

**“The Status of Moroccan Jews during the Reign of King Mohammed V
may God have Mercy on Him”**

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Abstract

This study is about the Moroccan Jews who immigrated to Morocco, so they settled on its lands from east to west, and from north to south, and coexisted with its people, and brought together its family, males and females, young and old, and they were treated kindly and well, in an atmosphere that was mostly full of values of tolerance and synergy. In application of the tolerant principles of Islam, which urges good treatment of the People of the Book, which is the same behavior of the late King Muhammad V, who had paid great attention to the Moroccan Jews throughout his reign. On top of that, the king was a model to be emulated in the civil peace they acquired the status of a citizen, and the legal framework became unified at that time for all Jews and Moroccans, except with regard to personal status, and this is according to the recognition of the Moroccan Jews themselves. There was a national and international consensus that King Muhammad V equaled Muslims and Jews in terms of rights and duties. When Morocco gained its independence, Sultan Muhammad V, may God have mercy on him, renewed the protection contract that binds him to the Jewish community.

Key words: Mohammed V, Moroccan Jews, People of the Book, Morocco

Introduction:

Jews are considered to be one of the Oldest human communities that migrated to Morocco, their presence on its land dates back to the pre-Islamic period (Jacques-Meunié, 1982) ; (Haim Zafrani, 1999) , they took its land from east to west, and from north to south, coexisted and got familiar with its people ; male and female, young and old. They were well treated in an atmosphere that was all full of values of understanding and synergy in accordance with the principles of Islam, which urge the good treatment of the people of the Book, Jews or Christians, in a better way, as long as they are peaceful and do not fight Muslims, showing no hostility and no intention of war. This is what the Qur'an has referred to in many verses, and the Prophet's Sunnah has acknowledged in many prophetic hadiths. It is the Qur'an that says: « Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them : for Allah loveth those who are just. »

However, the history of this existence in its finest details is somehow ambiguous, as we have not got what we can quench our thirst with concerning their exact history. The vicissitudes of time and the oblivion of history has folded their history and to talk about their first permanent stay in Morocco became a sort of myth and something that is difficult to be sure of, which made the researchers, old and contemporary, different about this existence.

This difference has several reasons, the most important one is: the lack of historical documents about this minority that lived in Morocco for many years. This lack is due to the shortage of scholars, Muslims and Jews, who were interested in writing this ancient history. According to researcher Jacques Meunie, "The old Muslim researchers have never spoken neither of the Jewish presence in Morocco's Sahara, or their political and social status, or their important place in the economy. This silence does not mean that the Jews did not exist, but it is caused by the scarcity of information about them. » (Jacques-Meunié, 1982) , In our article, we will try to shed light on a specific period of time during which the Moroccans and Jews revived after Morocco had gained independence, when Sultan Mohammed V, may Allah rest his soul, was the defender of all, Jewish and Muslims.

Jews during the reign of King Mohammed V

After many difficult negotiations, Morocco gained its independence in 1956, and all citizens felt free, Muslims and Jews. They celebrated the return of King Mohammed V, may he rest in peace, to the homeland from exile in Corsica and then Madagascar, and blessed his auspicious return which led to the independence of Morocco. The king responded with the same feeling in his first speech which was free of any vengefulness. His reign was a model for civil peace and peaceful coexistence. "The first speech we address to the Moroccan nation and all the inhabitants of the Holy Kingdom, then, is a message of hope, vision and reconciliation." (Sarraff Robert, 1997).

They remained linked to their homeland and in March 1956, the year of Morocco's independence, their number was about 230,000 of the whole population of Morocco which was about ten million. (Shahlan Ahmed, 2009) They demonstrated that they were real patriots. They proved their patriotism for this country. This was clear when some of them, in 1975, went to the registration offices with the intention of participating in the green March, voluntarily, and there were even some who participated in response to the royal appeal (Al-Haddawi Muhammad, 2005). They were granted citizen status and the legal framework was then the same for everyone except in terms of personal status law, (Tzelkat's Ali , Undated) and that was admitted by the Moroccan Jews themselves, and to name but a few, Admun Imran al-Maleh

used to repeat in his essays "We Moroccan Jews or Jewish Moroccans were never exposed to any danger...We fully joined the entire Moroccan people and without any hesitation we agreed in this declaration on a new destiny, as the country finally gained independence after a colonial era.» (Shahalan Ahmed, 2009)and (Sarraf Robert,2009).In a special program called « People of El Mallah » broadcast by Moroccan Channel 2, the Moroccan Jew, Yamine Bouzaglo, confirmed in an interview with the Jewish Museum governor in Casablanca, Zhor Rhihl. That he would not be able to leave Morocco even if his body got burned, and when the journalist asked him:



Picture No. 1: A picture of the dialogue that took place between Yameen Bozaglu and Zahoor Rahil on Med Radio.

why he visited Morocco from time to time coming from France where he lived, he answered with a multi-meaning proverb saying that the snakes charmer would talk to one of his snakes and ask her to go out, and she said : « "خُرُوكَ لُبْدَانُ، وَلَا خُرُوكَ لِمَكَانُ" hurug al'abdan, khayr min khrouj lmkān" which means that burns in the bodies is better than getting out of the place, meaning that he would not leave Morocco even if his body got burned, as a metaphor, adding that he was in a visit in Morocco in 2012, and his friends told him: "You want to go to Morocco but you may die there." He answered "If I am supposed to die there, I will be buried next to my father". By the way, he speaks Amazigh fluently, and can also sing Amazigh songs as the picture below shows.

There was a national and international consensus that King Mohammed V equated Muslims with Jews in terms of rights and obligations, and as soon as Morocco gained its independence, Sultan Mohammed V, God bless him, renewed the protection contract with the Jewish community that had disappeared since the colonial era. The law of the « Dhimmi » with its external and concrete indications was compensated by the Sultan by the citizen, (**Berdugo Arlette,2002**) and history is the best reference in this regard. In many of his speeches, he praised Moroccan Jews and considered them equal citizens to the Moroccans in rights and duties. To name a few, his speech on 14 Rajab 1367 AH, corresponding to 24 May 1948 AD, which he devoted to the Palestinian cause, saying: "This is why I ask our Muslim subjects not to be forced, by what Jews have done to their Arab brothers in Palestine, to do anything that violates the regime or disturbs the peace and security. They must know that Moroccan Jews who had settled this country for centuries under protection, found in it a better home and were faithful to the Moroccan throne, are not the homeless Jews who went to Palestine from all over the world and wanted to take it unjustly and aggressively." (Bennis Abdel-Hay,2010) It is obvious that the Jews of Morocco are like all Moroccan citizens, they have equal rights and duties to this democratic system, which should bring a life of well-being and happiness to all," he said in his throne speech on Friday 3 Rabi' II 1375 AH, 18 November 1955 AD.¹¹ This shows the proper and privileged position that Sultan Muhammad V was holding for Jews as first-class citizens equal to Muslims in rights and duties, and he addressed them: "Be sure that I will not sign any document that harms Moroccan Jews, and to me you are like the rest of the Moroccans and as equal as Muslims, and that your properties are in safe hands and very well guarded, and if you are told bad news about the Jews, then come and let me know as quick as possible.» (Zafarani Haim,2000) And this was reflected in informing the Moroccan Jews that they were granted the status of a Moroccan citizen, and he even appointed one of them as a minister in the Moroccan government, and this decision was an expression of their integration into the new regime. (Berdugo Arlette,2002).

The best thing to conclude with is the following expressive picture(Mourad Kamelon,2019) :



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