

LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE FOR CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN JEWS AND ZOROASTRIANS IN POST-SASANIAN ERA

Dr. Kersey Antia, Oct 5, 2019

Similarities between Gavri and Jeed dialects in Persia as assiduously detailed by Farhang Mehr, Volume II, in *Atas-e Dorun: The Fire Within*, edited by C.G. Cereti and F. Vajifdar, 2003, p. 305-315) represents another, often overlooked dimension of congenial Jewish Zoroastrian relations. Mehr notes: "During my research on the Gavri dialect, I was struck by the similarities between the Gavri and Jeed dialects" (which are spoken by the Zoroastrians and Jews of Yazd and Kerman areas and incomprehensible to the outsiders), "prompted me to believe that the two dialects have a parallel evolution from a *single* (italics mine) regionally spoken language. The fact that Jeed is incomprehensible to the Jews of other regions of Iran corroborates my assumption." Such similarities leads Mehr to suggest that both are derived from a regional language, which was in turn akin to the current Dari language. "It was a practical device to have their communications concealed from the Arabs." However, he adds that the present differences between them must have emerged over time consequent to their subsequent isolation. He notes that the Zoroastrians and Jews of Yazd and Kerman can understand each other, however limitedly, but the Jewish dialects of other regions are incomprehensible to them. The full implications of Mehr's findings need to be further explored for Jewish-Zoroastrian relations as it indicates some common ways covertly adopted by them for protecting their interests and privacy from the Arabs.