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Ethnically or Religiously Chosen? A Survey on Israelites Being a Chosen Nation

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Abstract: Judaism has been considered to be a national religion, and the children of Israel, its followers, to be an ethnic group chosen by God. Nevertheless, as also stated by Muslims, this chosenness is nothing but the superiority according to which nobility in the sight of God is being righteous (*taqwâ*). Indeed, there is some evidence in the Holy Book of Jews pointing out that this superiority and chosenness should be understood as such. But in course of time, based upon the fact that Judaism withdrew into itself after the Exile of Babylon and thus turned into a national religion from the outset of the Christina era onward, this understanding of superiority initially came to be perceived as an ethnic superiority of the people of Israel.

Key Words: Chosenness, the Chosen People, People of Israel, Judaism

Judaism is, in general, regarded as a national religion, while the Children of Israel who have constituted the major adherents of this religion are seen as an ethnic people chosen by God.[1] With the course of time, this misconception appeared among the Jewish/Israelite People, and then penetrated, like some other wrong understandings, into the Christian and Muslim peoples. It is because of this misconception that Christians believe that with Jesus, the covenant God had made with the Children of Israel on the ethnic basis came to an end and God made a covenant with those chosen in faith instead. Likewise Muslims, having been influenced by the misperception that Judaism is merely the religion of Children of Israel, considered the Qur'anic verses[2] stating that the Children of Israel (once upon a time) distin-

guished over all the people to be the superiority of this nation in the certain period of history. Some Muslims believed that with the coming of Islam, this superiority came to an end.[3] However, is this understanding that has generally been seen true by Jews, Christians and Muslims true in reality? In other words, has God sent the religious tradition called Judaism only to the people of Israel and merely on account of ethnic reasons distinguished them over the other people? If not, is this way of perception only a delusion? We shall attempt to answer this question in the Tanakh that has been showed as the source of religious and ethnic chosenness.

The Tanakh not only contains the statements both connoting or supporting the ethnic chosenness, but also includes opposite statements indicating that this chosenness is not ethnic-based, but rather a religious one. In this case, the matter should first be examined beginning with Abraham, the founding patriarch of the Israelites and then the data supporting both approaches should be taken into consideration.

Abraham, the ancestor of the Israelites, left Harran where his family were living and went into the Land of Canaan[4] where God had promised to give him and his descendent as inheritance, and he established good relationships with indigenous peoples there. But when he wanted to marry his son Isaac, despite his friendship he had established before, he did not prefer to acquire a daughter-in-law from the neighbouring people, and thus called his old slave not acquire a wife for his son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom He was living. He sent him instead to Harran and to his relatives to find a wife for his son Isaac.[5]

The stance attributed to Abraham in Torah not to intermarry with outsiders also maintained by Isaac insisting his sons that they must not intermarry with foreigners.[6] However, Isaac's son Esau, disobeying his father, married the foreigner women. This situation irritated Isaac and his wife.[7] As for Jacob, Isaac's other son, remaining in royalty to his parent's demands; he married two girls of his uncle who were living in Harran and their concubines.[8] The twelve sons of Jacob[9] whom he begot from the four women have been regarded as the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

What we pointed out above about Abraham who was regarded as the forefather of Judaism and his children may be seen as a proof for the fact that the matter of ethnic chosenness has been approved by the Tanakh. Although, the marriage with the foreigners at the time of Abraham and his sons was not treated as a good act, it seems that the conditions changed later on. As a matter of fact, Joseph, the most beloved son of Jacob married an Egyptian woman.[10] The same act was also shown by Moses after centuries when he married Zipporah the daughter of Jethro the priest in Midian where he took refuge after he had fled Egypt.[11] But here it may deservedly be argued that Joseph and Moses got married with the outsiders just because of compulsory reasons, since by the time they married, there was no one

around them from the tribe of Israel that they could have any opportunity to provide a different choice and marry an Israeli woman.[12] Thus, we should admit that such an argument that ignoring the ethnic chosenness, Joseph and Moses had married the outsiders and thus the chosenness of Israelites as mentioned in Torah was not relying on an ethnic basis and, if so, these two distinguished Israelis would not marry the outsider women will not be a well-established proof. In this case, we must find other proofs for our claim that the matter of chosenness referred to in the Quran and Torah is not an ethnic chosenness but rather a religious one. For this reason, it will be more properly appropriate to set our eyes on the period during which the Israelites under the leadership of Moses appeared on the stage of history as a people of covenant rather than family or tribe.

While relating the early times of Moses' prophethood, the Tanakh focuses basically upon his struggle against the Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, mentioning the miracles shown within this period against the Pharaoh and finally narrating the permission given by the Pharaoh to the Israelites to depart Egypt since as a punishment at midnight God attacked all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the prison, and all the firstborn of the cattle.[13] Within the same context, it is related that, in this course of Exodus, Pharaoh, who aimed to kill them, and his army chased after the Israelites. The Egyptians chased them and followed them into the middle of the sea – all the horses of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. God ordered Moses to extend his hand to the sea to return it to the normal state. The Israelites went through the middle of the sea on dry ground, the water forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. So Moses extended his hand toward the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state when the sun began to rise. Now the Egyptians were fleeing before it, but the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the middle of the sea. The water returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the army of Pharaoh that was coming after the Israelites into the sea not so much as one of them survived! But the Israelites walked on dry ground in the middle of the sea, the water forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. So the Lord saved Israel on that day from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea.[14] After giving the number of Israelites during Exodus, the Torah narrates that a great number of people of various ethnic origins also left Egypt together with them.[15] It may be easily concluded from the statement "And a mixed multitude went up also with them" that these people moved from Egypt with Moses and that the Israelites were not of Israeli origin but people of various ethnic origins who came to faith. And this clearly shows that from the beginning Moses was delivering the divine message to the people of other origins as well as Israelites and that Judaism was not, at the beginning, an ethnic based religion, thus the chosenness of Israelites indicates their religious chosenness, not their

ethnic chosenness. Indeed, this case and how the chosenness should be understood are obviously expressed during which Israelites came to the desert of Sinai and Moses went up to God, and God said "Now if you obey me and keep my covenant, you shall be my special treasure among all nations, even though all the world is mine you will be a kingdom of priest and a holy nation to me."[16] As has also been clearly seen in this passage, God made his covenant via Moses with the believers having departed from Egypt and stated that if they keep this covenant and obey his orders they become more valuable than the others in the sight of Him. Here it is obviously clear that to be noble in the sight of God, as stated in the Qur'an, depends on obeying his commands and living in accordance with His willing.[17]

In other places of Tanakh, it can also be seen that the chosenness of the Israelites has been stipulated to obey the commands of God. Indeed, in the book of Leviticus, chapter 26, God promise Israelites that he will be with them protecting them from all worldly troubles and disasters, if they keep his commandments, but if they do not this, he warns them explicitly that he will turn away from them leaving them to all kinds of catastrophes. The pertinent chapter enumerates the consequences of disobedience.[18] This clear and detailed list of promises and threats is linked to the obedience or disobedience of God's commands and nevertheless, no evidence about an ethnic origin, or superiority is found. This constitutes clear evidence for the fact that God regarded the people of Moses, the majority of which were Israelites and also including people from other ethnic origins, as a religious group of notables and that this religious chosenness should not be seen as an ethnic chosenness.[19]

The understanding that this people of faith who came together around Moses and whose majority were Israeli tribes were basically religiously chosen people. After Moses, this people of faith, from Joshua onward, gradually seized the lands of Canaan. These seized lands were shared out among the tribes. In this course, the tribes mixed up with the surrounding people, particularly by mutual marriages. The most clear evidence of this is the fact that Ruth, the mother of David's grandfather, who is regarded as the greatest hero of Israelites, was a woman of non-Israeli origin.[20] Although Ruth was not of Israeli origin, even coming from Moab,[21] a tribe which was considered by Israelites to emerge after an incestous relationship[22] and of whom God stated that only ten generations later he would accept them among his people, has been boasted in the Tanakh a pious and virtuous woman and her story constituted a certain part of this holy book.[23]

As mentioned above, not only David's grand mother (Ruth), but also some of his wives were not of Israeli origin. The clearest evidence to show this is Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon who acceded to the throne after David.[24] Bathsheba with whom, according to Torah, David, had lay, though she was married with other one (Uriah the Hittite), was most probably not of Israeli origin. Because her husband Uriah the Hittite, as has been concluded from his name, was a Hittite, thus it was

most likely that Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, was a Hittite. This fact shows that David gave permission to some from the tribe of Hittite, one of seven tribes about which were stated in the Book of Deuteronomy that any agreement would not be made with them; on the contrary they would be exterminated to live in his land, even to join in his own army. Furthermore, this shows that Uriah the Hittite and probably many more Hittites or members of other tribes embraced the Jewish belief and, contrary to the command stated in the Book of Deuteronomy, were not exterminated completely, but were admitted into Judaism.[25]

As has been seen from the examples we have given above, the fact that the grandmother and some of wives of David, a figure who was regarded as the greatest hero of Judaism, were ethnically not of Israeli origin shows that the matter was at the beginning not viewed from an ethnic perspective and, a corollary of this was that, the Israelites neither considered themselves to be a superior race nor an ethnically chosen people. This fact remains that Judaism did not bear at the outset a national character and that the aforementioned chosenness should be understood as a notability in the sight of God in recognition of obedience to the divine responsibility. This way of perception also continued after the reign of Solomon when the state was divided into two parts in 930 BCE. In this period, from time to time some deviations from the religion were taking place in either kingdom. In this process of religious degeneration, first the northern Israeli state collapsed by the Assyrians in 722 BCE and the people of the region were exiled to Assyria.[26] Instead of them, a variety of people were brought from the provinces of Assyria and settled there.[27]

Almost a century and a half later after the collapse of Israeli state, the Babylonian state became a remarkable power of the region. Thereupon, the State of Judah the only Jewish state was forced to pay taxes to Babylon.[28] But, after rejecting to pay taxes, it was destroyed by the Babylonian armies in 586 BCE and most of people of country were expelled to Babylonia.[29] from this point onward, the subsequent narrative of Torah basically focuses on the Jewish state in the South and the exile of two tribes i.e., Judah and Benjamin, both of which had established the Jewish state, to Babylon and post-exile developments, however, it does not refer to the fate of ten tribes, the members of Israeli state in the north.

It seems to me that the course during which Judaism tended to be perceived as a national religion, and, as a result, the religious chosenness came to be seen as an ethnic chosenness began to appear in the aftermath of the Exile of Babylon. For it is also clearly stated in the book of Jeremiah attributed to the Prophet Jeremiah, who just lived prior to the period of exile and in the early years of exile, that God was not the only God of Jews but God of whole nations, saying "I am the Lord, the God of all humankind."[30] On the basis of this statement in the book of Jeremiah, it should be thought that the imagination of God in Judaism, in which he only cared

about Israelites and ignored the rest, came out, at the earliest, towards the end of the Exile, even after the Exile and gradually. This notion whose first signs appeared at the end of the Exile of Babylon completely came out in the period during which the Israelites returned from the exile, rebuilt Jerusalem and rewrote the lost Torah. We can see the clearest example of this in the expressions of Ezra the Scribe, the most prominent leader of the period of return from the Exile. He saw the fall of the Israeli state and the exile of people as a punishment for those Israelites broke off ties with their own religious values and thoughts by merging with foreigners, and therefore he commanded them not to marry foreign women and those married to divorce their foreign wives.[31] At the same period, the name of Jewish which probably appeared after the Exile in Babylonia was used to refer to the people of Jehovah gained prevalence. By using this name, the people Jehovah not only keep away from the foreigners, but also from the Samarians[32] of different origins who had been settled in the land of Israel during the Assyrian invasion and had been converted to Judaism here. With this exclusive attitude, even they refused the demands of Samarians who asked them to contribute to the construction of Solomon's temple which they had begun to rebuild after the Exile.[33]

In the light of the aforesaid information, at the second temple period, it appears that Israelites withdrew into themselves, adopting a nationalist stance, and thus began to comprehend the chosenness that was formerly showing a religious chosenness as an ethnic chosenness. During the later period, this misperception increasingly continued and under the influence of political and social events day by day solidified and reached the peak by the time when Jesus appeared on the stage of history. In this period, Jews began to believe that even if they shared the same place with outsiders, they would spiritually be unclean. Hence, in the Pasah, after they tried and sentenced Jesus, as a Jew like them, to death on account of the fact that he plotted mischief in religion, they could not enter the palace of the governor of Roman empire who was authorized to ratify death penalty, thus calling him outside to lay their claims.[34] In the time of Jesus, Jews showed this exclusivist attitude not only to non-Jewish people, but also to Jews they did not see as much pious as themselves, criticizing Jesus that he had a relationship with them.[35]

This exclusive attitude of Jews against the foreigners –and against those they saw as sinner even if they belong to them, with the influence of political and social circumstances, increasingly continued in the post-Jesus period. This religion, from the second century CE gained almost a completely introverted form. From that point onward, a decision was made that those wishing to convert to Judaism would be subjected to a serious trial and only after that would they be accepted to this religion.[36] Although Judaism completely closed the doors to external conversion, this religion still did not remain as a religion of an ethnic group, and from time to time

persons or groups of various ethnic origins converted to Judaism. For example Khazars, a Turkish group converted to Judaism around the 8th century CE.[37] Even in the sources, it has been pointed out that apart from this voluntarily conversion of Khazar Turks to Judaism, some Jewish people attempted, contrary to the traditional attitudes of Jews, to spread Judaism to other (non-Jewish) people, and, in this way, there appeared people who embraced Judaism from other nations. Indeed, in the period when Islam emerged, Jewish tribes in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly around al-Madinah is related to have attempted to spread out their beliefs among Arabs and converted the Arab children delivered to them to Judaism.[38]

Today, there are living representatives of historical examples we put forward above that Israelites should basically provide evidence for a religious group rather than an ethnic one, and the statements concerning their chosenness a religious chosenness, not an ethnic one. Within this framework, Ethiopian Jews (Falashas) were brought to Israel in 1984 and 1991[39] and also the existence of one hundred and fifty thousands of Jews of Kurdish origin presently living in Israel[40] prove that Judaism, despite all nationalizing attempts and withdrawing efforts should not be perceived as a religion of only one nation, and accordingly the expression "chosenness" which was applied in a certain period of history to this nation was not an ethnic chosenness.

All these proofs support our thesis that Judaism was originally not a national religion and the term Israelites not only did refer to an ethnic people, but also the people of different origins acting together with this people and sharing the same beliefs. This situation shows that Israelites or, as was called in the later period, Jews did not consider their own religion to be a belief of a certain ethnic group, but, in time, with the influence of political and social events withdrew into themselves and made their religion into a national religion. Despite this, this withdrawal did not occur as an ultimate act, and people of other ethnic origins were allowed, if they want to embrace Judaism. However, in spite of this permission, it seems that there is an evident slide in the perception of chosennes from a universal religion to a national religion. Today this perception is shared by most of Jews, and with the influence of Jewish view, this way of misperception influenced Christians and partly by Muslims. Depending upon the perception of Judaism as an ethnic religion, the perception of chosenness also underwent a change, and thus the chosenness that obeying to divine message shows one's valence before God began to be seen as a chosennes or worthiness of an ethnic group in the sight of God. With the fact that Judaism withdrew into itself and thus changed into a national religion, the universal aspect of Judaism was forgotten, and, a corollary of this was that, the religious chosenness began to be regarded as a chosenness of nation. This perception that appeared among Jews and also penetrated into Christianity also emerged in this tradition as a Messianic movement and in time turned into a universal religion, and partly influenced Muslims' way of perception, as a common element of these two religious cultures.

REFERENCES

[1] See Paul Johnson, A History of the Jews, USA 1987, 18-19; Nicholas De Lange, An Introduction to Judaism, USA and Australia 2000, 27-28; Baki Adam, Yahudilik ve Hıristiyanlık Açısından Diğer Dinler, İstanbul 2002, 128-129; Nazmiye Yavuz, Kitabı Mukaddes Açısından Yahudilik ve Hıristiyanlıkta Seçilmişlik Anlayışı, (A. Ü. Institute of Social Sciences, Unpublished MA thesis) Ankara 2006, 86.

[2] "O Children of Israel! Remember My favour wherewith I favoured you and how I preferred you to (all) creatures." (al-Baqara, 47, 122); "And (remember) when Moses said unto his people: O my people! Remember Allah's favour unto you, how He placed among you prophets, and He made you kings, and gave you that (which) He gave not to any (other) of (His) creatures." (al-Maidah, 20); "And verily we gave the Children of Israel the Scripture and the Command and the Prophethood, and provided them with good things and favoured them above (all) peoples.? (al-Jasiya, 16.)

[3] Abu al-A'lâ Mawdûdî, Tefhimu'l- Kur'an, Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri, trans. Muhammed Han Kayanî, Yusuf Karaca, İstanbul 1986, I / 98.

[4] Genesis, XV / 18-21; XVII / 8.

[5] Genesis, chapter XXIV. In the commentary of the Tanakh, this attitude of Abraham and his descendents as to not marry with the people of Canaan is based upon the cursing of Canaan who was regarded as the forefather of people of Canaan by Noah. According to Torah, after the Flood Noah drank of the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself within his tent. Ham and Canaan, Noah's son and gransdson who saw Noah in this way harped on about this. Shem and Japheth, the other two sons of Noah took the garment and without looking at his naked body placed it on him. According to Genesis, Noah who awoke and knew what had been done to him directly cursed the son of Ham instead of cursing his own son. (See Türkçe Çeviri ve Açıklamalarıyla TORA ve AFTARA, 1. kitap BEREŞİT, Translation and arrangements: Moşe Farsi, Edition: Yitshak Haleva, İstanbul 2002, 56-57) To my mind, this unusual cursing was inserted into the text as a supporting statement to prove the righteousness of Israelites who settled in the land of Canaanites, arguing these lands were bestowed them by God.

[6] Genesis, XXVIII / 1-9. "So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman! Leave immediately for Paddan Aram! Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and find yourself a wife there, among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. May the sovereign God bless you! May he make you fruitful and give you a multitude of descendants! Then you will become a large nation. May he give you and your descendants the blessing he gave to Abraham so that you may possess the land God gave to Abraham, the land where you have been living as a temporary resident." So Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau. Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him off to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. As he blessed him, Isaac commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman." Jacob obeyed his father and mother and left for Paddan Aram. Then Esau realized that the Canaanite women were displeasing to his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, along with the wives he already had."

[7] Genesis, XXVI / 34; see also XVII / 46.

[8] Genesis, chapter XXIX.

[9] Genesis, XXXV / 23-26.

[10] In Torah, it is recorded that Joseph married to Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, a priest in the city of Heliopolis (Genesis, XLI / 45).

[11] Exodus, II / 16–22.

[12] According to Torah, Joseph was sold by his brothers to the foreigners and thus was brought as a slave to Egypt and, in course of time, gained a reputation in the society. At the time when he got married, there was no one from Israelites in Egypt. In the same way, Moses also ran away from Egypt where his people was living and took refuge in Midian and maried there to the daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian. and At the time when he married no one from Israelites was available around.

[13] Exodus, chapter XII.

[14] Exodus, chapter XIV.

[15] Exodus, XII / 38.

[16] Exodus, XIX / 5-6.

[17] al-Hujurat, 13.

[18] Despite this covenant that God made with Israelites, for now and then making a fuss and shuffling, they were punished, but not completely be left in the lurch. This was regarded as a particular tolerance, and this was because of the fact that they turned back from the error to the way of God, or God pomised, in their opinion, to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Deuteronomy, IX / 4 ff).

[19] In this point, it should be noted that in the Quran, the phrases "Children of Israel" and "Jewish" were applied to those following the teaching of Moses, and this terms defined the community following the message brought by Moses, rather than an ethnic community. These names were also used at the time when the Quran did not yet revealed and the Quran adopted the same names as used in the past. Because the Quran, when mentioning a certain group, preferred to use the description common and known to that environment, and, in this sense, did not opt to correct the name instead. However, the prophets connected with these religions were referred to, it noted that these definitions used by these people were not correct. Indeed, it was stated in the Quran, as was in the verse "Do you say that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes were Jewish or Christian? Say "Do you know better than God (al-Baqara, 140)," that the names such as "Jewish"," Children of Israel" and Nasara" used by the People of Book were not correct in essence, and the prophets notifying these religions were Muslims, and the essence of their message was Islam (al-Baqara, 131-133).

[20] Ruth, IV/ 13-22.

[21] Deuteronomy, XXIII / 2-6.

[22] According to the story of Lot as narrated in the Genesis, God perished the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, for the sins they committed to, and only Lot and his two daughters were saved from this disaster. Since they had no one around to get marry, Lot's daughters had Lot drunk as far as he would not know what to do and then lay, in turn, with their father. In this way, two daughters conceived from their father. According to Torah, while the elder bore a son and named him Moab, he has been the ancestor of Moabites; the younger too bore a son and name him Benammi. And it has been stated that he was the forefather of Ammonites (Genesis, XIX / 30-38). I think that the reason why the Israelites accused the ancestors of Moabites and Ammonites so heavily depends on an enmity between Israelites and these tribes which goes back to the time when they went out of Egypt. In Torah it is pointed out that after Israelites left Egypt, they were not met friendly and helped by these tribes settling on their way. The anger Israelites felt against these tribes due to the attitude they showed towards them during the immigration was reflected to the re-writing of the lost Torah and thus the authors of Torah took their revenge by saying that the forefathers of these two tribes were the products of an incest relationship. It was because of the same anger and hostility that Israelites inserted into Torah the expressions of not wishing their goodness and not adopting the adherents of these tribes in the community of God during the next ten generations (Deuteronomy, XXIII / 2-6).

[23] the Book of Ruth, chapters I-IV.

[24] II. Samuel, XII / 24. According to Torah, David married this woman in a highly different and controversial way. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very attractive. So David sent someone to inquire about the woman. He immediately desired her. David then committed adultery with her and she conceived. In an effort to cover up his sin, David summoned Uriah from the army (with whom he was on campaign) with the hope that Uriah would sleep with Bathsheba, and thus the child could be passed off as his. However, Uriah was unwilling to violate the ancient kingdom rule applying to warriors in active service. Rather than go home to his own bed, he preferred to remain with the palace troops. After repeated efforts to get Uriah to lie with Bathsheba, David gave the order to his general, Joab, that Uriah should be abandoned

during a heated battle, and left to the hands of the enemy. After Uriah was gone, David made the now widowed Bathsheba his wife whom he had impregnated before. She bore a son from this marriage. But, according to Torah this act by David offended God, and thus the child born out of wedlock died as a punishment. Later on, Bathsheba bore another child, Solomon, as a legal partner. (II Samuel, chapter XI. and XII). Soloman was crowned as a king through the influence of his mother, despite his elder brothers born out of David's other wives and naturally were the heirs of throne (II. Samuel, III / 2-5), particularly Adonijah who was regarded by most of the army and high officials as the future king (I Kings, Chapter I).

[25] In the book of Deuteronomy the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites are ordered to be killed, who live in the lands promised to Israelites, not to make agreemnet, not to establish relationship by intermarrying, otherwise the foreigner wives would spoil the Israeli belief (Deuteronomy, VII / 1-5). Despite this command of Torah, it seems that these tribes were not completely exterminated, were allowed to participate in the Jewish belief and even established relationship through such persons as David. In my view, this shows that this kind of exclusive statements were inserted into the text of re-written Torah which was lost after the Exile to Babylon, not to the fact that there was such a text at the beginning. In this course, Isrealites came to see the political and social decline as a punishment of religious corruption, thus showing the first signs of withdrawal into themselves. This understanding and exlusive approach emerging in the post-Exile Judaism was inserted into text during the re-writing period of the lost Torah.

[26] II Kings, XVII / 5-6; XVIII / 10-11; see also Johnson, 69-70.

[27] II Kings, XVII / 24; see also Johnson, 70.

[28] II Kings, XXIV / 1; also see Johnson, 77-78.

[29] II Kings Capters XXIV and XXV, see also Johnson, 77-78; Ali Osman Kurt, *Erken Dönem Yahudi Tarihi (Yahudiliğin Miman Ezra)*, İstanbul 2007, 32.

[30] Jeremiah, XXXII / 27.

[31] Ezra, X / 10-11; see also Kurt, 131-132.

[32] After overthrowing the Israaeli state, Assyrians expelled most people of the region to Assyria, bringing people, in their place, from Babylon, Cuth, Ivvah, Hamath and Sepharvaim to settle there. After a while, these newly settled people embraced Judaism (II Kings, XVII / 24-41; see also Johnson, 70). But, the tribe of Judah who, after the exile of Babylon, returned to Jarusalem and around did not see these Jews equal to themselves, and in order to separate themselves from them, they began to used the name "Âm ha Yahuda" (the people of Judah) (Baki Adam, "Yahudiliğin Hıristiyanlığa ve İslam'a Bakışı", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (hereafter A.Ü.İ.F.D.), Ankara 1997, XXXVII / 335; see also Johnson, 70-71.

[33] Ezra, IV / 1-3.

[34] John, XVIII / 28-32.

[35] Matthew, IX / 10-13; Mark, II / 16-17; Luke, XV / 1-2.

[36] Rabbi Wayne Dosick, **Living Judaism** The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition and Practice, USA 2007, 65-66; Modern Judaism An Oxford Guide, Edited by Nicholas De Lange and Miri Freud-Kandel, USA 2005, 344; Adam, *A.Ü.İ.F.D.,* XXXVII/ 340.

[37] De Lange, 216; Adam, *A.Ü.İ.F.D.*, XXXVII / 341.

[38] Muhammed Hamidullah, *İslam Peygamberi (Hayatı ve Faaliyeti)*, trans. Salih Tuğ, 4th edition, İstanbul 1980, I/ 601, 629; also see Ömer Faruk Harman, "Tefsir Geleneğinde Yahudilere Bakış", Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları IV Müslümanlar ve Diğer Din Mensupları - Müslümanların Diğer Din Mensuplarıyla İlişkilerinde Temel Yaklaşımlar, Ankara 2004, 120; Şinasi Gündüz, "Kur'an Vahyi ve Diğerleri: Zincirin Son Halkası Olarak İlk Buluşma", *İslamiyât*, Ankara 2004 (January-March) Vol. 7, no: 1, 16-17.

[39] De Lange, 17.

[40] Http://www.jcjcr.org/kyn_article_view.php?aid=20 (12.09.2008); Ahmet Almaz-Pelin Batu, , İstanbul 2007, 249.