

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SEPHARDIC PROGRESS

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

**The International Society for Sephardic Progress has awarded Edwin Black the 2004 Doña Gracia Medal for Best Book of The Year for his book *Banking on Baghdad*.**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The International Society for Sephardic Progress has awarded Edwin Black the 2004 **Doña Gracia Medal for Best Book of The Year** for his book *Banking on Baghdad*. The Doña Gracia Medal is awarded annually in January for the most significant book published during the preceding year that impacts the Sephardic community. The book awarded is one which the ISFSP feels would be strongly recommend for members of both the Jewish and non-Jewish public to read.

Edwin Black's book *Banking on Baghdad* has become a catalyst for change, bringing about a more accurate and inclusive educational curriculum on Holocaust studies. When Holocaust educators teach about the years 1933-1945, they aim to present a comprehensive overview. But sadly, a major event that took place during this period, known as the Farhud-the 1941 Nazi-allied pogrom against Iraqi Jewry, has been all but forgotten about by historians. The subsequent events culminating in the expulsion of 120,000 Iraqi Jews-a community with a precious 2,600 year legacy-has also been forgotten. Edwin Black's work has made a difference, evoking widespread discussion, by both Jews and non-Jews, about the events that unfolded in Iraq between the Arabs and their partnership with Hitler.

The award is named in honor of Doña Gracia Mendes Nasi, a 16th century banker who used her money, power and influence to develop an escape network that saved thousands of her fellow Jews from the terrors of the Inquisition. Doña Gracia used her considerable wealth to help individuals and communities, supported academies of learning as far away Jerusalem, and sponsored printing presses—which were invaluable in keeping Jewish books alive.

**Persons wanting to learn more can visit [www.isfsp.org/dona\\_gracia\\_award.html](http://www.isfsp.org/dona_gracia_award.html)**

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*The International Society for Sephardic Progress is a Jewish agency developed to serve the Sephardic community--the descendants of the Jews of historic Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Levant who share both common religious and cultural bonds. Although a Sephardic organization, the ISFSP is a Jewish advocacy agency first and foremost.*

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