

About the book

In the novel *Simorgh - An Afghan Jew on the Silk Road*, the Jerusalem writer and researcher Benzion D. Yehoshua presents us the fascinating world of Elisha-Hai, whose father was murdered by road robbers in Afghanistan while he was still in his mother's womb. Elisha-Hai grew up in Herat to be a trickster and adventurer. He runs away from the old world, where popular beliefs, demons and spirits rule, but a new and unfamiliar world that brings him to Haifa during the British Mandate on the Land of Israel. The journey brings him together with shrewd dealers, drug smugglers, arms and women traffickers, from whom he learned the secrets of life. A deep cultural and value gap lies between the districts of his childhood and the new world he built for himself in Palestine.

The stevedore in Haifa port becomes a rich capitalist, a cunning merchant who lives on the edge of the sword - changing identities, informing on the British and collaborating with the undergrounds. At the same time associating with the British, with Arab nationalism, with the Templars, with the Baha'is and fighting the socialists. He is a man with endless passions. Along with the women in his life, he was captivated by Trudy, the newcomer from Leipzig who harbors a secret. He also hides from her the secrets from his past.

Ben-Zion's novel invites the reader to partake of an abundance of pleasure in a literary, linguistic, cultural and emotional experience. The reader is invited to enter a colorful, harsh, exotic, and romantic world. Sometimes tragic, sometimes comical, sometimes macabre, the abundance of its nuances in a sweeping story is admirable. It is a meeting of new versus old, east versus west against the backdrop of historical events in Afghanistan and Palestine in the first half of the 20th century.