

Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore

Edited by Dr Louis Loewe

A facsimile

of the 1890 edition

Introduced by

Professor Raphael Loewe

With a new index by

Walter Schwab

The Jewish Historical

Society of England

The Jewish Museum



APPENDIX.

GENEALOGY OF THE FARKHI FAMILY, TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC.

RAPHAEL and Mordecai Farkhi being among those accused of the murders of Padre Tomaso and his servant at Damascus in 1840, I here give the genealogy of their family, which will show the great esteem in which they had been held for generations, and the high Government offices with which many members of the family had been entrusted.

In the year 5491 A.M. (1731 of the Christian era) the ancestors of the Farkhis came originally from Tyria, in Asia Minor. About 120 years ago Haim Farkhi (grandfather of the late Haim Farkhi) came to Damascus, together with his brother Joseph. Both were then employed as bankers (sariifs) by the Governor of Damascus. They were likewise entrusted with the offices of keeping the accounts of the Government revenues, and of those connected with the pilgrimage to Mecca and its expenses, also the expenditure required for keeping the army. The revenues derived from farms and villages were also entrusted to them.

When the Governor of Damascus was called away from there to go to another place, his successor, seeing that the management of the brothers Farkhi had given general satisfaction, confirmed them in their office, as did every succeeding governor coming to Damascus during their lifetime.

Haim had two sons, Solomon and Nathan. The latter being the more clever of the two, succeeded his father in the several offices he had held, and surpassed him in importance by the influence which he had with the Governor and in good reputation among the people. Nathan had five sons, Haim, Menahem, Joseph, Raphael, and Moses, and one daughter, Reina. Solomon had two sons, Jacob and Meir, of whom the first only held public appointments. Nathan, being once requested by the Governor of Haina to send him a person of talent, in whom he could place entire confidence, and whom he could employ as banker, sent his eldest son Haim. The latter was at that time very young, but gifted with such extraordinary capacity that, after a few years, he was recalled from Haina to Damascus to superintend all the members of his family in their different public offices. When Haim was twenty years old he was sent to Constantinople to supervise the accounts with the Ministry of Finance. The ability shown by Haim on this occasion roused the jealousy and hatred of some very influential and fanatical persons in Constantinople, who caused him to be thrown into a dungeon, where he remained for many years, without even having been examined; and he was subjected to the most cruel tortures, without being allowed the opportunity of answering the charges brought against him. His sister Reina, though at that time only fourteen years of age, undertook to go to Constantinople, with the intention of procuring justice for her brother.

When there, she awaited the Sultan in a street through which he was about to pass. On his arrival she approached, took hold of the horse's

bridle, and presented her petition, in which she related how unjustly her brother had been treated. The Sultan investigated the matter, and, becoming convinced of Haim's innocence, ordered him to be liberated, and reinstated in all his former offices.

Haim now returned to Damascus, sent for his brothers, and employed them again in the functions of his public calling. Some time after his return Ahmed Pasha Djezar was made Governor of Damascus. He was known for his cruelty and the merciless manner in which he compelled his subjects to provide whatever money he chose to demand from them. Haim Farkhi tried to intercede on behalf of some of the unfortunate sufferers, and remonstrated with the Governor for his merciless proceedings. By so doing he offended Ahmed Pasha to such a degree that the latter commenced to harbour in his heart the desire to kill Haim; but, finding that he could not do without him, he was obliged to leave him in his various offices, and he took his revenge by persecuting Haim's brothers to such an extent that they were compelled to leave Damascus and go to Aleppo and Bagdad. Ahmed Pasha was subsequently also made Governor of Sidon. He took Haim Farkhi with him, the latter leaving some of his relatives in his place at Damascus, so that both provinces were under Haim's control and direction. Ahmed Pasha, fearing the punishment of the Porte for his cruel treatment of those under his jurisdiction, fortified Acre, and made it his residence. Thinking himself now secure, he gave way still more to his barbarous instincts, and contrived fresh tortures, killing women, and hanging them by their breasts, throwing children into the wells, putting out persons' eyes, cutting off their ears and noses, putting hot irons into their flesh, and crushing their foreheads with small bones. All this he did to induce his unhappy victims to give up their property to him!

The officers of the Pasha seeing, that all the public offices were in the hands of the Farkhis, and that Haim Farkhi did his best to alleviate the sufferings caused by the inhuman treatment of the Pasha, became very jealous of his good name, and tried to incite the Pasha to have him killed; but the latter, well knowing how indispensable Farkhi was to him, told his officers he could not kill him until they had procured another man of equal capacity to fill his place. They thereupon brought to the Pasha a man from Haina, to whom were entrusted all the offices held till then by Farkhi, who was then put in prison. This new man, however, proved so incapable for his responsible office, that he had to be forthwith discharged. Those who had recommended him to the Pasha were disgraced, while Haim was liberated from prison, and once more reinstated in all his former offices and honours. This roused the jealousy of his enemies still more; they continued to persecute him, and to urge Ahmed to kill him, until the Pasha became afraid that Farkhi would take flight. To prevent this he had him closely guarded in his house every night, and brought to his office in the day time under an escort; he also ordered one of his eyes to be put out, and part of his nose and ears to be cut off. In a short time the Pasha repented of this order, and sent in haste to countermand it; but Farkhi's enemies had had everything prepared beforehand, and the cruel order was so quickly carried out, that the counter order came too late.

The Pasha then called on Farkhi, and tried to comfort him by good words, saying that what had happened was the work of evil-disposed persons, and giving him new robes of honour. Poor Farkhi had to submit, and to promise that he would serve the Pasha faithfully again. Haim continued in the Pasha's service till the latter died.

Ahmed Pasha Djezar's death caused general joy throughout the country, and the people praised the Almighty for having delivered them from such a tyrannical ruler.

Ismael Pasha, one of his slaves, and the organiser of the brutalities of his predecessor, then took the reins of government, and Farkhi was compelled to remain in his service. A few months later, however, the Sublime Porte appointed Suleiman Pasha as Governor of Acre and Zidon. He informed Farkhi of his appointment, and the latter gave notice of this to the officers, who immediately delivered the town over to the new Governor, and he afterwards also took possession of Zidon.

Suleiman, who loved justice, entrusted Farkhi with all that concerned the administration of the place, directing him to arrange all the matters according to his ability.

Farkhi then, under the auspices of the Pasha, took the direction of affairs, introducing everywhere principles of justice and equity, showing honour and respect to every individual according to his deserts. By his conduct he attracted the attention of the Sublime Porte, and was also much esteemed by Mohhammad Ali Pasha in Egypt. The secret correspondence between the Sublime Porte and Suleiman Pasha was conducted by Farkhi, he being well versed in the Turkish language.

It had been the custom formerly, that the chiefs of the districts were allowed (if they thought fit to do so) to practise extortion and order capital punishment at their own discretion, but now that Farkhi was at the head of the administration, he caused such authority to be withdrawn from them. Any officer who had allowed himself to take any money in the way of extortion, was made to undergo due punishment for the offence, and no one could be put to death unless the crime of which he had been accused had been brought to the knowledge of a Court of Justice, and there condemned by the Law. Every fine, payable in money by the transgressor, was to be distributed amongst the poor of the country, by order of the judge.

Farkhi was also charged to maintain the security of the high roads, and in his time both women and children could travel without incurring any danger.

He always kept the accounts of his administration in the hands of his Christian employés, in order to make it evident to every native or stranger in the country that there was nothing in all his acts requiring concealment from the eye of the public.

Haim Farkhi's good name and strict integrity caused the inhabitants of Palestine to appoint him as treasurer of all contributions sent to them from abroad for the support of the poor and the learned students in the Holy Land. He attended to this office most zealously, and often himself advanced large sums, without interest, when the donations did not arrive in time. His benevolence was known far and near, and applications for assistance came to him, not only from the inhabitants of Turkey, but also from his coreligionists in Russia and Austria. He founded, at his own expense, institutions for the support and maintenance of learned teachers and pupils in schools; also imported large numbers of Hebrew books for distribution among poor Jewish children, and purchased every year quantities of new clothing, which he divided among the poor of all denominations. He was extremely well educated, and in addition to his knowledge on various secular subjects, he was also learned in theology, astronomy, and the Mohammedan laws. He was perfect in the Turkish and Arabic languages, wrote Hebrew well, and also possessed some knowledge of Persian. His courteous manner, his benevolence and learning, commanded general admiration. People of all denominations blessed his name. His brothers imitated his good example, and were also greatly respected.

Haim Farkhi, as well as his brothers, showed the utmost hospitality in their houses at Damascus to all strangers, and were always ready to give them every assistance in the settlement of their affairs.

Suleiman Pasha, the Governor, had appointed Ali Pasha, one of the

Djezars of the Mamelukes, as his Lieutenant. This man was taken ill, and on his deathbed sent for Haim, requesting him to act as guardian to his son Abdallah, and recommending the young man to his particular care and favour. Haim promised to do his best, and after Ali's death, introduced the son to Suleiman Pasha, and obtained for him the appointment to succeed his father. Haim remained for nineteen years in Suleiman Pasha's service without incurring any blame, and gave the utmost satisfaction by his management of State affairs.

After Suleiman's death Abdallah's mother came to Haim and entreated him to grant his protection to her son, that he might be appointed Governor of Acre. Abdallah was at that time very young, but Haim, thinking that as he had brought him up and tried to instil into his mind the principles of virtue, he would be able to lead him in the right path, and also being mindful of his promise to the dying father, recommended Abdallah to the Sultan, and procured him the Governorship.

After Abdallah's promotion the Turkish Government required him, as was the custom, to give up the property of his predecessor, Suleiman having left no son. Haim again interceded for him, so that he was only required to give up a portion of the property, being permitted to keep the remainder for himself. During the time in which Haim had directed the affairs of State, there had been no necessity for maintaining a large army; all was conducted so fairly that the people were perfectly satisfied, and called him Haim Pasha!

But Abdallah had surrounded himself by young and profligate companions, who soon caused him to forget the teachings of Haim, as well as to be jealous of his influence over the people. If Haim ventured to remonstrate with Abdallah for leaving the paths of virtue, that only succeeded in rousing the latter's wrath.

Haim soon found that all his influence over his pupil had vanished, while Abdallah's low companions became paramount. He repented, but too late, of having raised Abdallah to power. Abdallah's companions told him that as long as Haim lived he (Abdallah) was not safe, as Haim was likely to report his doings to the Sultan. Haim, they said, ought therefore to be put out of the way. They brought false reports to Abdallah about Haim, which enraged him to such an extent that he would no more listen to anything Haim said.

Abdallah's mother tried to reason with him, and reproved him for his ingratitude towards Haim, to whom he owed position, fortune, and everything in life, but all in vain. Several persons told Haim that the Pasha meant to kill him, but he would not believe that one to whom he had been more than a father could act so basely. At last his enemies triumphed, and procured from the Pasha the order for Haim's execution. Before giving the order the Pasha had sent for the Mufti, and tried to get from him a Fetwa against Haim, saying that this Jew had succeeded by illegitimate means in obtaining great influence over the Mussulmans, which is against the Laws of the Koran, and punishable by death; but the Mufti refused to give a Fetwa, and on the contrary praised Haim, saying he was a most useful servant of the State, upright in all his dealings, and that to kill him would be not only an injustice but a great injury to the State. Abdallah was greatly incensed by this refusal, but decided in spite of it to have Haim executed.

He sent to call him suddenly in the middle of the night. Haim arose to obey the summons of the Pasha, and when he came to the door of his house he was met by the Pasha's lieutenant and five hundred armed men. The barbarous decree of the Pasha was shown to Haim, who, having read it, said with sublime resignation, "Let the will of the Almighty and the order of the

Pasha be fulfilled, but I entreat you to allow me time to say my prayers first." They granted his request, and as soon as he had finished his prayers he was strangled at the door of his own house, and his lifeless body was brought to the Pasha.

When this shocking event became known in the town it caused general mourning and lamentation among all the inhabitants, Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, but his inveterate enemies were not yet satisfied. They said to the Pasha, "Let Haim's body be thrown into the sea, otherwise the people will make his tomb a place of veneration and pilgrimage." Abdallah thought this very probable, and therefore permitted the body of his benefactor to be thrown into the sea, at the same time giving strict orders that the whole proceedings should be concealed from his mother, who, he knew, would be outraged at his depravity. Haim's house was shut up and his property confiscated by the Pasha.

After Haim's corpse had been thrown into the sea it was seen swimming on the surface, and Abdallah then ordered it to be thrown in again with heavy weights attached, so that he might not be troubled again by its reappearance. The next day, greatly repenting of what he had done, he offered a large reward for the recovery of the body in order to have it decently buried, but it could not be found.

When the Viceroy of Egypt, Mohhammad Ali Pasha, heard of the murder he was very indignant. "What a madman," he exclaimed, "must Abdallah be to deprive himself of such an assistant, a man endowed with such qualities! Had he resigned him to me, I would gladly have given him many thousand purses in return." Abdallah afterwards felt great sorrow for his crime, and the remainder of his life was embittered by undying remorse. He gave up to Haim's family the greater part of the property which he had confiscated, and also permitted the widow and brothers to leave Acre for ever. They went to Damascus, but the widow, overcome by grief and sorrow, succumbed on the journey.

The brother Moses obtained employment with his cousin Solomon, and his brother Raphael at the Treasury office in Damascus. Abdallah then sent a confidential messenger to Constantinople to report his own version of Haim's death to the Sultan, to whom he also sent many valuable presents, but the Sultan indignantly rejected the presents and the report, and threatened the Pasha with his vengeance. Upon this Abdallah suspected Haim's brothers of having sent a true report of his death to the Sultan, and greatly regretted having allowed them to go to Damascus. To avenge himself, however, he sent decrees to all his officers, telling them to hunt down the Jews in all their districts. He himself set the example by inflicting horrible tortures upon the Jews of Acre, sending many of them to hard labour, condemning others to death, and confiscating the fortunes of all on whom he could lay hands. The Jews in Palestine had likewise to suffer from his tyranny. His misconduct was so unbearable that in 1825 Dervish Pasha, the Governor of Damascus, was sent with three other Pashas and 40,000 soldiers to decapitate him. Dervish Pasha took his Saraf, Solomon Farkhi, a relative of Haim, with him. When Abdallah heard this he sent secret emissaries to poison Solomon, saying that Solomon prevented any reconciliation. So Solomon was poisoned, and his brother Raphael had to take his place. When Abdallah's mother found that no benefit resulted to her son from Solomon's death, she went to Mohhammad Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, and entreated him to intercede at Constantinople for her son, who promised in future to rule with justice. In this she was successful, the troops were withdrawn from Acre, and Dervish Pasha returned to Damascus, taking with him Raphael Farkhi.

Abdallah no sooner felt himself free, than he sent his own troops to

Damascus to attack the Governor, in revenge for his having carried out the Sultan's order, and behaved again so shamefully with the people under his jurisdiction that he received the name of "Mad Abdallah."

After Solomon Farkhi's death, Abdallah spread the report in Constantinople that the family of the Farkhis was still very opulent, and their riches were not honestly earned. In spite of all that was known to the contrary, some officers of the Porte could not withstand this bait, and Saleh Pasha was sent to confiscate all the property. Raphael was put in prison and utterly ruined; Saleh Pasha likewise ordered the imprisonment of all the Jewish notables in Damascus. They were not liberated until very heavy ransoms had been paid for them. Raphael then went to Bagdad with the intention of remaining there, but after some time Saleh Pasha sent for him to return, as he had been reinstated in his offices of trust and honour.

Raphael held this appointment for many years until the Egyptian invasion. In 1833 the great contest took place between Abdallah and Mohammad Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, in which Ibrahim Pasha defeated Abdallah, and took possession of the whole of Syria. Ibrahim confirmed Raphael in his office, giving him many distinctions and proofs of confidence; but after many years evil-disposed persons, jealous of Raphael's influence, intrigued against him, and obliged the Pasha to give the office to another, but as a proof that Raphael had not lost his personal regard, he made him a member of the municipal council of Damascus.

As soon as the Egyptian Government was expelled from Syria through the intervention of the English, Raphael was restored to his place. After his death the office was given to a Christian, but the whole responsibility was placed under the direction of the Defterdar Effendi, who is always sent direct from Constantinople, thus depriving the office of its dignity and trust. Since that time no member of the Farkhi family could get employment from the Government, although they were all honourable and many capable men among them, the services of their ancestors being entirely disregarded.

Names of the surviving members of the Farkhi family:—

Meir Farkhi, at present member of the Municipal Council (not paid).

Solomon, Moses, Jacob, sons of Meir Farkhi.

Joseph and Nissim, sons of Menahem Farkhi, and Solomon, son of this Joseph.

Ezekiel and Nathaniel, sons of Joseph Farkhi.

Aaron Farkhi, their nephew.

Mordecai and Menahem, sons of Moses Farkhi.

Judah, Meir, David, sons of Raphael Farkhi.

Israel H. Farkhi, son of Solomon, who was poisoned at Acre.

Of these sixteen persons, only seven are tolerably well off, the others can with difficulty earn a scanty living.
