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Recalling a Forgotten Community: Jews of Diyarbakır*

Unutulmuş Bir Topluluğu Hatırlamak: Diyarbakır Yahudileri

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Abstract

The presence of Jews in Mesopotamia and Anatolia can be traced since ancient times. By the time, during the Ottoman reign Jews were dispersed to different parts of the state but especially concentrated in western regions such as Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa and Edirne. However, there were also Jewish communities lived in the eastern part of the Ottoman State and todays Turkey. There were also considerable Jewish communities who lived in the eastern part of the country in provinces such as Gaziantep, Urfa, Siverek, Diyarbakir, Çermik, Mardin, Nusaybin, Cizre, Başkale and Van. In this research eastern Jews is referred to Eastern part of first Ottoman later Turkey. This study aims to explore some cultural traits including religious, social and economical traits of the Jews, who once lived in the east and later immigrated to Israel

Jews of Diyarbakır are one of those religious minority groups that have a long historical background in the city. The presence of Jews in Diyarbakır dated back centuries. Historians or researchers those interested in Jews of Turkey usually studied Jews of Istanbul, Jews of İzmir and Jews who live in different parts of the western cities. Lack of researches and scarcity of resources makes the Jews of

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Diyarbakır as one of the significant Jewish communities among the Eastern Jews that need to be taken into account. In this article it is aimed to explore migration process, religious, social and cultural conditions of a small religious group, who once lived in the east of Turkey and later moved to Israel. It is expected to introduce their way of life, their beliefs, and their relationships with other local groups and culture in a multicultural and multi-religious environment of the city of Diyarbakır. Additionally, majority of data for this article collected through in-depth interviews that based on an anthropological fieldwork conducted in Israel. Therefore, information given by informants is the most important distinguishing feature of this study. It is expected to reveal this forgotten religious minority group more visible.

Keywords: *jews, culture, migration, memory, multicultural, Diyarbakır*

Öz

Mezopotamya ve Anadolu'da Yahudilerin varlığına çok eski çağlardan beri karşılaşılmaktadır. Osmanlı döneminde, zamanla Yahudiler devletin farklı bölgelerine dağıldılar fakat daha çok İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa ve Edirne gibi batı bölgelerinde yoğunlaştılar. Ancak bununla birlikte, Osmanlı Devleti'nin ve günümüz Türkiye'sinin doğu kesiminde yaşayan başka Yahudi toplulukları da vardı. Gaziantep, Urfa, Siverek, Diyarbakır, Çermik, Mardin, Nusaybin, Cizre, Başkale ve Van gibi doğu kesimlerinde yaşayan önemli Yahudi cemaatler de vardı. Görüleceği üzere Doğu Yahudileri derken öncelikle Osmanlı Devletinin doğusunda daha sonra da Türkiye'nin doğusunda yaşayan Yahudilere atıfta bulunulmaktadır. Bu çalışma bir zamanlar Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun ve daha sonraları Türkiye'nin doğusunda yaşayan ancak İsrail'e göç eden Yahudilerin ekonomi, din, sosyal ve yaşam gibi kültürel özelliklerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Söz konusu topluluklar içinde Diyarbakır Yahudileri, bu kentte yaşayan uzun tarihi bir geçmişi olan dinsel azınlık gruplarından birisidir. Diyarbakır'da Yahudilerin varlığı yüzyıllar öncesine dayanmaktadır. Türkiye Yahudileri ile ilgilenen tarihçiler veya araştırmacılar genellikle İstanbul Yahudileri, İzmir Yahudileri ve batıdaki şehirlerin farklı bölgelerinde yaşayan Yahudiler üzerinde çalışmaktadırlar. Araştırmaların eksikliği ve kaynakların azlığı, Diyarbakır Yahudilerini Doğu Yahudileri arasında dikkate alınması gereken önemli Yahudi topluluklarından biri haline getirmektedir. Bu makalede, bir zamanlar Türkiye'nin doğusunda yaşayan ve daha sonra İsrail'e taşınan küçük bir dini grubun göç süreci, dini, sosyal ve kültürel durumlarına yer verilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Diyarbakır şehrinin çok kültürlü ve çok dinli yapısında Yahudilerin yaşam tarzları, inançları ve diğer yerli topluluklarla olan ilişkileri incelenmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bu makaledeki verilerin çoğunluğu, İsrail'de gerçekleştirilen antropolojik alan çalışmasına dayanan derinlemesine mülakatlardan elde edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, görüşmeciler tarafından verilen bilgiler, bu çalışmanın en önemli ayırt edici özelliğini oluşturmaktadır. Bu çerçeve de unutulmak üzere olan Diyarbakırlı dini azınlık grubunu daha görünür kılmak amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Yahudiler, göç, kültür, hafıza, çok kültürlülük, Diyarbakır*

An overview of city history

Amida is the oldest name of the city, although it is not known where originally the word came from. After the conquest of Arabs the city started to be referred to as "Diyarbekir" because lands of the region were belonging to Bekir bin Vail, an Arab tribe settled along the Tigris River. The name also can be seen as "Diyar-ı Bekr" in sources from the 8th century. Under the Ottoman rule Diyarbekir established as Beylerbeglik that consist of Amid the city and its Sanjaks. After the 18th century the name Diyarbekir started to be the name of the city. In 1937 the city was being called as "Diyarbakır" (Göyünç, 1994:464-465).

In the pre-Islamic period three major religions were common around the region, especially in Diyarbakır. These are Şemsiler, worshipper to the sun, (Çayır and Yıldız, et al., 2007), Christianity and Judaism. According to the first official records, during Tanzimat Period in Ottoman Empire registered local population is 21,372. Of these, 9,814 thousand are Muslim, 6,853 Armenian Gregorian, 1,434 Assyrian, 174 Assyrian Catholic, 976 Chaeldian, 305 Greeks who renegade Assyrian Orthodox, 55, Greek Catholic, 650 Protestant and lastly 1,280 were Jews. Christians seem the dominant community (Arslan, 1990:80-108).

The presence of Jews in Diyarbakır dated back centuries. In this regard, in Ottoman Archives specifically in İcmal (summary), Mufassal (detailed survey) or Tahrir (cadastral) records from the fifteenth and sixteenth century the existence of Jews can be traced. During Ottoman rule in 1518, with reference to cadastral register books, the city had four gates and with four neighborhoods named Bab-ı Mardin, Bab-ı Rom, Bab-ı Cebel and Babü'l- Ma. In these quarters 1220 Muslims, 1093 non-Muslims family and households and 237 taxpayer single (unmarried) resided. Within the neighborhoods the crowded one was Babü'l-Ma. Non-Muslims were the majority in there. There was a small population of Jews consisting of 28 households and three single (Bachelor) people (Göyünç, 1994:466; Epstein, 1980:217). Additionally, due to migration from neighbor districts Hazro, Sasun, Atak, Genç, Eğil, Muş and Hısnıkeyfa Amid's non-Muslim population has been increased compared to the Muslims'. Moreover, there were 26 religious communities and each one was registered to a church. In this respect, in the cadastral book dated 1540, it seems Jews were registered to a Nestorian Church (Göyünç, 1994:467).

In 1816 the traveler James Silk Buckingham visited Diyarbekir. He stated the city population as 50,000. He mentioned about 400 Assyrian families, and said a dozen Jewish families remained in the city and the rest had immigrated to Baghdad, Aleppo and Istanbul. Additionally he cited the presence of 25 mosques, two Armenian Church, one Catholic Church which two Italian priests reside in, one Assyrian and one Greek Church and lastly a small synagogue in Diyarbekir (Buckingham, 1827:213-215; Göyünç, 1994:468).

Rabbi Yakov, son of Rabbi Yehuda Mizrahi, mentioned about a Jewish community in Diyarbakır dating back to the seventeenth century in a letter sent to the Nineveh Jewish community. In 1835, the city of Diyarbakır had 8,000 households. Fifty of them were Jewish (Ben-Ya'kov, 1981:133-137; Bali, 1999:367). Jewish traveler Efraim Neumark visited Diyarbakır in 1844. He mentioned 200 hundred Jewish fellows who lived in the city. There were wealthy Jews among the community. And he adds Lord Montefiore has been persuaded to build a new synagogue for the Jews (Bali, 1999:368; Lipman, 2007:457).

Another Jewish traveler Rabbi Benyamin Hasheni mentioned about 250 Jews in the city in 1848. Further, Rabbi Peterman found 60 Jewish families and an old synagogue in Diyarbakır (Ben-Ya'kov, 1981:133-137; Bali, 1999:368-369). In 1890 a German traveler Doctor Lamec Saad mentioned about eighty Jewish families at the city in his travelogue. He states that most of them were poor, peddlers and generally engaged in grocery (Pınar, 1999:150). Head of the Jewish community was Parhia Sameh Tet in 1909 (Ben-Ya'kov, 1981:133-137; Bali, 1999:369).

Dr. Edmund Naumann gave us some statistics of Diyarbekir population including Jews based on information he gets from the Consul Thomas Boyacıyan in 1890. A year after him Cuinet stated some datas on the city's population which less or more different from Boyacıyan's results. According to Boyaciyan 1404 Jews lived in the city. However Cuinet stated 1269 Jewish resident (Pınar, 1999:150).

In addition to traveler accounts, significant information regarding Jews of Diyarbakır can be found in The Alliance Israelite Universelle bulletins. The Allience was an International Schooling Jewish organization established by French Jews. It aimed to preserve human rights of Jews all around the world and also to improve and develop the social and educational situation of eastern Jews including Turkey (Rodrigue, 2003:25-34). We learn about the Diyarbakır Jewish community in Alliance archives only after the establishment in 1860. However, the information in the bulletins was mostly about the troubles they have confronted.

There is not any specific source that we can find on the whole population of Jews of Diyarbakır. During the Ottoman Period there are numbers from travelers' accounts, from Salnameler (Yearbooks) and from the first census in 1897. In this respect, population of Jews of Diyarbakır in 16th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries can be seen on the following page.

Jewish Population in Diyarbakır from 16th century to 20th century[1]

YEAR		1518[1]	1526[2]	1840[3]	1855[4]	1873[5]	1890[6]	1893[7]	1894[8]	1895[9]	1896[10]	1897[11]	1905[12]	1906[13]	1906-1907[14]	1913-1914[15]	1914[16]
GENDER	M	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	679	693	657	1434	572	187	?	?
	F	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	612	612	724	1358	593	202	?	?
TOTAL POPULATION		28 Households and 3 Bachelor	207 Households	50 Families	200 Families	200 Person	80 Families	285 Person	1051 Person	1291 Person	1305 Person	1381 Person	2792 Person	1165 Person	389 Person	2538 Person	520 Person

M: Male F: Female

Sources

1) BA, T.D, 64. P.27, 924/1518-19 in Mark Alan Epstein, 1980 The Ottoman Jewish Communities and Their Role in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Freiburg. p.217.
2) Leslie Peirce, 2003 Morality Tales: Law and Gender in Ottoman Court of Aintab, University of California Press, California
3) Horatio Southgate, 1840 Narrative of a Tour Through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia and Mesopotamia, D.Appleton& Co., volume II, New York, p.299.
4) Avram Galante, 1961 Histoire des Juifs d'Anatolie, v.4, İsis Yayımcılık, İstanbul, p.287
5) Avram Galante, ibid, v.4, p.287
6) Dr. Lamec Saad, 1913 Sechzehn Jahre als Quarantaenarzt in der Turkei, Berlin cite İlhan Pınar "Gezginlerin Gözüyle Diyarbakır 1701-1924, in Şevket Beysanoğlu, M.Sabri Koz ve diğerleri, 1999 Diyarbakır: Müze Şehir, İstanbul, p.150
7) 12, Yurt Ansiklopedisi, Anadolu Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1982, v.3, p. 2242 -2243 as cited in Rıfat Bali 1999 Diyarbakır Yahudileri, in Şevket Beysanoğlu, M.Sabri Koz ve diğerleri, 1999 Diyarbakır: Müze Şehir, İstanbul, s.367-389
8) 9, 10, 14., and 16., Kemal Karpat, 1985 The Ottoman Population 1830-1914, Demographic and Social Characteristics, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, p.134 as cited in Rifat Bali ibid. p.367-389
11) Tevfik Güran (haz.), 1997 Osmanlı Devleti'nin İlk İstatistik Yıllığı 1897, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Tarihi İstatistikler Dizisi, Ankara, s.24 as cited in Rifat Bali ibid.
12) Cem Behar (haz.) 1996, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun ve Türkiye'nin Nüfusu 1500-1927, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Tarihi İstatistikler Dizisi, Ankara, s.56 as cited in Rifat Bali ibid. p.367-389
1+) Justin McCarthy 1994, Jewish Population in the Late Ottoman Period in The Jews of the Ottoman Empire 1994, Avigdor Levy, Princeton, USA, p. 375-399.

Additionally, Jewish population of Diyarbakır in Republic Period is shown as below:

Jews of Diyarbakır during the republic period

Year	1927[1]		1935[2]		1945[3]		1955[4]		1960[5]		1965[6]	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Jews	173	219	164	172	202	239	?	?	5	7	14	20
Total	392		336		441		21		12		34	

Source:

1) 1927. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, '28 Teşrinievvel 1927 Umumi Nüfus Tahriri: Türkiye Nüfusu' İstatistik Yıllığı / Annuaire Statistique IV (1930-31), İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü Neşriyatından, sayı 14, s. 61-62, (Ankara 1931).
2) 1935. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü, 20 İlkteşrin 1935 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Ankara, 1937, Walter Weiker, 1992, Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, University Press of America Maryland, 1992, p.267
3) 1945.Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, 21 Ekim 1945 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Türkiye İstatistik Yıllığı / Annuaire Statisque de Turquie, cilt 18, no: 328, s. 46 (Ankara, 1950).
4) 1955. Türkiye 1955 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü (Republic of Turkey, Prime Ministry, General Statistical Office), 23 Ekim 1955 Genel Nüfus Sayımı: Türkiye Nüfusu, (23 October 1955 Census of Population: Population of Turkey), (Ankara, 1961).
5) 1960 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 23 Ekim 1960 Genel Nüfus Sayımı: Türkiye Nüfusu (Republic of Turkey, Prime Ministry, State Institute of Statistics, Census of Population, 23 October 1960 Population of Turkey) (Ankara 1965).
6) 1965 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 23 Ekim 1965 Genel Nüfus Sayımı: Türkiye Nüfusu (Republic of Turkey, Prime Ministry, State Institute of Statistics, Census of Population, 23 October 1965 Population of Turkey) (Ankara 1970).

Due to migration after the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jewish population in Diyarbakır declined especially between the years 1945-1955.

Migration from Diyarbakır

Migration as a universal social phenomenon can be seen as embedded in the history of human societies. It is not only a physical movement of people from one place to another, but as a social process it also brings about cultural, economical, social and even emotional and memorial changes in the migrant people. Briefly, the lives of the migrant people totally change after their migration. Why would people where they have lived for centuries leave their hometown and go to an unknown place where they do not know even speak the language? All migrations are motivated by push and pull factors. Whether voluntarily or compulsorily Jews examined in this study had a reason to migrate. According to our interviewees currently there are no Jews in the east and in Diyarbakır. They are all immigrated.

By the end of the First World War and start of the Turkish Independence War non-Muslims in different parts of the country were start to migrate. Jews of Turkey whether they voluntarily or compulsorily, all had a reason to migrate. Palestine, later Israel becomes a primary choice for Turkey's Jews. Mainly due to migration, the number of Jews in Turkey has declined. Immigration of eastern Jews continued to different countries as well. There were various economic, social and political factors for the immigration. Starting with the founding of the

Turkish Republic in 1923 through the establishing of the state of Israel migration of Jews from the eastern cities continued. However, the immigration of Diyarbakır Jewish community did not happen at one time. At first one or more family members immigrated. After settling and living in Israel then they called for the rest of the family to follow (interview notes).

Eastern Jews of Turkey used different ways to immigrate Israel. A great majority of Jews of Diyarbakır immigrated to Israel through İskenderun port with cargo ships but not passenger ships. Additionally, five or six other Jewish families from Diyarbakır moved to İstanbul, except one woman, Farha. She was the only one who stayed in Diyarbakır after all the Jews left the city (interview notes). In all likelihood, she is the Jewish woman mentioned by the famous Armenian author, Mıgırdiç Margosyan, in his book Gavur Mahallesi (Margosyan, 1994:54-55). Margosyan pointed out that at that times the non-Jews called the Jews "Moshe". He says:

> The people we called Moshe left suddenly to Israel in 1950. Only one insane woman called Ferho stayed. She did not want to go or they did not take her with them. Despite all her insanity Ferho change her name as Selma. After that she felt at ease (Köker, 1995).

One of my interviewees[2], a female from Diyarbakır, was born in 1938. She is a well-known storyteller in the Diyarbakır Jewish community. Her mother in-law's family came to Palestine with donkeys. Their journey took three months, traveling through Syria and Lebanon to Palestine before the state of Israel was established. She personally came with her family by ship from Iskenderun port in 1947 (Rachel Tsafon, 74, housewife, Jerusalem, 24 May 2012).

As far as we know currently, there are no Jews in Diyarbakır and in the eastern part of Turkey. The Jews mentioned in this study, whether they voluntarily or compulsorily, all had a reason to migrate. In the migration process of Jews of Diyarbakır, first young people and poor families immigrated, and then the others followed. There also was an incident that accelerated the migration of Diyarbakır Jewish community. It was a homicide that occurred between the years 1947-1948. According to information extracted from interview[3] notes a man came from a place in Diyarbakır or Siverek to open a teahouse business. The man was serving tea to Jewish shopkeepers by forcing them to drink in his shop. A Jewish tradesman Yona Shemtov, son of İliyahu Shemtov, and his brothers, who had a dry goods shop, expressed their opposition to this man in Buğday Pazarı (Wheat market), where they were doing business. Yona was a brave man. All the Jews of Diyarbakır would consult him and ask for help in a dispute with the Muslims. Therefore, even Muslims were afraid of him and they stayed away. Sometime later, a server in the teahouse forced Yona's brother's son to drink tea in the shop, however he resisted and did not want to drink. During the quarrel the server hit the child. When Yona heard about that he went to the teahouse. Yona started to slap in the servant and beat him badly in front of the many customers. During this, he swore using the name Muhammed, prophet of the Muslims. He realized that he had made a big mistake but it was too late. Muslims of Diyarbakır heard about this and were very angry. The tea server sued Yona. During the court proceedings, a crowd gathered outside. When Yona and his brothers left the court, some of the relatives of the tea server stabbed Yona with a

curved knife. While they then tried to escape, Yona took out his knife and stabbed the man to death. Both Yona and the man he stabbed died right there[4] (interview notes). This incident accelerated the migration process of the Jewish community. Unfortunately, many Jews could not but only some of them able to sell their belongings. However, some Jews exchanged their properties with gold and some sold their belongings for very low prices.

In addition to that one of another reason for immigration of Diyarbakır Jewish community was poverty. Majority of Jewish community were poor and barely earning a living. They moved to Israel hoping to find work and better living conditions. Therefore, it can be said that the first migrants were some poor families who left because of the difficult economic conditions in Diyarbakır. These families decided to go to Jerusalem.

All the Jews of Diyarbakır did not immigrate at the same time. By the early years of the state of Israel, Jews those migrated from the east of Turkey had to live in small villages or in migrant camps for a while then they distributed to be settle in different parts of the Israel. According to interviewees it was not easy to adopt the new life. The infrastructure of the camps, villages and settlement were poor. There was scarcity of electricity, medicine and food. Also, almost all of the immigrants did not speak Hebrew when they firs arrived in the beginning communication with others was difficult. First they had to cope with the new language, Hebrew. Those who have the opportunities went to Hebrew language teaching courses called Ulpan. Those who are not able to got chance it took time to learn Hebrew. Over the next few decades the remaining Jews in the east left for Israel. Previous settlers helped the new immigrants to find jobs or housing. Newcomers continued to do same job as they do before in Turkey. Professions such as tailoring, shoemaking and peddling continued to do the same jobs. Some immigrants took up work in agriculture. In addition to desire for a better life there was also a motive of religious beliefs behind the migration of some Jews of Diyarbakır. Especially elderly Jews had strong faiths and keeping their beliefs in the promise land (interview notes). Currently, there are no Jews in the eastern part of Turkey and in various towns of Anatolia. It is possible that many of them would not have thought of abandoning their home if they hadn't feared for the security of their life and property.

Some cultural features of the Jewish community

Jews from eastern Turkey were a small minority thus their life and culture became intertwined in many ways with the local society. Their cuisine and their way of dress were similar to those of native people. However, there was quite a difference in cultural matters between the western and eastern Jews of Turkey as well. Western Jews lived in the cities and they were more urbanized. Eastern Jews lived in small cities and towns, so they were rather rural. Western Jews were wealthier than their eastern brethren, since they were bankers and merchants, while eastern Jews were mostly tailors, peddlers and shopkeepers.

Jews of Diyarbakır, primarily spoke Turkish and Kurdish and Arabic. The community was headed by a ḥakham, who generally was also the ḥazzan, mohel, shoḥet, and teacher. The social and cultural life of the Jewish community was usually structured in their own neighborhood.

It is referred to as Yahudi Mahallesi or Yahudiyan Mahallesi (Jewish quarter) in the cadastral and court records within the Ottoman archival documents. In the mixed quarters, they were not separated, but usually Muslims lived in one part and non-Muslims in the other part (Şimşek, 2013:47-59). The word "Homa (the wall)" was the common way the Jews of Diyarbakır referred to their neighborhoods. When I asked if they remembered the Jewish quarter, the answer was quite simple: "Yes, of course, it was very close to Homa" (interview notes).

Interestingly, Shimon Cankatan remembered his address while he lived in Diyarbakır. He specified his home address as "Arap Şeyh Mahallesi, Kara Sokak, numara 2. (Arap Şeyh quarter, Kara Street, number 2)". He said the Jews had been living inside the walls (interview with Shmimon Cankatan, Rishon Letsiyon, 27 April 2012). Rachel Tsafon from Diyarbakır mentioned that the residents used to bake bread in the neighborhood and carry water from the river to their houses.

Jews were not treated as infidels or non-believers in the east of Turkey. In general, the religion of eastern Jews was mostly based on the oral transmission of received Judaic practices and customs. They kept the tradition they had inherited from their ancestors. If the father attended services in the synagogue, the children would go along. Living in the rural conditions of the east in some cases affected the practice of their religion. They could not regularly attend services in the synagogue. However, during the major Holidays, such as Purim and Yom Kippur, the synagogues were very crowded. *Haham,* the rabbi, led the ritual prayers in the synagogue. *Hahams* had multiple duties. They often were also the Shohet and *Hazan.* Shalom Yemin pointed out that the *Haham* of the Diyarbakır Jewish community in 1908 was Pinhas Ben Yaakov Levi, a 30- to 32-year-old. He was both a *Shohet* and a *Hazan* (Bali, 1999, p. 380). Ustad Hayim Levy was the last *Rabbi, Haham* of the Diyarbakır Jewish community before they left the city in the 1950s. He taught Jewish Hebrew and read *Torah* to children in the *kuttab* (interview notes dated 27.04.2012). Synagogues occupied a central place in the Jews' life, not only offering religious services but also serving as a school for Jewish children (interview notes).

None of my interviewees mentioned any incidents or disputes regarding the practice of their faiths.

> We had good relationships. We used to go to other places, villages freely; Muslims welcomed us very well, no frictions, and no problems with Muslims. They used to be like guests in our houses and we used to be guests in their houses (Ruth Levy, Jerusalem, 19.04.2012.)

said Ruth Levy, who emigrated from Diyarbakır before the establishment of the state of Israel.

Jews also had relationships with other religious minorities in Diyarbakır. Armenians lived in Hançepek, the Gavur neighborhood that was next to the Jewish quarter. Famous Armenian author Mıgirdiç Margosyan, who was originally from Diyarbakır, pointed out that they, called the Jews "Moşe (Moshe) ". Margosyan mentions encounters between the Armenian children and the Jews. The only way to get to the Jewish quarter was to go through

Hançepek, the Armenian neighborhood. He said that in the summer, usually the streets were full of melons and watermelons rinds. So, residents had to take a detour to avoid falling into the children's ambush and being pelted with melon rinds (Margosyan, 1995:55).

Based on the interviewees' explanations, the way Jews of Diyarbakır dressed was usually the same as that of the local people. However, clothing became more modern from the east towards the west in eastern Turkey. Jews used to wear more traditional clothes in the east, than the western part of the region. The dress of Jews of Diyarbakır was more local and traditional. Jewish women used to cover their heads in different ways in Diyarbakır. According to interviewees, women did not go to visit the market or to shop without their husbands or a male relative. As seen in the first picture, when they left the house, they wore *çarşaf,* a loose black robe, a kind of chador that covers the whole body from head to foot, without a veil. In the house, they used to cover their heads with ornamental white headscarves. As seen in the second picture, it did not cover the entire head.

In addition to that, men used to wear *şalvar*, baggy trousers, instead of suit pants and shirts. They put on rawhide sandals for shoes (interview notes). After the Dress Code regulation passed in 1934, men started wearing pants, suits and felt hats covering their heads. Women, too, began to wear modern attire.

The Jews of Diyarbakır consumed basic foodstuffs abundant. Among them were meat, wheat, fruits and vegetables. It can be said that the cuisine of eastern Jews including Diyarbakır Jewish community is mainly based on meat. Preserved meat called *qalya/qaliye* also had an important place in the cuisine of the eastern Jews especially of Jews of Başkale, Diyarbakır and Siverek. Large Jewish families mostly cooked *Qalya*. Depending on the size of the family, at least one or several fat sheep were slaughtered. The diversity of food was limited, and the eating habits of the Jews were greatly influenced by the culture they lived in. K*ashrut (kosher),* the Jewish dietary laws are strictly observed by the Jews of Diyarbakır. They used separate pots, pans, and knives for meat and dairy products (interview notes dated).

Apart from the influence of local cuisine, an Arabic influence can be seen in the foods of Jews of Diyarbakır, Urfa and Antep, which also emphasized meat. They separated milk and meat, keeping their kitchen kosher that way. Some wealthy Jews had two kitchens, one for Pesach (when Jews do not eat leavened bread) and another for the rest of the year (Interview notes dated).

Jews were small non-Muslim minorities among the Muslim majority society in the east and southeast of Turkey. They lived in the same quarter, with houses facing each other. Their population was not very large. The smallest Jewish community consisted of at least fifty families; the biggest, between 150 and 200 (interview notes). Amos Karayazı described the Jewish families in Diyarbakır:

> It was a small community. We were talking about that everybody was related to other people (each other), it was like a big family, and like a "Hamula" it was a big family. If someone made something, everybody would knew, you did not need to make something special to inform everybody. If one went, everybody

> knew that he had gone. Most of them were poor. The women wouldn't work. They were housewives. Only a few people were rich. Maybe five families were rich, but not many (Amos Karayazı, Jerusalem, 01.06.2012).

Interviewees, mentioned similar traits of the families in Diyarbakır. They said they had extended families, all Jews recognizing each other and almost everybody sharing a kinship. Accordingly, family members knew each other very well. A father could have an authoritarian air, but he was not distant to his sons or the rest of the family. Sons knew how their father would react (interview notes, Jerusalem, 01.06.2012).

Marriage among Jews occurred at an early period in life at fourteen or fifteen years for girls and seventeen or eighteen for boys. Since Diyarbakır Jewish community was small and people lived in the same quarter, everybody knew each other and tended to be related.

Jews of Diyarbakır used to get married on Fridays. Engagements and wedding ceremonies took place in the yards of their houses. Ruth Levy from Diyarbakır said they had *Nedunya,* possessions which the bride brings to the groom in the marriage. Usually it was not money but property or household goods. Amos Karayazı a Jew from Diyarbakır, stated, *"The girl's family should do Nedunya."* The groom, meanwhile, used to give money to the bride's family.

Behavioral patterns of eastern Jewish women in Turkey were largely shaped by tradition, customs and religion. They were influenced not only by the Islamic society they lived within, but also by the wealth standard of women in the community. The Jewish communities were based on a patriarchal family system just like their Muslim neighbors. Women were not inferior, but they were not equal either. The majority of Jewish women had to cover their head and wear a veil and a cloak to cover their body outside their homes. Furthermore, they were not allowed to go to the market or other public spaces alone; usually a boy or a man accompanied them (interview notes dated 21.03.2012). The majority of women in Diyarbakır Jewish community were housewives. While the domain of men was outside, the women's was limited to the interior of her home. The primary duties of Jewish women were childbearing, housework and serving family members. Laundry, cleaning the house, cooking, taking care of the children and drying vegetables for the winter took up most of their time. The majority of eastern Jewish women were illiterate. Since their workload and duties were focused mostly on the home, society tended to consider study unnecessary for women (interview notes dated).

Similar to Jews in the other cities, most of the Jews of Diyarbakır were poor. Only a few families were rich. They had big shops located in the central place of the city at that time. Anat Keskin's father was engaged in the gold business. He had a jewelry store in Diyarbakır. Other Jews worked as coppersmiths, shoemakers, tailors, drapers and haberdashers and peddlers. Ruth Levy's father was a peddler. He had a donkey and sold goods in the villages of Diyarbakır. Yoel Aslan pointed out that some Jews worked in pharmacies owned by Muslims (interview notes).

Conclusion

It can be considered that Jews were one of the ancient religious minority groups since centuries in the city of Diyarbakır. Their existence can be traced both pre-Islamic period and after the Islam spread out in the region. According to our researches currently there are no Jews who live in the city. Through this paper it was aimed to explore the reason behind their emigration and to reveal their social and cultural conditions of their life during their stay in the city of Diyarbakır. Accordingly, it can be said that Jews of Diyarbakır easily adopted the norm of the local communities they live in. Since they were a small minority they internalize the city's culture without having acculturation difficulties. It seemed that if Jews of Diyarbakır had no fear of security for their lives after the incident mentioned above they could have been still the residents of Diyarbakır. Because for centuries different religious communities lived together in harmony in the city.

Briefly the motives behind the immigration of the Jews of Diyarbakır can be pointed as; the incidents mentioned above, general economic conditions and religious reasons. In addition to that, Jews of Diyarbakır still have positive feelings towards Turkey and Diyarbakır even those have emigrated due to events mentioned above. Their ties with the city once they lived even they strongly desire to keep alive it is weaken they by day. However, they remain interested in Turkish news, T.V. serials, and customs and wish to revisit it.

Endnotes

1 Differently from Rıfat Bali's table mentioned in his study I add a few more data regarding the years

2 Due to anthropological ethical reasons pseudonyms were used in the study.

3 It should be noted that Rıfat Bali in his article titled, "Diyarbakır Yahudileri", also mentiones about the same incident. However Bali, did not go to Israel. He clarified that he obtained this information through Yaakov Barha's interview with Yitshak Yemin, a Jew from Diyarbakır, in 14 April 1999, and through another interview with Yusuf Güzel in 18 March 1999 (in Rıfat Bali 1999 Diyarbakır Yahudileri, in Şevket Beysanoğlu, M.Sabri Koz ve diğerleri, 1999 Diyarbakır: Müze Şehir, İstanbul, s.367-389).

4 Having similarities with the Rıfat Bali's quotation, differently from him to get the information in detail regarding this issue I conducted a fieldwork in Israel between the years 2011-2012. I interviewed a couple families with the Jews of Diyarbakır. They explained the incident in detail with the new names those involved in the event.

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