

Lesson 3:

Forgotten Refugees: Jewish Refugees from Arab Lands

Appendix A –Text from Rabbi Ezra Sasson Dangur on Exodus 23:19

Rabbi Ezra Sasson Dangur (1848-1930) on Exodus 23:19

“You were strangers” - as it is explained to us “You understand the stranger’s soul, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9). In the same way, a person who was in danger and was saved by God, should have mercy on those who experience similar suffering. The same is true for the psychological and\ or emotional realm - (a person who suffered this pain) should have compassion when s\he sees another person who suffers from the same distress from which s\he once suffered.

כי גרים הייתם' - כמו שמפורש לפנינו: 'ואתם ידעתם את נפש הגר - כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים'. ומי שהיה בצרה וצוקה וה' הצילו, ראוי שירחם על כל הבא במצוקה ההיא, וכן הוא בתולדות נפש האדם - שיכמרו רחמיו בראותו את רעהו במכאוב, שהרגיש הוא בעצמו לשעבר.

עדי זהב על התורה, חלק א', ספר שמות, פרשת משפטים, פרק כ"ב, פס' כ', עמ' שי"ג, הוצאת מכון ירושלים, ירושלים

Rabbi Ezra Sasson Dangur was born in Baghdad Iraq in 1848. He studied Torah at the *Beit Midrash Beit Zalka* with renowned Iraqi Rabbi Abdullah Somekh. He served as Rabbi of the Jewish community of Rangoon in Burma and in 1897 returned to Baghdad to voluntarily run the Great Synagogue of Baghdad. In 1903 Rabbi Dangur got permission from the Turkish sultan to open a printing press in Baghdad. This printing press printed more than 140 different books, the first of which was a Siddur according to the Iraqi tradition. Rabbi Dangur also served as the Head of the Iraqi Jewish community



Ezra Dangur and family, Baghdad, 1910

(Wikipedia)

- 1) How does Rabbi Dangur address the question of Jewish suffering?
- 2) What are we supposed to do as Jews who have experienced suffering?
- 3) What do you think the children of refugees should do when they see suffering in the world?