, the husband's will	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
should prevail.			
Husband	17	12	7
Wife	11	10	8
Woman should always obey husband without question.			
Husband	16	15	5
Wife	17	9	3
Husband and wife should talk their sex problems freely.			
Husband	28	5	3
Wife	22	2	5
In matters of socially acceptable behavior adolescents			
regard the opinion of their friends more highly			
than those of their parents.			
Husband	13	15	8
Wife	9	12	8
A certain amount of sex education should be given			
at school to all boys and girls.			
Husband	23	7	6
Wife	19	9	1

Do you discuss **sex matters** with your children? Yes: 9 No: 34.

If your daughter(s) has a worry, to whom does she go first?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 1. To father | 3 |
| 2. To mother | 25 |
| 3. To relative on father's side | 2 |
| 4. To relative on mother's side | - |
| 5. To mother and father | 7 |

If your son(s) has a worry, to whom does he go first?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 1. To father | 6 |
| 2. To mother | 14 |
| 3. To relative on father's side | 2 |
| 4. To relative on mother's side | 1 |
| 5. To father and mother | 16 |

Do you expect your children to support you in your old age?

Yes: 39 No: 3.

Finance

It appears that the majority of the subjects come from a rather good economic condition. Their income ranges from D 300,000 to D 2180,000. In the majority's answers it shows the husband as the main person to provide income to the family. Quite a number answered that they depended on other income besides the husband's. This other income was **rent** that the family receives from rooms or a house that it owned. Only four out of 41 responses showed the **wife** working. (See table next page.)

To the question of whether or not they lived in a house of their own, 22 out of 43 subjects answered No, 21 said Yes. It appears that the family is independent financially. Fourteen out of 41 subjects mentioned their assisting a relative partly. (See table on pages 66 and 67.)

In the expenditure of money it appears that the husband and wife do plan their budget together and they strictly adhere to it. In the families that do not adhere to their budget plan, the husband appears to be the one who constantly over spends. One subject went through explaining their plan of money expenditure, "Divide the money for daily expenses, reserve for unforeseen expenses and put the spare money in the bank." (See table p. 67.)

In round number would you please tell me the total income of your family for the year.

From D 300 - 300	1	800 - 899	-
400 - 499	3	900 - 999	3
500 - 599	2	1000 and over	7
600 - 699	2	maximum 2180	6
700 - 799	4		

Please check the statement which is most true with regard to economic needs of your family, you depend:

1. On husband's income only	25
2. On husband's and wife's income	4
3. On wife's income only	-
4. On husband's and other source	<u>12</u>
	41

Do you live in a house of your own?

Yes	21
No	<u>22</u>
	43

Do you receive financial help from any relative?

1. Fully	-
2. Partly	2
3. Not at all	<u>39</u>
	41

In planning the budget it appears that the husband and wife do it together. The majority of subjects answered that the father gives all of his salary to the wife. Both husband and wife appear to be responsible for spending money for family needs. The mother's role in spending money for food is apparant. (See table next page.)

The majority said that they are better off financially than their parents. In managing an independent old age the subjects gave these suggestions. They are arranged in number of responses: "Sufficient saving," "have a house," "hope the best," "depend on son," "business of my own," "insurance," "pension."

Do you assist any relative financially?	<u>Response</u>
1. Fully	1
2. Partly	19
3. Not at all	21
	<u>41</u>
Please check any that fit:	
1. The husband spends money freely.	2
2. The wife spends money freely.	-
3. Husband and wife plan their expenditure together but the husband constantly over spends.	5
4. Husband and wife plan their expenditure together but the wife constantly overspends.	3
5. Husband and wife plan their expenditure together and both strictly adhere to it.	32
6. Other?	-
	<u>42</u>

In planning the budget for the family who is responsible?	<u>Response</u>
1. Husband	3
2. Wife	4
3. Husband and wife together	26
4. Husband, wife and children if old enough	6
5. Husband and his relatives	3
6. Mother	<u>1</u>
	43

Father gives his salary to the wife

1. Part of it as needed	10
2. All of it	15
3. None of it	-
4. Certain amount every week or month	1
5. Spend it together	13
6. Numbers 2 and 5	<u>3</u>
	42

The responsibility for spending money for family needs is on

1. Husband	4
2. Wife	6
3. Husband and wife together	25
4. A relative in the family	-
5. Husband, wife and children	3
6. Numbers 3 and 4	2
7. Mother	1
8. Numbers 2 and 7	<u>1</u>
	42

Are you better off financially than your parents?

Yes: 22 No: 8.

Division of Work

From the results it appears that not many families have servants. Those families that have servants do laundry and general house cleaning. However, there is one subject who has a cook, a cleaner and a driver. The wife seems to be wholly responsible for the house work. She receives help from the husband and the children. Forty out of 43 subjects indicated that the husband had some responsibility at home. The majority of subjects expected their children to help with the house work. It appears that they expect the girls more than the boys in the family to have house work responsibilities. The responsibilities carried by children mentioned are: setting the table, baby sitting, washing dishes, cleaning, ironing, cooking, small errands.

As noted before in only 4 of 41 families responding were the wives working outside the home in remunerative work.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you have servant(s) now?	9	33
Does the father have responsibility for any work in home?	40	3
Do you expect your children to help you with house work?	39	4
Does your son have any house work responsibility?	15	26
Does your daughter have any house work responsibility?	22	15

Leisure Time

The average family enjoys some leisure time activities. The majority of both husbands and wives spend their leisure time together and with the children. The mentioned activities that are enjoyed the most by all the members of the family are in order of the high responses: family

gatherings; children playing around; movies and parties; reading Bible; visits; watching sports; outdoor picnics; playing cards; drives; listening to radio; tell stories of ancestors.

The family shares some leisure time with the family clan. The partners usually attend the church services together. The majority of the subjects indicated their joining the Assyrian parties. The majority of these go regularly, then quite a number go whenever they have nothing else to do.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you and your partner attend entertainments together?	33	10
You and your partner cannot find leisure time in the home or out of it.	14	22
You, your partner and your children have leisure activities together.	40	3
You and your partner share some leisure time with the family clan	39	4
You and your partner go out together to church	31	12
Do you join the Assyrian activities?	37	6
Family attends Assyrian community parties:		
1. Regularly	23	
2. Whenever it does not have anything else to do.	15	
3. Not at all	3	

Loyalty to family

Many families have their relatives living in another country. Those that live very far naturally are not able to visit each other often. Yet they keep in touch with each other through correspondence. The regularity

of writing ranges from "very few" to "twice a month." That applies to both husband's and wife's relatives. The family members or relatives that live in the same district visits range from "daily" to "once a month."

As mentioned before the parents want their children to follow their advice in choosing their occupation. We have also seen that some of the couples, 20 out of 41, assist relatives financially.

Family in Society

Parents appear to be concerned about the community. The majority agreed that the youth should work for and serve the community. They feel responsible for the prestige of the community. Almost all said that if they were given the chance they would serve the community. (See table next page.)

Quite a number of families had either one or more members belonging to an organization, club, society, whether religious, social or athletic. Ten husbands belong to the Assyrian Athletic Club. Two husbands belonged to the Church Society. From the wives the majority (8) are members of the Assyrian League of Mothers. Three belong to the Church Society. The children appear to be members of the Christian Endeavour Society and the Assyrian Athletic Club.

There are families with members who hold positions either in the church, group, club or school. In the church the father is either a member of the council, a deacon, leader, church treasurer, etc. In most of these the position is carried voluntarily. One subject is principal of the Assyrian school. There are wives who hold positions in Assyrian League of Mothers. One subject mentioned her being a teacher in the Assyrian School.

The youth should work for and serve the community.	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
Husband	32	2	2
Wife	26	-	3

An insult of our community's honor should always be punished.

Husband	29	3	4
Wife	21	2	6

If you were given the chance you would do something of great benefit to your community.

Yes: 40 No: 2.

Divorce - Social Attitude

From the answers the subjects gave concerning divorce, it appears that the divorce regulations are considered too strict. Though they are strict, the majority of subjects do not wish to have them altered. They also said that there are not many divorces among the Assyrian families.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you think divorce regulations are too strict?	25	15

Divorce laws should be altered to make divorce easier.	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
Husband	4	28	4
Wife	4	21	4

Do you think there are many divorces among the Assyrian families?

Yes: 4 No: 36.

Arts

It appears from the data collected that not many have artistic training. Twenty-five out of the 43 subjects said there was none in their family. The rest mentioned having either one or more members of the family with an

artistic ability. The sons appear to have artistic abilities more than other members. Areas mentioned are in painting, singing, playing musical instruments: banjo, accordion and violin. The areas of artistic abilities of husbands mentioned are singing and playing musical instruments; daughters, painting and music; wives, painting and singing. The subjects indicated that they were not very competent.

Emotional Behavior

The answers exhibit the subjects' emotional reactions in a variety of ways. Sixteen out of 34 subjects said that a man, woman and a child should never swear. Fourteen subjects said "sometimes." Four subjects said "as often as wanted." Even one of these subjects commented that if he doesn't swear he will burst.

When it comes to coping with another person's anger, the subjects seem to manifest a calmer attitude. The majority of the subjects both husbands and wives indicated that they would calmly show the other person where he is wrong. Next highest indication was that they stay away from him until they are calmer. The minority of subjects have semblance of strong emotional reaction. If they are angry at another person they would tell him off immediately.

The majority of the subjects seem to accept crying as a way of releasing feelings. The circumstances which they consider acceptable for a man, a woman to cry was death and departure. "For a man," one subject said, "it is acceptable to cry when he is in need of money to provide for his big family." A "woman may cry whenever she feels like it," admitted two other subjects. "A child may cry when spanked, when he is hungry and when he is jealous," said a few others.

Food

From what we can judge religion still holds its effect on a number of families' eating habits. Eighteen subjects out of 41 observe the religious restriction of excluding meat from their food on Wednesdays and Fridays. The majority of these are able to follow the restrictions; five subjects said "not always."

The majority of subjects (28 out of 40) have a form of worship associated with eating. It is usually the Lord's Prayer or some other form of thanksgiving. One subject wrote, "When each member eats alone he or she does the sign of cross and eats." Eleven subjects answered that they have no worship associated with meals.

The general pattern of the meals appears to be three meals during the day. Two families out of 41 said that they eat two meals; four families said they eat four meals during the day.

Out of 41 subjects 21 said that the family eats together regularly. Nineteen said they eat together sometimes, and one subject wrote that the family does not eat together at all.

The families show their belief in combinations of foods which they feel are not good for the family. Twelve out of 35 subjects said they do eat sour milk and fish on the same meal. Twenty-three subjects answered that they do not. The reasons given are: "had not tried it;" "upsets the stomach;" "causes white spots on the skin." Other unhealthy combination of foods were given such as: "sour milk and eggs;" "honey and water-mellon causes swelling in the body." The foods that they felt were not good to eat are: hot pepper, too much meat, sweets, raw meat, snails, lobsters, crabs.

Health

The general health condition of the family members ranges from good to very good. One subject when answering that it was good has added, "Thank God!"

The condition of the teeth ranges from good to poor. The majority show that their teeth are in good condition. Following are those whose teeth were in fair condition but were kept in repair by the dentist. A few had not repaired them. Still some few said that the condition was poor and they had replaced them.

Twenty-two out of 41 subjects answered that they had visited the doctor in the past year, 20 of them for minor illnesses, 2 for serious illnesses. Eighteen out of the forty subjects had not seen a doctor this year.

In treatment of an illness 34 subjects out of 40 said that they take patient immediately to the doctor, while four said they use previous prescriptions unless the sickness is very serious; two answered that they follow an elderly relative's advice.

For minor illnesses the families seem to have certain remedies. From what we can judge the remedies are medical. For example, for curing colds the subjects suggested: Aspro tablets, next longtonic, menthalatum, dry cups with hot tea and lemon and plenty of rest. One subject suggested "cook radishes and spread hot on the chest." Other more unusual remedies were suggested: "pomegranate blossom for heart trouble;" "honey for reumatism."

The majority (20) of the subjects said that their health is generally better than that of their parents' family. Thirteen out of 33 said No, their health was not better than that of their parents.

Beliefs and Superstitions

It appears from the answers that the Assyrian families do not believe in superstitions as people years ago used to. Twenty-four out of 43 subjects answered that they did not know of any superstitions. The rest mentioned a number of their parents' beliefs which they consider superstitions. These beliefs are connected with food, health, fortune, etc. The following are the beliefs mentioned:

Do not bath on Monday evening.

When bathing, call God's name and throw hot water on ground to keep away evil spirit.

When there is an eclipse of the sun, shoot guns or throw stones in the air to keep away the dragon which is eating the sun.

When you sneeze an "odd" number before an undertaking, it means "bad luck" and when you sneeze an "even" number it means "good luck."

Dreams reflect the daily life of a person.

When a person dies they say God had already written it on his forehead to die on such a date.

Riches are from God.

Food should not be thrown in the waste basket especially bread being God's gift.

Belief in fortune tellers.

Some Attitudes

The majority of the husbands agreed in women's not being equals of men in intelligence, organizing ability, etc. It is interesting to note that from the wives those who disagreed are slightly more than those who agreed. The majority of wives also agreed that all professions should be open to

women while the majority of husbands disagreed.

The majority of subjects both husbands and wives appear to agree that birth control, except when medically indicated, should be made illegal.

Concerning abortion the general attitude shows that it should be made illegal. However, 15 wives agreed and 15 wives were uncertain about the statement.

The majority of the subjects agreed that only by hard work and intelligence can a person get along in the world. Again the majority agreed that God watches over us and what we should have according to His will, will come our way.

	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
Women are not the equals of men in intelligence, organizing ability, etc.			
Husband	23	11	2
Wife	12	13	4
All professions should be open to women.			
Husband	10	19	7
Wife	12	11	6
Birth control, except when medically indicated, should be made illegal.			
Husband	17	13	6
Wife	14	10	5
Abortion should be made illegal.			
Husband	17	7	12
Wife	12	5	12
Only by hard work and intelligence can a person get along in the world.			
Husband	30	3	3
Wife	23	3	3

	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>U</u>
God watches over us and what we should have according to His will will come our way.			
Husband	28	5	3
Wife	26	1	2

Opinions on the Present Assyrian Conditions

To find out the general attitude toward the present Assyrian condition, this question was asked: "Do you think the Assyrian family is happier now than two generations ago?"

Out of the 39 subjects that answered this question, 28 said No. Several reasons were given as to why the Assyrian family is not happier now. The following is a summary of their comments.

The fact of unsettlement was mentioned by a number of the subjects. The Assyrians are scattered in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, United States, Argentine, Brazil. There was more security before the war when they were living in Iran. The average family had a home, land and cattle. Everything was abundant. Now we are depending on pay only. People used to work for six months in the fields and rest for six months. Now we are having hard times. Standard of living is higher. Some fathers have to leave their family and work out of town. Before, the people were socially close. They had much leisure time and fun. People lived longer--they had no worries. "Now we are having grey hair while still young." The people were religious, had religious societies. They had colleges, e.g., the medical college in Urmi, Iran. By the passing years our customs are changing, our children are learning languages other than their mother's. Religion is not as effective. People now are materialistic. In general the people are dissatisfied.

A few of these subjects were optimistic about the future. They hoped that the Assyrian family will be happier.

On the other hand, 11 out of 39 subjects said Yes, that the families are happier now. They have residence in Iraq. They have rights and privileges. They are more secure and stable. Life is easier now. Education is progressing. The parents are having a lovely family life.

C. Reports from the Iranian and the American Families

In the previous pages we have viewed the attributes of the Assyrian family in Iraq. In the next discussion we shall see what changes in the manner of the Assyrian family life are effected by its migration to the States or its continuous living in Iran. The discussion is based on answers from four questionnaires that were received from Iran and six from the States. The responses are not enough samples to be regarded for comparison but the answers help us to perceive some differences and continuity of family patterns of the Iranian and the American families.

The subjects were born in Iran and are at present living in Abadan, Iran, except one husband who was born in Iraq.

The American subjects were born in Iran, Iraq and one was born in the States. At present three families are living in Turlock, California, two in New Jersey and one family in Chicago, Illinois.

The year of birth among the Iranian husbands ranges from 1905 - 1923 giving the age range of 34 - 52; among the wives it ranges from 1914 - 1929 giving the age range of 28 - 43.

As to the American husbands the year of birth ranges from 1873 - 1923 giving an age range of 34 - 84; among the wives it ranges from 1894 - 1929, the age range being 28 - 63.

The age of the Iranian husbands when they were married ranges from 21 - 27 the average being 23 and the mid point 22; of the American husbands from 27 - 32 the average being 30 and the mid point 28. The age of the Iranian wives at time of marriage ranges from 16 - 17 the average being 16.5 and mid point 16; the American wives from 18 - 26 the average being 20.

None of the Iranian subjects had any previous marriage. Out of the American families only one had married again.

Two out of the four Iranian husbands had secondary education, two professional education. Of the American husbands, one had elementary education, three had college education, two professional education one of these having had Ph.D. degree. The Iranian wives had education as far as elementary education, one secondary education and the rest college education.

The Iranian subjects had attended government, American and Assyrian schools. The American subjects had attended American, Assyrian, government and English schools consecutively.

Two of the Iranian husbands are Catholics, and two Protestants; of the wives two are Catholics, one Orthodox and one Protestant. Of the American husbands three are Protestants, two Catholics, and one Nestorian; of the wives there are Catholics and Protestants.

The Iranian subjects mentioned the length of time they had known their partners before marriage ranged from "few days" to "three years." One subject writes "...never saw each other until a few days before the engagement. The girl was recommended to me by a friend...." The American subjects' answers give the range "from childhood" to "one year" as the length of time the partners had known each other before marriage.

There seems to be the tendency to allow the young boys and girls to have dates as deduced from both the Iranian and the American responses. Only one Iranian subject said No, while the others required that there be a chaperon. The American subjects said Yes, only two said that they be chaperoned. One can't help but wonder if the new environment has caused this more liberal attitude.

The Iranian and the American subjects agreed as to the importance of

love before marriage and the relation of courtship to marital happiness.

Both the Iranian and the American subjects objected strongly to inter-marriage with non-Christians. The Iranians objected also to the inter-marriage with non-Assyrians, but Christians while the American subjects said it was alright as long as the other partner was a Christian.

The age range recommended for a boy to get married was 20 - 26 by the Iranian group, 20 - 35 by the American group. For a girl the age range 20 - 25 was suggested by both groups.

The Iranian families felt that before he marries, a boy should be educated, self confident and able to support a family. While the American group said "does not matter;" "just enough;" "have a trade or profession."

Both groups felt that after being educated a girl should have training in homemaking. One American subject added, "Nowadays a girl should have some kind of profession besides sewing and cooking."

In describing his engagement ceremony (in 1930) one Iranian subject with no parents writes, "After the girl accepted to marry me, I took her to the shops accompanied by her mother and my cousin to buy the engagement rings and other necessities that she may like to have. Later we appointed a certain date and invited relatives and friends and an Orthodox priest. There was a big gathering (on such occasions usually the girl must be present but she was shy, therefore did not show in). After the service the ring was taken to her. She wore it, meanwhile a great noise rose up from the crowd, clapping and shouting, 'Long live the bride, God bless her, etc.' I also had my ring. Then the crowd sat down for dinner. There were enough drinks to wet everybody's dry throat...."

The engagement ceremony in the States tends to be very simple with a small informal party. One subject writes, "We decided ourselves and told

our parents. After their consent we had a private engagement ceremony for friends and relatives."

The Iranian subjects said that their wedding ceremony was religious and the celebrations were carried on according to the old Assyrian customs. While the American subjects write that the ceremony was religious "followed by a small reception at home."

Though the Iranian subjects married according to old Assyrian traditions they prefer the wedding of their sons and daughters to be very simple. The American subjects said, "Church wedding followed by dinner reception." Both the Iranian and the American group had not paid and did not want to pay dowry.

Three Iranian subjects out of four indicated that they received no assistance when they were married. They had "lost all those who would give such help during the World War." Of the American group one subject said Yes, the others No. One has added, "We lost everything during the World War." Both the groups were willing to assist their sons and daughters if there is a need for it.

The number of children in the Iranian families ranges from 2 - 5, the average being 3; in the American families from 1 - 5, the average being 4. The age range of the Iranian children is from 2 - 22. The American children's age ranges from 1 - 43. The Iranian children attended government schools. The American children attended American schools either grade or high school.

Both groups show the tendency toward the independent biological family. They also prefer that the young couple live alone. One Iranian subject says that the couple should live with the husband's family for some time. He comments, "Generations ago, it has been a custom for the Assyrian nation,

family in particular, to keep the brides within the family, sometimes even up to seven, until they (the brides) also had their children married. The grandfather and grandmother were the two responsible persons at home."

The Iranian and the American subjects said that their relatives are in Baghdad. They kept contact with them by correspondence. Those in Iran had few relatives living there. They visited them daily to once a week.

In their attitudes toward children all the subjects show no special preference for boys or girls. The majority agreed that the children in the family should have same privileges. The responses were divided between agreeing and disagreeing on parents' concern about the appearance of their children's behavior to the neighbors. The majority agreed that parents interfere too much in the affairs of their adolescent children. The Iranian subjects felt that the youth today are lacking in courtesy and consideration. The American wives disagreed while the husbands agreed. Strict discipline for the youth was agreed upon by all the subjects except the American wives.

In reporting their parents' discipline of them the majority of subjects said that it was reasonable. Two Iranian subjects were orphans; their parents were killed in the World War. One wife had added that at two her father had been killed; her mother was very strict in disciplining her. The American subjects feel that they had enough guidance while the Iranian subjects say No. They all wished they had more opportunity for independent thinking.

Most of the responses show a tendency to be more strict with elder children than the younger ones. The Iranian subjects disagreed as to the desirability of teen-agers' independence in choosing a vocation. On the other hand, the American subjects agreed that it was desirable. Authority is exhibited in the answers demanding complete obedience from the children.

Yet three Iranian husbands exhibit a change by disagreeing with this attitude. The American responses were equal. The majority feel that obedience and respect are important virtues the children should learn. Rules and regulations are to show authority. They believe that children wait to be pushed by their parents. The majority disagree that punishment of children is effective especially the wives in both Iranian and American responses.

The parents cooperate in making discussions for the family. They are also responsible for training the children.

The Iranian subjects agree on father's sovereignty while the American subjects disagreed as to the father's role as the disciplinarian in the family. They also agreed that the mother should exercise discipline in the family. The majority of the Iranian subjects agree that both parents should discipline the children. They agree that the wife is more likely to know what is best for the children.

The American subjects did not consider the physical care of the children as the most important function of the home. The Iranian responses to this attitude were equal. The subjects wish their children to attain university education. The American responses show concern over teen-agers' shift in vocational interests, while the Iranian responses do not show that. The responses show that both groups do not feel the necessity of the adolescents' following their parents' advice in choosing a vocation. The majority leave the choice of vocation up to them. A few others suggested that they be doctors, lawyers, dentists and businessmen.

In husband-wife relationships the American responses were in disapproval of the father's authority over the wife. The Iranian subjects were divided between approval and disapproval. Yet all the responses from both groups show that husband and wife do discuss sex matters freely. In their

relation to the children the parents feel that the former regard their friends' opinions more highly than those of their parents. They feel that sex education should be given at school. The majority do not discuss sex matters with their children. The reasons given from the Iranian group were, "We give them good sexual books to read;" "Such discussions may upset their minds." From those who did discuss sex, the American responses rank higher. One subject had commented that they discuss sex matters with their children "only when they ask questions."

Both groups show that the daughters tend to feel more free to talk with the mother than with the father while the sons go to both of them.

Almost all the Iranian subjects answered yes, that they expected their children to support them in their old age. One subject, born in 1905, had commented, "This was a common thing among the Assyrians." On the other hand the American responses were in negative.

In matters of finance almost all the subjects depended on the husband's income alone. The Iranians did not live in a house of their own while the Americans, except one, said Yes. They answered that they received no financial help and assisted no body except one from the States, who indicated his assisting some relative partly. The parents plan their budget together and they strictly adhere to it, except one American subject who commented, "spend as needed, do not adhere to budget." It appears that the husband and wife plan the budget together except two American subjects who said that the wife took that responsibility. In most cases the wife was mentioned to be the responsible person for spending money for family needs. To the question whether they are better off financially than their parents, the Iranian subjects answering this question said Yes. The reasons were due to better education and wages. From the five American

families replying, two said No and the rest said Yes, giving reasons "because I have more opportunity in the country I live in;" "because they lost all property during the World War."

In managing an independent old age the Iranian subjects gave the following suggestions: "pension," "saving," "insurance." The American responses were such as "income property" and "saving."

All the American and the majority of the Iranian subjects do not have servants. The wife does all the housework. Her husband helps her. The Iranian subjects mentioned the children's responsibilities at home: "serving tea, washing dishes, cleaning, sweeping, and dusting." All the subjects expect their children to help them in the housework. The Iranian families expect their daughters to have responsibilities more than their sons while the Americans expect them both to help at home.

Besides work, the family enjoys leisure time. The activities mostly enjoyed by the Iranian families were: gardening, music, movies, parties, chess, painting, reading, picnics, visits. The American families mentioned watching television programs, singing and dancing. The family enjoys leisure time with the family clan. In both Iran and the States the families join the Assyrian activities regularly except for few who said that they attend them whenever they have nothing else to do.

The American families have their parents or relatives living in Iran or in Baghdad. Correspondence is kept up between them. It ranges from "occasionally" to "every month." Visits are very rare. The Iranian subjects had either no parents or they were living in Baghdad or they were living ⁱⁿ the neighborhood especially the wife's family. The regularity in writing letters ranges from "not at all" to "three times a year." Visits to the neighboring relatives were "daily" but those living in another

country were "after every 3, 5 or ten years."

There is concern from both groups about the Assyrian community. They agree that the youth should work for and serve the community. They said that they themselves would do something of great benefit to their community if given the chance. Almost every family had one member or more belonging to an organization, club, society whether religious, social or athletic. One Iranian husband had mentioned his belonging to the Assyrian society of the church and school. Some of the children belong to the School Youth Relief Organization. The American husbands wrote of their belonging to "Holy Name Society," "Knights of Columbus," "Brotherhood Society," "Assyrian-American Club," etc. The mothers mentioned "Mothers' Guild," "Bridge Club," "Church Club." The children belong to "Sunday School and Young Folks Society," and "Brownies." The Iranian responses show almost no indication of the family members having a religious or a community position. The American responses show mostly the father holding a position either in the church or in the Assyrian-American Club. One husband is a retired minister. One mother said she belonged to the Presbyterian Council of Women.

In matters concerning divorce both the Iranian and the American subjects feel that the divorce regulations are not too strict. They disagreed to the statement that they be changed to make divorce easier. The Iranian subjects indicated that there were not many divorces among the Assyrian families while the American responses were divided between Yes and No.

Few families mentioned the artistic ability of members in the family. One Iranian family mentioned drawing done by a daughter, still another father plays the piano and organ. The two American families answering

this question said the wife is very good in singing, the other, that the children play the piano and violin.

In the questions concerning the emotional reaction, all the subjects answered that a man, a woman and a child should never swear. One of the Iranian subjects had written, "But sometimes it so happens that even the father, for no reason at all, swears." When coping with another person's anger, the husbands tend to agree that the other person should be told calmly where he is wrong. While the wives prefer to stay away from him until they are calmer. All the respondents approve of crying especially under circumstances of death, misery and misfortune.

In discussing the food and the effect of religion on eating habits the four Iranian families answered, "We consider these restrictions as superstition and do not observe them." From the two American answers one was Yes; the other No. One of the Iranian respondents said that they said the Lord's Prayer before the meals while the others did not. The American subjects say the "blessing." All the respondents replied that they eat three meals during the day and that all the family eats together regularly.

The subjects have beliefs in unhealthy combination of foods. Three Iranian subjects said that sour milk and fish cause skin disease; the other said they had not experienced it. The American subjects said Yes, they do eat it; one only indicated that "they do not agree." Other unhealthy combination of foods mentioned, were water melon and honey (American and Iranian); milk and cherries (American).

The general health condition of the respondents ranges from "good" to "very good." The condition of the teeth ranges from "poor and replaced" to "good." In general the majority said the condition of their teeth was fair and kept in repair by the dentist. The majority said that they had been

to the doctor for minor illness. In treatment of an illness all the respondents said that they take the patient immediately to the doctor, though in certain illnesses the families have remedies, for instance, in curing colds, the Iranian answers were "drugs and rest;" "hot bath and sweating;" "a cup of hot tea mixed with whisky and arak." The American respondents answered, "aspirin tablets, lots of fluids, rest." The answers to the question whether the health of their family was better than that of their parents, the answers were divided between Yes and No. There was one of each group who answered "about the same."

Concerning the beliefs and superstitions, there were none mentioned by the Iranian and the American group except one from the latter group who said, "Sneezing odd number was considered bad omen."

In finding out some attitudes, the majority of the Iranian husbands disagreed to the statement that women are not the equals of men in intelligence, organizing ability, while the majority of women agreed. On the other hand the American women disagreed while the husbands' answers were divided between agreement and disagreement. The majority of the American husbands and wives agreed that all professions should be open to women while the Iranian subjects disagreed. The American respondents agreed that birth control, except when medically indicated, should be made illegal; the wives from the Iranian group agreed too, while the husbands were uncertain. The majority of both groups agreed that abortion should be made illegal. Again, the majority of both groups agreed that only by hard work and intelligence can a person get along in the world. Then to the statement, "God watches over us and what we should have according to His will, will come our way," the American subjects agreed; the Iranian husbands disagreed, the women's answers were divided between agreement and disagreement.

Of the four Iranian responses, three were Yes to the question whether the Assyrian family is happier now than two generations ago. The following are the comments mentioned: "progress in education;" "parents are working hard and encouraging their children to attain higher education in order to raise their standard of living." The one response which was No gave the reason "not happier, though they have much money. They had property on which they could depend with certainty." Four out of the five American subjects answering this question said Yes. They pointed out that "the Assyrian families are happier now. They have learned, unfortunately, the difficult way after many hardships to adjust to their environment both socially and politically;" "Many new ideas have come out to make our life happier with the love of God as our Creator and guide to better living." "The family who thinks progressively is happier now." "The Assyrians in America eat better, dress better and take good care of themselves than the old generation in Iran." The one subject who said No commented, "They had less worries."

General Observations and Conclusion

In this thesis we have observed the Assyrian family in the past and present. It is plain that the present can be understood only in the light of the past. The existing patterns have derived from those which went before.

We have pictured the Assyrian family as a dynamic institution subject to constant modification of its patterns. These patterns, highly susceptible to influences, have changed. On the other hand, the Assyrian family has not been so ready to discard the old for the new. There are evidences of some customs practiced today which were in fashion way back before the Christian era.

From the knowledge available we have pictured the ancient Assyrian family and read of the geographical and cultural influences that had affected their lives. After the fall of the Empire, the once proud and mighty Assyrians came under the rule of one nation after another. The fact that they came in contact with Greeks, Persians, Turks, Kurds, Americans, Arabs, Russians, British and other Western nationalities and came under their rule or were subject to pressures, persecutions, violations or even succor by them is evident in the adjustments the Assyrian family had to make. These nationalities, each in turn, brought the influences of their individual civilizations thus drawing the Assyrians to modify their own. As the Assyrians lived side by side with any of these nationalities, there was a certain degree of intermarriage with the consequent intermixture of family patterns. This does not mean that the Assyrians were a pure race until they came in contact with these nations. There was possible intermixture at the time when it was an empire with certain

Babylonian and Chaldean elements.

The Christianization of the Assyrians was a great influence on the family. Their contacts with Russians and other western cultures made some accept the Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant sects. These three with the Nestorian sect are represented today in the Assyrian community. The laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc., that these sects hold have affected the family patterns.

As a group, the Assyrians have had a social and financial struggle for a number of generations. Partly due to that and partly due to the persecutions that they experienced, many of the families migrated from rural to urban centers. There seems to be substance to the belief that the family was better adjusted to its agricultural setting (Urmi, Iran) than it now is to its urban (Baghdad) setting. The family has had to work out its own adjustments to the changing conditions. The families living in Iraq have had certain adjustments to make to be able to live comfortably even if that was at the expense of altering their customs.

In the report from the families living in the States, it appears that the first generation that moved there seem to hold to their old customs. The trend away is manifested in the home of their children, born and raised in a western culture.

One would think that the Iranian families should be the least affected by the changes but, as we have seen from the report, the family patterns are changing in Iran too. All the four Iranian respondents are at present living in Abadan; the reason here might be again the effect of the migration from the country to the city and their living side by side with other nationalities.

As mentioned before Christianity played an important role in the

lives of men. Marriage became strictly monogamy. Sex outside marriage was controlled, the Church taking the decisive stand. Marriage was considered as a sacrament and sacred. Even the engagement was a religious ceremony. Christian doctrine is against divorce and in favor of the indissolubility of marriage. Restricted by the religious laws, the Assyrians' attitude toward divorce continues to be conservative. From the subjects' answers we understand that divorce is not common among the Assyrian families nor is it favored.

The questionnaire respondents may also have been restricted by the religious laws when they objected to birth control and abortion.

The religious influences also refer to the dominion of the father and the obedience of children and wife. They determine the parents as responsible for the physical and spiritual care of the children and requiring honor, respect, and obedience of the children for their parents.

In the answers there was indication of religious participation drawing the family together in shared activities. Some of the ancient religious practices as family activities are still carried on, e.g., animal sacrifice.

Marriages before were arranged by parents. From the answers of the questionnaire respondents it appears that there is increased emphasis upon the factor of affection as a basis for family life. Differing from the past when it was the tendency to minimize the importance of affection as the prime motive for marriage, the trend at the present is to give it more importance. As mentioned in the elderly ladies' reports of courtship in their youth, they had practically no courtship whereas parents now seem to exhibit more lenient attitude toward their children. There seems to appear the desirability of engagement to be as a period of testing.

personality rather than mere contract between families. This attitude appears to be more favored by the families living in the States and Iran than those living in Iraq. Not all the families living in Iraq hold that attitude. There is still present the conservative attitude concerning boy-girl relationship.

To keep the race distinct for so many generations must have called for some strong taboos against intermarriage. The objections now seem only to be against non-Christian marriages which may mean the assimilation of the Assyrians as a race into the Christian community.

Due to the changes in location and the instability of the Assyrian community, the engagement and wedding celebrations tend toward simplicity instead of the elaborate celebrations. Western ideas, contacted by Iraqi as well as American families, and the busy life may also be influencing the preference for a simple wedding celebration.

As to the age of man and woman at marriage, it is apparent that the husband should be several years older than the wife but in any event the man should be married by the time he is 30 years old. This is considered older than the ancient Nestorian legal requirement of at least 14 years of age. The legal age for a woman was 12 years.

From what we can judge financial stability and education were and still are important characteristics to be said of a young man who is considering marriage. For the girl, education, especially in household arts, has always been considered desirable.

Another trend that the family has undergone is the change in the household unit. The compound family group is disappearing and the simple family is taking its place. The trend is thus from large to small families; more tendency toward biological rather than joint family. The

size of this individual family is about six people. There are still a few who live with the husband's family or have the husband's parents in their home. Some of the respondents indicated that their parents are already dead. From the questionnaire responses we may conclude that there is continuing responsibility for relatives. There is encouragement of financial as well as physical independence for the newly weds. However, if the newly weds were to live with elders the preference was that they live with the husband's parents for some time till they can afford to live independently. There is continued sense of responsibility for the financial start of children's marriage, probably originating in the old practice of providing dowries.

Almost 50% of the questionnaire respondents live in a house of their own. From my observation the families are trying to secure a home and year after year more families are able to buy houses.

Several suggestions were given to the planning of an independent old age. Only one suggested his dependence on son. Yet the majority expect their children to support them in old age.

The family keeps in contact with the relatives either by visits or correspondence depending on how far they live from each other. The loyalty for the larger family continues. Along with this, loyalty to the community seems to be present too. There is concern for the prestige of the community and its welfare. There is a sense of responsibility and interest in Assyrian activities whether religious, social or athletic. There appears to be quite good participations in Assyrian affairs. The status of the children has been enhanced. The answers of the questionnaire respondents show the continuous concern for education for the children, both boys and girls. It appears that the opportunities for higher education

are open for boys and girls. The parents, though generally low in educational background, show their interest in their children's attaining high education and good vocations. A number of boys and girls are attending colleges today. They are attending government colleges. From the answers to the questionnaire the parents show still a feeling of responsibility for their children's choice of vocation.

There is a redefining of the roles of the children of different sexes. The trend is toward equality of position for all the members of the family. There appears to be no special preference for boys and girls. If there is preference it is for boys. Strong cooperation between the family members is manifested in their attitude towards household tasks. Both boys and girls seem to have responsibilities at home.

There is lack of discrimination on the answers concerning the privileges for children. If I am interpreting their responses correctly I would say that they would ultimately give boys more privileges than girls.

Parents are concerned as to their children's behavior. They admit that there is probably too much interference in the adolescents' affairs. Youth today differ from people a generation ago in matters of respect and consideration for their elders. This may be interpreted to mean that parents feel the necessity for releasing control over adolescents but fear the lack of respect which may come.

Parents seem to have had reasonable discipline and enough guidance from their parents, yet they wish they had had more opportunity for independent thinking. The parents realize the importance of teen-age independence, yet they do not seem to accept their independent choice of vocation. There is still the strict attitude especially towards the elder children. The parents seem to be affected by the conservative cultural

attitude discouraging the discussion of sex matters with the children. Daughters appear to be closer to mother. The sons seem to feel close to both. Fathers seem to be stricter with their daughters than with the sons. From the subjects' answers one could sense a continuing authoritarian attitude toward children.

In relationships between husband and wife and parent and child there is a tendency toward more democracy in the family. Mother's status is improved in relation to the children. Both father and mother are responsible for training the children. They say that both father and mother should be the disciplinarians over the children but with the father as the ultimate authority. The feeling was that the mother is more able to understand the children's problems. The wife is given status within the family, yet the majority of husbands disagreed to the statement that all professions should be open for her.

There appears to be more cooperation and freedom between husband and wife, e.g., in matters of sex. On the other hand, there still prevails the attitude that wife should always obey the husband. The major work of the house seems to be the responsibility of the wife yet the husband and children help her. The work at home is more divided than concentrated in one person. Economically the family depends on father's income in most cases. He seems to be the sole bread winner of the family. The husband is apparently doing relatively well in his role as provider. The general attitude of the subjects to the financial condition compared with that of their parents appears to be in favor of the present condition.

From what we can judge the husband and wife appear to follow a plan in money expenditure. Both of them do the planning together. The wife is given important role as she appears to be the one responsible for money

spending for family needs. The parents seem to have leisure time activities whether alone, with children or with the family clan. Different interests were mentioned by the respondents. The activities include church attendance and Assyrian parties.

The writer has attempted to investigate the family's attitudes and experiences in other specific areas to add to our understanding of family patterns.

In the field of arts the family does not seem to be competent though quite a number of the members of families do practice playing an instrument, singing, painting. It was mentioned that any member of the family whether father, mother, son or daughter has such artistic or musical talents.

The answers to the questions show variation in degree of emotional reaction. The majority did not approve of swearing. A close number admitted that it could not be helped sometimes. There appears to be a calm attitude in conditions of anger. Crying seems to be accepted under circumstances of death, misery, etc.

From the questions concerning food, we may conclude that religion still holds its effect on the eating habits. This shows the continuation of the old beliefs and feeling of responsibilities towards adherence to religious restrictions. Yet some of the subjects seem to have released themselves of such restrictions. The majority have a form of worship before the meals. The general pattern is three meals per day. The responses do not give a definite answer as to the regularity of all the family members eating together. They divided between "regularly" and "sometimes." There appears to be a tendency for family gathering at meals to be negated by outside interests or occupations.

From the subject of food, we also conclude that the families have beliefs and superstitions connected with combination of foods. We see some of these beliefs carried over to the States, and these families in Iran still holding to some.

In general, health condition seems to be good. The purpose in asking questions connected with health was to find out whether there were realistic attitudes towards the family's health or whether the beliefs and superstitions governed. There appears to exist some superstitions but very little. The people seem to realize the importance of the doctors. The majority believe that the present health condition is better than that of their parents.

There is little belief in superstitions as it appears from the answers. From my observation I can admit that some of the superstitions the subjects mentioned as their parents' beliefs are still believed in by many people, not being aware of it. Unconsciously a person may call God's name when bathing. There are also many who still believe in the fortune tellers. This is mostly found in the old generation and among the uneducated people.

From the few statements included in the questionnaire we conclude some general attitudes of the subjects. Hard work and intelligence were accepted as important tools in life. On the other hand, God is the provider.

In their attitude toward the present Assyrian condition, the answers show the majority, especially from Iraq, admitting that the Assyrian family was happier in the past due to its security and stability. A few are optimistic for the future. Yet a number contend that the family is happier now due to security, stability, and progress of education.

In conclusion, the Assyrian family has continued to survive carrying with it some of its old customs with alterations and modifications of others.

Supported by its religious training the family remains stable but the biological family has become more independent of the clan. The father remains the head of the household, and ultimate authority but the wife and children participate more democratically in family activities and responsibilities.

This strong, stable, progressive family is probably largely responsible for the continuation of the Assyrians as a distinct race.

Appendix A

Development of Family Patterns in the Assyrian Community

This questionnaire is for both husband and wife. If only one parent is answering it, he or she should answer only his or her part. There is no need for you to write your name. The information you give will be strictly confidential. Please try to be as accurate as possible.

1. Please fill in the blanks:

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
1. Date of birth (year)
2. Religious sect
3. Age when you got married
4. Any previous marriage
when.	when.
5. Birthplace
6. Present address (City and Country)

2. Of the following, please check the one that shows your last year in school:

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
1. No school	_____	_____
2. Elementary school (class)	_____	_____
3. Secondary (high) school (class)	_____	_____
4. College (number of years)	_____	_____
5. Professional education	_____	_____

3. What kind of school or schools have you attended? Please check.

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
1. Government	_____	_____
2. Private	_____	_____
a. Assyrian	_____	_____
b. American	_____	_____
c. English	_____	_____
d. French	_____	_____
e.	_____	_____
3. Other	_____	_____

4. How long did you know each other before marriage?

5. In what year did your wedding take place? _____

6. How was your marriage ceremony and celebrations? Please describe briefly.

1. Religious

2. Civil

7. How many children do you have now? _____

8. Please fill in the following blanks about your children:

Sex	Date of Birth	Class at School	Type of School	Nationality of School
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

9. Do you prefer? Please check:

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
1. Boys	_____	_____
2. Girls	_____	_____
3. No special preference	_____	_____

10. Do you live? Please check.

1. With your partner (husband or wife) and child(ren) alone?
2. With your parents?
3. With your in-laws?
4. Others

11. Do you receive financial help from any relative? Please check.

1. Fully
2. Partly
3. Not at all

12. Do you assist any relative financially? Please check.

1. Fully
2. Partly
3. Not at all

13. If your parents or in-laws are living with you, check the one or ones who are with you:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Mother | 5. Mother-in-law |
| 2. Father | 6. Father-in-law |
| 3. Brother(s) How many? _____ | 7. Brother(s)-in-law How many? _____ |
| 4. Sister(s) How many? _____ | 8. Sister(s)-in-law How many? _____ |

14. If your daughter(s) has a worry, to whom does she go first? Please check

1. To father
2. To mother
3. Relative on father's side. Who? _____
4. Relative on mother's side. Who? _____
5. To mother and father

16. How much education do you wish each child to attain (or did they attain)?

17. What occupation do you expect your children to assume, (or did they assume)?
18. If you do not live with your parents or your in-laws, how far do you live from
1. Husband's family?
 2. Wife's family?
19. How often do you visit parents' family (father, mother, brother(s), sister(s))?

		<u>How often visit</u>	<u>How often write letters</u>
Wife	(Wife's family -----	-----	-----
	(Husband's family-----	-----	-----
Husband	(Husband's family-----	-----	-----
	(Wife's family -----	-----	-----

20. Are there any other relations your family keeps close contact with (e.g., visiting, writing) Check.
 Yes No
 If Yes, how often?
21. The following are statements about relationships within the family. Will you indicate if you agree, disagree, or are uncertain of the way you feel about each one. If you agree more than you disagree, indicate by drawing a circle around A. If you disagree more than you agree, circle D. If you are uncertain about how you feel, circle U.

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
1. Children should be taught to obey without question.	A D U	A D U
2. The most important function of the home is to provide physical care for children until they are grown.	A D U	A D U
3. All the children in the family should have same privileges.	A D U	A D U
4. Young people today are not as respectful of their elders as young people a generation ago.	A D U	A D U
5. A certain amount of sex education should be given at school to all boys and girls.	A D U	A D U
6. Punishment is the best way to make children behave properly.	A D U	A D U
7. Adolescents should follow their parent's advice in choosing a vocation.	A D U	A D U
8. Boys and girls should be allowed different privileges.	A D U	A D U

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
29. It is normal for adolescent boys and girls to want to be independent of parental control.	A D U	A D U
30. God watches over us and what we should have according to His will, will come our way.	A D U	A D U
31. The mother should be the disciplinarian in the home.	A D U	A D U
32. Birth control, except when medically indicated, should be made illegal.	A D U	A D U
33. Parents are responsible for the religious education of their children.	A D U	A D U
34. There is a strong relationship between the length of time a couple has known each other before marriage and the permanence of the marriage.	A D U	A D U
35. Parents should not impose their religious beliefs on their children.	A D U	A D U
36. It is necessary that the couple love each other before they marry.	A D U	A D U
37. Parents should work together in training children.	A D U	A D U
38. The church is wholly responsible for the religious education of children.	A D U	A D U
39. Children should receive no religious education till they are old enough to think for themselves.	A D U	A D U
40. When husband and wife disagree, the husband's will should prevail.	A D U	A D U
41. The wife is more likely to know what is best for the children than the husband.	A D U	A D U
42. Woman should always obey her husband without question.	A D U	A D U
43. Husband and wife should talk their sex problems freely.	A D U	A D U
22. Below are a number of questions and statements. Would you please answer by <u>Yes</u> or <u>No</u> :		
1. Do you and your partner attend entertainments together?		
2. Do you expect your children to help you with house work?		
3. Does your son have any house work responsibility?		
4. Do you join the Assyrian activities.		

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Wife</u>
9. The father should be the disciplinarian in the home.	A D U	A D U
10. Most parents are overly concerned about the way their child's behavior will look to the neighbors.	A D U	A D U
11. Teen-agers are lacking in courtesy and consideration.	A D U	A D U
12. Parents should let a teen-ager follow the location of his own choice.	A D U	A D U
13. Children want their parents to tell them what to do.	A D U	A D U
14. What the youth needs most is strict discipline.	A D U	A D U
15. The youth should work for and serve the community	A D U	A D U
16. Most parents should be more strict with their elder children than with the younger ones.	A D U	A D U
17. Most parents should set rules and regulations for their children so that they will recognize authority.	A D U	A D U
18. Boys in the family are allowed more privileges than girls.	A D U	A D U
19. Parents need not be concerned if a teen-ager shifts his vocational interests several times.	A D U	A D U
20. An insult of our community's honor should always be punished.	A D U	A D U
21. All professions should be open to women.	A D U	A D U
22. Divorce laws should be altered to make divorce easier.	A D U	A D U
23. Most parents interfere too much in the affairs of their adolescent children.	A D U	A D U
24. In matters of socially acceptable behavior adolescents regard the opinions of their friends more highly than those of their parents.	A D U	A D U
25. Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.	A D U	A D U
26. Only by hard work and intelligence can a person get along in the world.	A D U	A D U
27. Women are not the equals of men in intelligence, organizing ability, etc.	A D U	A D U
28. Abortion should be made illegal.	A D U	A D U

5. Does the father have responsibility for any work in the house? (e.g., keeping things in repair, taking care of children when mother is away.)?
 6. Do you live in a house of your own?
 7. Does your daughter have any house work responsibility?
 8. Do you expect your children to support you in your old age?
 9. You and your partner share some leisure time with the family clan (as when there are guests, feasting or festival times).
 10. You and your partner cannot find leisure time in the home or out of it.
 11. You and your partner go out together to church.
 12. You, your partner and your children have leisure activities together.
 13. If you were given the chance you would do some thing of great benefit to your community.
23. When there is a decision to be made concerning the family, who does it?
Check:
1. Father
 2. Mother
 3. Father and mother
 4. Father, mother, and children if old enough
 5. An elderly relative
 6. Numbers 3 and 5
 7. Others (Please state who)
24. Family attends Assyrian community parties (Please check)
1. Regularly
 2. Whenever it does not have anything else to do
 3. Not at all
25. Does anyone in your family hold a
- | | <u>Who</u> | <u>What</u> | <u>Voluntary or
Paid</u> |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Church position | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 2. Community position | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 3. Group, club, or
school position | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 4. Others | ----- | ----- | ----- |
26. Do you belong to any organization, club, society, etc. whether religious, social, athletic, etc. Please write what:
- | | | |
|---------|------|----------|
| Husband | Wife | Children |
|---------|------|----------|

27. Please check the statement which is most true with regard to economic needs of your family, you depend:
1. On husband's income only
 2. On husband's and wife's income
 3. On wife's income only
 4. Other source (please state what)
28. In round number would you please tell me the total income of your family for the year:
29. Please check any that fit:
1. The husband spends money freely.
 2. The wife spends money freely.
 3. Husband and wife plan their ~~expenditure~~ expenditure together but the husband constantly overspends.
 4. Husband and wife plan their expenditure together but the wife constantly overspends.
 5. Husband and wife plan their expenditure together and both strictly adhere to it.
 6. Other?
30. If your pattern of money expenditure does not fit any of the previous points please explain briefly how you do it in your family?
31. The responsibility for spending money for family needs is on: (Please check)
1. Husband
 2. Wife
 3. Husband and wife together
 4. A relative in the family
 5. Husband, wife and children
 6. Others?
32. Father gives his salary to the wife (Please check)
1. Part of it as needed
 2. All of it
 3. None of it
 4. Certain amount every week or month
 5. Spend it together
 6. Other
33. In planning the budget for the family for the year, who is responsible? Check:
1. Husband
 2. Wife
 3. Husband and wife together
 4. Husband, wife and children if old enough
 5. Husband and his relatives
 6. Others

34. Do you have servant(s) now? Check: Yes ___ No ___
35. If the previous answer is Yes, how many _____ and what kind of help does your maid or maids give you such as cleaning, washing, meals (planning and preparing), children care, etc. Please explain.
36. If the answer in question 34 was No, please check any that fit.
1. Wife does all the work
 2. Husband helps her
 3. An elderly relative helps
 4. Children help _____ (Please indicate in what way help is given.)
 5. Others
37. Please describe briefly the family activity that is enjoyed the most by all the members of the family.
38. May a _____ Man _____ Woman _____ Child swear?
1. Never
 2. Sometimes
 3. As often as wanted
 4. Frequently as a part of everyday speech
 5. Other
39. When a relative dies, may one cry openly?
- | | | |
|-----|----------------|-------------|
| | <u>Husband</u> | <u>Wife</u> |
| Yes | | |
| No | | |
- Or should one restrain her or his grief in difference to others?
40. If you are angry at another person, is it better to: (Check)
- | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|
| | <u>Husband</u> | <u>Wife</u> |
| 1. Tell him off immediately | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Calmly show the other person where he is wrong | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Show him how angry he has made you | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Stay away from him until you are calmer | _____ | _____ |
41. Under what circumstances is it considered acceptable for a _____
- | | |
|----------|---------------------------|
| | <u>What Circumstances</u> |
| 1. Man | |
| 2. Woman | |
| 3. Child | |
- to cry?
42. Do you think divorce regulations are too strict: Check: Yes ___ No ___
42. Do you think there are many divorces among Assyrian families? Yes ___ No ___

44. Do you discuss sex matters with your children? Check: Yes ___ No ___
If no, Why? Please explain briefly.
45. What do you think is the best age for a young man to marry nowadays?
Husband _____ Wife _____
46. What do you think is the best age for a young girl to marry nowadays?
Husband _____ Wife _____
47. How well off should a young man be before he should marry?
48. How would you feel if your son or daughter decided to marry a
1. Non-Assyrian but Christian?
 2. Non-Assyrian? (e.g. Moslem)
 3. Assyrian but of different sect?
49. Should boys and girls be allowed to have dates? Check : Yes ___ No ___
If Yes, should they be chaperoned?
50. What would you like the wedding celebration for your son or daughter to be like? Please explain briefly.
51. Should a girl have a dowry? Yes ___ No ___
If Yes, how large should the dowry be? _____
52. Did you pay any dowry when you married? Yes ___ No ___
If Yes, how much?
53. Should a newly married couple live with (Please check)
1. Wife's parents
 2. Husband's parents
 3. Live alone
 4. Other
54. Should a newly married couple live with wife's parents or husband's parents? Check:
1. Always
 2. For some time
 3. Never
 4. Other
55. If answer is "for some time" under what conditions would this be appropriate?
56. Please describe briefly the ceremony associated with your formal engagement? or how did you announce your engagement?

57. What special artistic training have members of your family had?
(e.g., piano, voice, painting)

Who What How Competent

58. What do you think were **some** of your parents' beliefs that you consider superstition? (Beliefs connected with food, health, fortune, etc.)

59. Was your parents' discipline of you as a child

Husband Wife

1. Much too strict
2. Very strict
3. Quite strict
4. Reasonable
5. Not strict enough
6. Very lax
- 7.

60. Did you wish for more opportunity to do things your own way as you were growing up?

1. Husband Yes No
2. Wife Yes No

61. Did your parents give you enough guidance in making important decisions before you were married?

1. Husband Yes No
2. Wife Yes No

62. What training should a girl have before marrying (e.g., sewing, handicraft, cooking, etc.)

63. If you plan an independent old age how will you manage this?

64. Do you expect to give your sons or daughters financial assistance when they are married (e.g., education, land, money, etc.) Please explain.

65. What assistance were you given at this time in your life?

66. What do you think is the general health condition of your family:

Children

Husband Wife Son(s) Daughter(s)

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Poor
4. Very poor

67. Generally is the health of your family better than that of your parents' family?

68. Have you seen a doctor in the past year? Yes ___ No ___
If Yes, what for (check)
1. Minor illnesses
2. Serious illnesses
69. What is the condition of your teeth?
Fair and kept in Fair no Poor
Repair by Dentist Repair Replaced
1. Husband Good
2. Wife
3. Children
70. If a member of the family is sick do you (check)
1. Take him or her immediately to the doctor?
2. Use previous prescriptions?
3. Follow an elderly relative's advice?
4. Other
71. Do you have a remedy for curing colds? What is it? Explain.
72. Do you have remedy for other illnesses? Please explain briefly?
73. How many meals do you eat during the day?
74. Do all the family members eat together?
1. Regularly
2. Sometimes
3. Not at all
4.
75. Do you have a form of worship associated with eating? What?
76. What effect does religion have on your eating habits or on the foods you eat? (e.g., not eating meat on Wednesdays and Fridays)
77. If there are any religious restrictions, are you able to follow them?
78. Do you eat sour milk and fish on the same meal? Yes ___ No ___
If No, why?
79. Are there any other combinations of foods you feel are not good for the family?
80. Are there any foods you feel are not good to eat? Why?
81. Are you better off financially than your parents? Why?
82. Do you think the Assyrian family is happier now than two generations ago? Please explain your opinion.

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Interview

With Mrs. Nazlo Elia, Baghdad, December 28, 1956. Mrs. Elia was born in Urmi, Iran in the year 1858.

Letters

Rev. Fr. Gabriel Koda, Habbaniya, March 30, 1957. Rev. Koda is the Chaldean Priest of the Habbaniya Parish.

Mr. Korosh Shlemon, March 14, 1957. Mr. Shlemon is a lay Pastor of the Assyrian Presbyterian Church in Baghdad, the only Assyrian Protestant church in Baghdad. He is also the principal of the Assyrian School in Baghdad.

Mr. J. Jacob, Baghdad, May 18, 1957. Mr. Jacob, an active member of the Assyrian community, was, for a number of years the principal of the Assyrian School in Habbaniya, Iraq.

Pamphlet

Perley, David Barsum, J. S. D. Whither Christian Mission? New Jersey, Kimball Press, 1946.

Questionnaire

Distributed to Assyrian families in Iraq, Iran, and the United States of America.