

# RELIGIOUS, ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATION OF THE JEWS UNDER ISLAMIC RULE

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**Mustafa YİĞİTOĞLU**

Assoc. Dr. Karabuk University,

Theology Faculty, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

E-mail: myigitoglu@hotmail.com

Orcid: 0000-0001-6308-1475

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Phone: +90 – 212 395 0000 Fax: +90 – 212 – 395 0001 E-mail: aes@musiad.org.tr

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## İslam Hâkimiyeti Altındaki Yahudilerin Dini, Ekonomik ve İdari Durumu

### ÖZ

Yahudiler dünya nüfus itibarıyla fazla bir oranı teşkil etmemelerine rağmen bazı konularda dikkati çekebilmişlerdir. Özellikle Kur'an-ı Kerim'de ehl-i kitap olarak nitelendirilmelerinden ötürü Müslümanların da dikkatine mazhar olmuşlardır. Hz. Peygamber (sav) ile başlayan Yahudilerle ilk münasebetler çeşitli boyutlarda günümüze kadar devam etmiştir. İslam hâkimiyeti altında yaşayan Yahudilerin durumlarının farklı noktalardan ele alındığı bu çalışmada Hz. Peygamber (sav) dönemi, Halifeler, Emevi, Abbasi, Eyyübi, Memlük ve Osmanlı Dönemlerine genel anlamda yer verilmiştir. Bu makalede hayli uzun bir tarihi ele aldığından dolayı mümkün olduğunca genel konulara değinilmiştir. Tarihte Babil, Helen, Roma yönetimleri altında zor şartlar içerisinde yaşamaya mecbur kalan gerek dini anlamda gerekse pek çok hususta baskılara maruz kalan ve tecrit edilen Yahudiler, İslam egemenliğinde huzura kavuşmuşlardır. Yahudiler bu dönemlerde dini, sosyal, siyasi, iktisadi vb. alanlarda gerçek atılımlar yapmıştır. İslam hâkimiyeti altında buldukları sürece can, mal, ırz, din gibi hususlar o devletlerin garantisi kapsamında olmuştur. Bu nedenle Yahudiler olabildiğince hak ve hürriyetleri elde edebilmişlerdir. İslam hâkimiyetinin olmadığı diğer devletlerde yaşamlarını devam ettirmek zorunda olan Yahudiler sığınacak liman olarak yine Müslümanlar tarafından idare edilen toprakları görmüşlerdir. Hiç şüphesiz bunun sebebinde İslam'ın gayrimüslim tebaya karşı uyguladığı adil siyaseti, engin hoşgörüsü bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslam Yönetimi, Yahudi, Peygamber, Osmanlı, Emeviler, Abbasiler, Memlükler, Eyyubiler.

## Religious, Economic and Administrative Situation of the Jews Under Islamic Rule

### ABSTRACT\*

Although Jews do not constitute a large proportion of the world population, they have attracted attention in some issues. Especially because they are described as People of the Book in the Qur'an, they have also attracted the attention of Muslims. The first relations with the Jews, which started with the Prophet (Saws), have continued to the present day in various dimensions. In this study, in which the situation of the Jews living under Islamic rule is discussed from different points, the period of the Prophet (saws), Caliphs, Umayyad, Abbasid, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods are covered in general terms. Since this article deals with a very long history, general issues are mentioned as much as possible. The Jews, who were forced to live in difficult conditions under the Babylonian, Hellenic and Roman administrations in history, exposed to pressures and isolated in many respects, found peace under Islamic rule. Jews, in these periods, made real breakthroughs in religious, social, political, economic, etc. fields. As long as they were under the rule of Islam, matters such as life, property, honor and religion were under the guarantee of those states. For this reason, the Jews were able to obtain as many rights and freedoms as possible. The Jews, who had to continue their lives in other states where there was no Islamic domination, saw the lands administered by Muslims as a safe haven. Undoubtedly, the reason for this is the fair policy and broad tolerance of Islam implemented to non-Muslim subjects.

**Keywords:** Islamic Administration, Jew, the Prophet, Ottoman, Umayyad, Abbasid, Mamluk, Ayyubids.

\* This work is derived from a chapter of the author's book Judaism: From the Beginning to the Founding of Israel.

## **Introduction**

Genealogical origin of Judaism is based on Isaac and Jacob, who are the son and grandson of the Abraham, respectively. However, the beginning of Judaism is when the sons of Jacob, who settled in Egypt with Joseph, lived there for many years and suffered very hard, came to the Sinai region under the leadership of Moses, and Moses received a revelation on Mount Sinai.

Just as the Babylonian period, the first centuries of the A.D were also very difficult periods for the Jews. Hellenism, Roman oppression, the Jews' exposure to various troubles in the holy lands, the destruction of the temples, caused great problems that could not be compensated. However, despite the oppression and persecution of the administrations they have lived through throughout history, they have generally been able to preserve their own culture and religion as much as possible, although not completely.

It is known that Jews, who have been exposed to a lot of troubles under many administrations throughout history, had their human rights and freedom while they were living under the Islamic rule, and throughout that period it is known that they had made great progress in intellectual and other various areas.

The existence of Jews in the Arabian Peninsula, where Islam emerged, dates back to ancient times. Although there are some who take it back to the time of Moses, the settlement of the Jews to the Arabian Peninsula is thought to be started with the occupation of Jerusalem by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (586/7 BC). Because, during Babylon's occupation of Jerusalem, those who escaped from here migrated to Arabia. (Ibn Kathir, 1994) Jews; In the Arabian Peninsula, established their own private areas by establishing residences in various regions such as Wadi al-Qura, Medina, Khaybar, Tayma and Fedak. The Jews, who lived here for a long time with the Arabs, formed their own commercial, economic, political, social, educational and religious structures. The relations of the Jews with Islam, therefore with Muslims, are undoubtedly parallel to the emergence of Islam in Arabia. The Jews' close relations with the Prophet (Saws) and Muslim people continued to increase over time. Of course, these relations were sometimes positive and sometimes negative. These relations, which started with the Prophet Muhammad (Saws), continued with the states established by Muslims during and after the caliphs. The study titled " Religious, Economic and Administrative Situation of the Jews Under Islamic Rule ", in which the situation of the Jews living under the Islamic rule is discussed from different perspectives, has been prepared by taking into account many important sources.

### **Prophet Muhammad's Period**

The first contact of Jews with Muslims started in Mecca; However, due to the small Jewish population, bilateral relations were limited. (Hamidullah, 2003, p. 552) The Prophet (Saws) only met with Jewish groups who came to Mecca for fairs. (Hamidullah, 2003, pp. 555-560) The Prophet's commercial, economic, social and religious relations with the Jews began with the emigration to Medina. (Yiğitoğlu & Göregen 2018)

When the Prophet (Saws) migrated to Medina, some part of the population of Medina was consisted of Jews. However, it is known that the Jews who settled here before Islam were an Arabized society. So much so that they named their children in Arabic. In Medina, there was a Jewish school, which was called Beth midrash, and a treasury under the responsibility of Banu Nadir. Jews supported this treasury financially in order to meet their various needs. They mostly had a tribal lifestyle and they lived in smaller groups that were in conflict with each other. (Hamidullah, 2004, p. 475)

Shortly after the Hegira, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) tried to integrate the Jews living in Medina into the society as the first action, in order to establish the social order. (Sourdel & Dursun, 1992, p. 16)

In order to include the Jews into the society and to keep good relations with them, The Prophet (Saws) signed the Medina Agreement with Jewish tribes such as the Banu Qurayza, Banu Nadir and Banu Qaynuqa. (Hamidullah, 2004, pp. 166-184) Undoubtedly, since both Jews and Muslims lived together, this agreement had a very special meaning in terms of establishing the basis for the first relations between both sides.

According to the articles in the agreement, it is stated that the Jews should not cooperate with the enemies of the Muslims. (Ihsan Süreyya Sırma, 1994, p. 48) In addition, Jews should not help to Mecca and there is also an article about the Muslim-Jewish alliance in the case of an enemy attack. These decisions are binding on the members of the Medina City State, which signed the agreement. (Hamidullah, 2004, p. 173)

The Muslims, who formed unity in the city with the Medina Treaty, displayed a tolerant attitude towards the Jews. Examples of this tolerant attitude of Muslims towards Jews are: they were considered as the People of the Book, marrying was legitimate with chaste Jewish women, eating animals which they slaughtered was halal, and they were allowed to enter the mosques.

The Banu Qaynuqa Jews were expelled from Medina in 624 and the Banu Nadir was expelled from Medina in 625 because they did not fulfill their responsibilities and carried out harmful activities against the Muslims in Medina. The Banu Qurayza tribe, who attempted to attack the Muslims from behind in the Battle of the Handak with the polytheists, was punished and exiled from Medina in 627. (Bozkurt & Küçükaşçı, 2003, p. 307) Khayber, Fedak and Wadi al-Qura were also conquered due to the policies implemented by Jews against Muslims. (Apak, 2012, pp. 346-349)

Policy of the Jews against the Muslims caused the relations to deteriorate. (Bolay, 1967, p. 23) The expressions of "Jews, if you turn to our qibla again, we will swear allegiance to you" (Vakidi, 1984, pp. 172-174) are an example of the Jewish attitude towards the Muslims. Also important Jewish poets of the period such as Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf, Abu Afak, Asma bint Marwan had harsh and provocative statements against the Prophet. (Ibn Hisham, 1971, vol. II/284-285; Vakidi, 1984, pp. 172-174) Especially, the ugly treatment towards a Muslim woman in a Jewish jewelry store, has drawn a wedge between Muslims and Jews, (Ibn Hisham, 1971, vol. III/ 51) in such a way that the Jews, who further hardened their behavior towards Muslims, even attempted to assassinate the Prophet. (Ibn Hisham, 1971, vol. III/199)

### **Period of Caliphs**

After the Prophet (Saws), Islamic conquests continued with Abu Bakr. But the most striking one in terms of relations with non-Muslims was during the caliphate of Omar. The reason for this is that the first important conquests began under the Omar's administration. The policy applied for the non-Muslims in the conquered regions was meticulously applied within the framework of the principles set by the Prophet (Saws). As a matter of fact, Omar, bequeathed to his successor Uthman "to abide by the covenants of non-Muslims under his dhimma, to protect them from all kinds of cruelty and injustice, and not to impose too much tax" (Abu Yusuf, 1973, p. 289).

With Abu Bakr's conquest of the Syrian region, the road to Jerusalem was opened. The first battle was the Battle of Ajnadayn, which took place in 634 between the Muslims and the Christian Byzantines. (Belâzuri, 1987, pp. 163-164) The second one is The Battle of Yarmuk which took place in 636 during the time of Omar. And as a result of the clashes with Byzantium, Palestine was taken under siege from

the northern region. (Belâzuri, 1987, p. 195) All of Egypt and Mesopotamia regions also came under the rule of Muslims. (Nicolle, 1994, p. 8) Before the conquest of Jerusalem by the Muslim armies, Jerusalem Patriarch Sophronius and the people stated that they would hand over the city on the condition that Omer personally comes to the city and gives his word. (Belâzuri, 1987, pp. 197–198; İ. Süreyya Sırma, 2015, p. 205) Then, Omar came to the region and entered the city in 538. From this date on, Jerusalem has lived many years of peace and well-being under the rule of Islam.

Before Jerusalem was conquered by the Muslims, it was under the rule of Christian rulers. During the conquest of Jerusalem these rulers fled from the region and because of this reason the patriarch surrendered the city. After the city was captured, Caliph Omer examined it with Patriarch Sophronios. Caliph Omar's first act was visiting the Temple of Solomon, where Prophet Muhammad's (saws) Mi'raj event took place. (Runciman, 1951, Vol. 1 p.3) He ordered that this abandoned and dumped place should be cleaned immediately. (Gil, 1992, p. 65)

In the region where Omer was examining, there was a pagan city of Aelia Capitolina, which was built in 135 AD, and a temple dedicated to Jupiter Capitolina, instead of the Temple of Solomon, which was destroyed by the Romans. (Spence-Jones, 1911, p. 77) It is also known that many churches were built here after the acceptance of Christianity by Rome. It was also turned into a center of pilgrimage by Christians. (Yiğitoğlu, 2017, p. 139) A short time later, Omer had a simple mosque built here. Although the Jews' request to settle in Jerusalem was not wanted by the Christians, it was accepted by the order of the Caliph. It is stated that the resettlement of about seventy families was initially allowed. (Loewenberg, 2016, p. 256) In this period, Jews were given the right to determine their own religious or political leaders in order to establish good relations between Jews and Muslims. (Eşmeli, 2018, p. 246)

Since this town was neglected by the old administrations, it gained the value it deserved after the conquest of the Muslims. The living standards of the people in the region have increased due to the rights granted to both Christians and Jews by Muslim rulers and with the policy of tolerance. Particularly, Jews that lived in distress for a very long time found better life conditions after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Muslims. As a policy of the Islamic state system, the non-Muslim people, who were accepted as 'dhimmis', were given various rights on the condition that they pay the 'jizya'. These rights granted to non-Muslim subjects are under the guarantee of Muslims. Due to the dhimmi understanding and nation principle brought by Islam, all conquered nations are included in this status. Therefore, the same status was given to the Jews after their homelands were conquered.

### **Umayyads Period**

During the Umayyad period, the society was divided into two as Muslims and non-Muslims or Dhimmis. Non-Muslims are Christians, Jews, and Sabians. (Yiğit, 1995, p. 76) A tax called jizya was collected from the dhimmis. However, if they became Muslims, they were exempt from this. In this period, with the rapid spread of Islam among non-Muslims, conversions to Islam among dhimmis also increased. Although some restrictions were imposed on dhimmis in some periods, it cannot be said that this was intended to persecute them. As a matter of fact, it is also known that Caliph Umar b. Abdulaziz gave instructions in order to preserve dhimmis' rights and in addition to that he took various measures to improve the Jews' living conditions. (Aycan, 1998, p. 78)

The Jews, who were in the status of dhimmi in the Umayyads, were not exposed to any economic difficulties. In addition, they were not barred from almost any profession, except in the military and administrative fields. Most of the Jews were engaged in trade and were not subjected to economic deprivation. Jews in the Umayyad lands of Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, Iran and Central Asia were not

employed in heavy labor either. (Tritton, 1930, p. 22) Jewish scholars were also used during the Umayyad period. An example of this is the translation of the Jewish physician Masarjawaih's work called Kunnash into Arabic. (Adıgüzel and Çakan, 2019, pp. 344-347)

### **Abbasids Period**

Conquests continued uninterrupted during the Abbasid period, as it was during the Umayyads, and the lands owned by the Muslims increased enormously. With the expansion of the Islamic lands, most of the Jews, who were dispersed to different geographies and lived under difficult conditions, were now taken under an administration. The policy that Islam applied to non-Muslims also continued to be applied in the Umayyads and Abbasids. Thanks to the tolerance of Islam, the Jews had found a great comfort both in their religious life and in their social, economic life like never before. So much so that it was possible for them to have freedom of travel, freedom to acquire property, to have children, to be tried in their own courts, and even to be transferred to Islamic courts if they did not want to be tried in there. We can see an example of this in the case of a Jew who was sentenced to whip in court and wanted to get rid of this punishment and therefore applied to Islamic courts. (Mann, 1920, p. 123) There is ample evidence in the Jewish responsa and in the Geniza documents that Jews applied to sharia courts and were treated fairly by Muslim judges. In addition, Jews and other non-Muslims were allowed to take the oath in Islamic courts just as they do in their own courts. (Cohen, 2016, p. 16)

Before the Islamic conquests, the activities carried out by the Babylonian Jewish community continued in the same way under the Abbasid administration. "Resh Galuta" was the leader of the Jews in administrative matters, and the Rabbis called "gaon" were presiding over religious academies. The Jews, only together with the Abbasids, could adapt to the Islamic society. So much so that they could even create their own aristocratic class. Thanks to this tolerance of Islam towards Jews, Jews also loosened their strict policy towards Muslims. (Arslantaş, 2009, p. 724)

An important issue concerning the Jews during the Abbasid period is that a new structure (Karaim-Onanism) emerged under the leadership of Anan ben David. During the Abbasid period, the Jews, who were disturbed by the attitudes of the head of the community representing the Jews to the caliph and the scholars in the Talmud academies, and who had to live with different ethnic groups due to the opening of new settlements, entered into a new Tanakh-centered formation against traditional Judaism. (Sinanoglu, 2001, p. 424)

The Jews who lived in Egypt and North Africa, where the Fatimids, which emerged as an alternative power against the Abbasid state, established an alternative center named 'nagid' as 'Re'su'l-calutluq'. Thus, the administration of Jewish communities was established in similarity with the dual administration based in the Islamic geography (Baghdad and Cairo). (Arslantaş, 2009, p. 275)

In Palestine, which was within the borders of the Fatimid state, in 1069, a Turkmen ruler named Atsiz ibn Uvaq (Atsiz Beg) who was subjected to the Great Seljuk State, conquered Jerusalem. (Sevim, 1991) With the collapse of the Great Seljuk State, the principalities in Syria and Palestine continued their administration until the Crusades. (Çiftci, 2019, p. 94) And, it is also known that the Fatimids captured Jerusalem in 1096, during the time when the Crusaders came to Jerusalem.

The first crusade began in 1095 by Pope Urban II. These expeditions ensured the separation of the lands that include Jerusalem, from the rule of Muslims. (Pringle, 2002, p. 101) Crusaders captured this place on 15 July 1099. The state which is known as the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, continued its existence for about 200 years, with the first center of it being Jerusalem and in the following periods being Acca center until 1291. (Demirkent, 2006, p. 53)

## **Ayyubids Period**

The existence of the Crusaders came to an end in 1187, with the conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin Ayyubi. Saladin Josef Ayyubi, the conqueror of Jerusalem, who received Turkish state education and customs, served in various duties against the Crusaders and Fatimids within the Zengid dynasty. (Üstün, 2018, pp. 79–80) With the death of Nureddin Mahmud in 1174, internal turmoil arose due to the Ayyubid emirs' desire to seize power. Saladin Josef, the most powerful ruler and regent of the state, declared his reign after putting an end to the the internal turmoil. (Polat, 2015, p. 47)

Shortly after Saladin Ayyubi became sultan, he worked to ensure Turkish unity, put an end to the activities of the Assassins and end the existence of the crusaders. (Şeşen, 2009, p. 337) After eliminating the crusader threat on Egypt, he united the lands of Syria and Egypt. After long sieges and struggles, he defeated the Crusaders in 1187 in Hattin. In this war, most of the Crusader army was destroyed, King Guy and the counts and knights under his service were taken prisoners. (Şeşen, 1998, pp. 165–167)

After entering the Jerusalem, the first act of Saladin was the arrangement of the Haram al-Sharif according to Islamic methods and the delivery of the sermon on behalf of the Abbasid caliphate. In particular, the debris in the Haram al-Sharif was cleared and reconstructed. The Masjid al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock were repaired and converted into a mosque. (Gul, 2016, p. 121)

## **Mamluks Period**

The region of Egypt and Syria, and therefore Jerusalem, experienced an unstable period due to the Crusaders and Mongol invasions, as it was ruled by weak rulers who were in internal conflict in the last days of the Ayyubids. With the establishment of the Mamluk State in 1250, this region became stable again. But Jerusalem went back and forth between the Ayyubids and the Mamluk administration. The Mamluks, who gained great power after stopping the destruction of the Mongols in the Islamic lands and defeating them in Ayn Jalut, dominated Jerusalem until 1516. (Tomar, 2020, p. 107)

The rule of Bilad al-Sham (today's Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan), in which the Ayyubids established their system, was continued in the same way in the Mamluks. Jerusalem was governed as governorship and regency. Every appointment to be made in Jerusalem was made by the regency of Damascus. Jerusalem had also been a town with religious and spiritual importance among the Mamluks. Mamluk rulers reconstructed Jerusalem and brought madrasas, inns, mosques and water channels there. In addition to the Arabs, Christians, Jews, Turks and Circassians lived in Jerusalem under the rule of Mamluks. (Tomar, 2020, pp. 108–110)

## **Ottoman Period**

Ottoman Empire was the biggest and longest running multinational state that hosted nations belonging to various religions, such as Christians, Jews, Muslims etc. The reason for this feature of the Ottoman Empire is that it tried to apply the requirements of Islamic methods in the best way to its subjects of different religions and cultures. The clearest example of this is that even today, the nations that lived in the Ottoman Empire still preserve their own characteristics. (Yığıtoğlu, 2013, p. 24)

The rights of all those living in the Ottoman Empire were guaranteed; Every individual, being a Muslim or a non-Muslim, is considered as a citizen of the state. Thus, every one of them lived in the same system. (Hatipoğlu, 1993, p. 103) In the Ottoman Empire, there was a structure extending from the center to the countryside. There was also groups and congregations belonging to different

religions. They were autonomous within their own communities and had broad powers. (Yiğitoğlu, 2013, p. 26)

After the conquest, the Ottomans collected the 'jizyah' tax from non-Muslim people in accordance with the "dhimma contract" made with them. (Kazıcı, 1999, p. 429) But this tax; had not been taken from religious men, children, the incapacitated, the old, the disabled and women. (Tabakoğlu, 1999, p. 186) In addition, another tax taken from non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire is 'tribute' and is known as land tax. (Kazıcı, 1999, p. 434) The education of non-Muslims was carried out by their own religious leaders from the first periods until the Tanzimat, which was carried out within their places of worship. (Kenanoglu, 2008, p. 182)

With the declaration of the Edict of Gulhane, the "Millet System" applied in the Ottoman Empire was abolished; Afterwards, special laws were enacted for non-Muslims in accordance with the principle of equality, together with the Kanun-ı Esasi. (Yaman, 2015, p. 13) It is known that in the Ottoman Empire, non-Muslim subjects were approached with tolerance and they lived freely within the legal framework. (Yaman, 2015, pp. 14-15)

Jews in the Ottoman Empire took decisions based on halakha (Jewish law) in all matters related to their religious and social life. Rabbis in the Ottoman Empire created a large literature. (Angel, 1994, p. 669) Because the Jews represented an important part of the Ottoman Millet System. The Jews, who are mentioned with definitions such as Millet-i Yehud and Jewish, constituted the third important nation in the Ottoman Empire after the Greeks and Armenians. (Shmuelevitz, 1984, pp. 20-21)

The first traces of the Jewish presence in the Anatolian lands, where the Ottoman Empire became a state, can be traced back to the Babylonian attack on Jerusalem (537-8 BC). But the king of Macedonia Alexander's occupation of Palestine in 333 BC is a more likely possibility. (Aydın, 2002, p. 6) In addition to that, due to the "Jews' great revolt" between 132-135 AD, the expulsion of the Jews living under Roman rule from Jerusalem and its surroundings may have also initiated the arrival of the Jews to Anatolia. It is known that the devotees of the Karai Community came to Anatolia first. It is known that there was a Jewish population in Istanbul prior to the conquest as well. (Aydın, 2002, p. 9)

The first information about the Jews at the time of Ottoman Empire is with the conquest of Bursa in 1326. Because there was a Jewish population living in Bursa at that time. Etz Hayim (Tree of Life) Synagogue was built here with the consent of Orhan Gazi. This temple remained open until the 1940s. Balkan Jews, who thought that their living standards would rise with the conquest of Edirne by Murad I, settled in the lands of the Ottoman state. (Şarhon, 2005, p. 160)

Undoubtedly, the most advantageous among the Jewish communities living in the world were the Jews in the Ottoman Empire. This is because the Ottoman Empire treated its people equally and felt privileged for nations being a part of its core. Thus, there were large Jewish emigrations from Europe (Italy, Portugal and Spain). With the conquests and migrations, the Ottoman state had a considerable Jewish population (Ashkenaz, Sephardic, etc.) coming from many parts of the world. (Lewis, 1984, p. 113) In addition, the Ottoman Empire also included a society (Mizrahiyyim, Ma'raviyyim) formed by Arabic-speaking Jews (Musta'ribe) with the conquest of North Africa, Egypt, Palestine and Syria, which were the Islamic lands where mostly Muslim Arabs lived. (Doğan, 2010, p. 215)

During the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, Byzantine Jews, called Romaniot, welcomed Mehmed the Conqueror as a savior. Rabbi Moses Capsali (Moshe Capsali) was appointed by Mehmed the Conqueror as the first Turkish chief rabbi of the capital city of Istanbul. (Lewis, 1984, p. 136; Sharhon, 2005, p. 160)



Due to the persecution policy implemented by the kings of Spain against Muslims and Jews living in Andalusia, these two nations had to leave their homelands in 1492. And about ninety-three thousand Jews were accepted into the Ottoman Empire by Sultan II Beyazid. Sephardic Jews who escaped from the Spanish persecution and took refuge in Portugal Muslims were immigrated from there after a short time as well. So most of the Jews took refuge in the Ottoman Empire. (Şarhon, 2005, p. 161)

At the end of the 15th century, the Jews who escaped from persecution and came to the Ottoman Empire were settled in Tire and Manisa. (Arslan, 2014, p. 121; Emecen, 2008, p. 30) With the increase of Jews immigrating to the Ottoman Empire over time, one of the five neighborhoods established in Izmir was reserved for non-Muslims. With the conquest of Hungary and Serbia in the 16th century, many Ashkenazi Jewish communities moved to Thessaloniki, Edirne, Istanbul and Palestine. Ashkenazi Jews who fled from Poland, Ukraine, Russia, France, Germany and Hungary due to anti-Semitism in the 17th century had to come to Sofia, Izmir and the Aegean coasts. (Shaw, 1991, p. 121) During the reign of Murat I, there was a Talmud school in Edirne where Romaniot Jews were educated as rabbis. (Groepler, 1999, p. 30)

Apart from Spain, Portugal and Italy, immigration from Balkan countries to Ottomans had further increased the Jewish population in the empire. The count of Jewish families in Istanbul in 1477 was known as 1647. (Hacker, 1982, p. 123) Over time, this population has increased even more. After Istanbul, the institution of chief rabbi was established in Jerusalem in 1841, Baghdad in 1849 and North Africa in 1874 in the Ottoman Empire. (Levy, 1992, p. 107)

In the field of religious literature by Jews in the Ottoman Empire; Works such as “Shulhan Arukh”, “Leha Dodi”, “Me-am Lo'ez” were written. In addition, many famous doctors such as Khekim Jacob, Josef Amon, Moshe Amon, Daniel Fontesca served in the Ottoman Palace. (Şarhon, 2005, p. 162)

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, The Messianic movement, which was started by Sabbatai Zevi, who was born in Izmir in the 19th century, caused developments that was harmful to the Jews. (Şişman, 2008, pp. 334-335) Jews who migrated to the Ottoman Empire generally operated in the textile, printing and weapons industries.

Towards the end of the Ottoman Empire, the ideas of nationalism that emerged in France and many parts of Europe had a negative impact on the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Edict of Gulhane was published in 1839, which included certain rights for minorities in the Ottoman Empire. (Akyıldız, 2011, pp. 1-10) The Reform Edict was issued against the Western states that were not content with the Edict of Gulhane and demanded more rights for minorities, and thus tried to disrupt the political balance of the Ottoman Empire. (Gülsoy, 1999, p. 185) The community regulations given to the Jews in 1865 also became some sort of a constitution. These regulations, which were given to the Jews as well as the Greeks, Armenians, included the religious assemblies that would deal with the religious affairs of their communities, as well as the second assemblies dealing with administrative affairs. (Akyıldız, 2011, p. 7) In order to increase the loyalty of the minorities in the Ottoman Empire and to prevent the ambitions of foreign powers, the Constitutional Monarchy was declared in 1876 and 1908 alongside the Reform Edicts, but all these activities were not sufficient for the minorities in Ottomans; their separation from the state could not be prevented.

Zionist ideas by Theodor Herzl aimed to break up the Ottoman Empire and to establish a Jewish state by seizing Palestine. For this, material and moral support was found from rich Jews in the world. (Singer & de Haas, 2007, pp. 370-371) In addition, various countries that wanted the Ottoman Empire to be erased from the stage of history also helped Herzl's ambitions. Despite all these aspirations,

Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan's opposition to the Jewish state and the Ottoman's claiming its own lands took an important place in history. (Buzpınar, 1994, pp. 59–61; Küçük, 1998, p. 220)

## **Conclusion**

This study analyzes the process that Jews had under the Islamic rule, who are described as People of the Book and have some common values with Muslims, started with the period of the Prophet, and then continued with the era of the Caliphs, Umayyads, Abbasids, Ayyubids, Mamluks and then ended with Ottomans. It is known that Jews had been subjected to various attacks and exiles in history. Jews as a nation faced with the attacks of the Babylonians and lived in the diaspora, then witnessed the Hellenic and Roman oppression in the future period. So much so that during these periods, Jews were exiled from the regions they lived in, and they were exiled to the various parts of the world. Jews living in the world had been subjected to various oppression and persecution under different governments. However, after they came under the rule of in Islamic lands, they were approached with tremendous examples of tolerance and justice. For example, The Prophet (Saws) included the Jews residing in Medina into the society right after the “hegira” and signed the Medina Agreement with them. Thus, as long as they remained faithful to the covenant, they had rights and freedom both in trade, social life and in many other matters.

On the other hand, Muslim administrators that came after the Prophet Muhammad treated the non-Muslim people in line with the principles set by Islam. The best example for this is the “aman name” which was declared by the Caliph Omar after he conquered the city of Jerusalem. Also, it is admirable that Omar gave rights to Jews as well as Christians. The rights and freedom granted to the Jews in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods were maintained as well, and they were allowed to live comfortably without serious restrictions in many social, commercial and religious matters. With the Crusaders' attacks on Islamic lands, Jerusalem was held captive for 200 years and the Muslims and Jews living there were subjected to genocide. Thus, unfortunately, the peace in these lands had taken a hit at that period.

Shortly after the Saladin Ayyubi (conqueror of Jerusalem) became sultan, he provided Turkish unity and marched on Jerusalem, defeating the Crusaders in 1187, established peace in the city. Saladin Ayyubi rebuilt the city, which was destroyed by the Crusaders, in a short time. He had the temples returned to their original identity and maintained the religious harmony. The Mamluks, who took great care of the heritage of Ayyubids, also treated Jerusalem and the people living there with justice. Thus, most of the works and studies that have survived to our present time came from the structures which were built during the Mamluk period.

The Ottomans incorporated the Jewish people into its nation with the conquest of Bursa. With the conquest of Edirne, the Balkan Jews who wanted to increase their living standards also migrated here. In time, the population of the Jews increased even more with the Balkan conquests and with the addition of new lands and their people into the empire's borders. As a result of the tyranny of the kings of Spain against Muslims and Jews in Andalusia region, these people were forced to emigrate from there. During this period, the Ottoman Empire embraced many Jews. The Ottoman Empire granted rights and freedom to the non-Muslim minority according to the principles of Islamic Law and guaranteed their security within the borders of the country. With the spread of nationalist ideas, which emerged in France and spread rapidly to Europe and to the Ottoman Empire, and with the effect of Zionist activities, the separations from the Ottoman Empire began. After the Edict of Gulhane, the Reform Edict was published to ward off the Nationalist movements against the Ottoman Empire. Foreign powers, who did not find the rights and freedoms granted to minorities sufficient, tried their

best to disintegrate the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, Theodor Herzl requested Jerusalem from Abdul Hamid Khan, but he was rejected.

As a result, Jews, who had been exposed to difficulties, troubles and diasporas and who were unwanted and isolated for a very long time, achieved real peace and freedom while living under the Islamic rule. Islamic lands had been seen as a safe harbor for both Christians and Jews. This issue has taken its place in the minds as a truth that cannot be denied and is known by everyone.

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