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Honourable Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me and a pleasure to be in Ankara and to present the paper about Judaism and Secularization. If I am here it is thanks to prof. Abdurrahman Kucuk and prof. Mehmet Aydin and all the staff of IAHR. I would like to thank them very warmly. The relationship between Prof. Kucuk and Prof. Aydin is not a relation of academic persons and scientific person but it is long story of friendship. I am really lucky to have them like friends and colleagues and I thank them for their invitation. Since beginning of this meeting, Prof. Abdurrahman Kucuk raised the terminology and the words we use to designate and to describe phenomenon in this society, in our society. He spoke about United Nation resolution and Armenian genocide. People even politicians may take bad and sometimes silly resolutions. It is not my proposal to discuss here. But it is my proposal to point out what prof. Kucuk spoke about. How we choose our words? A Genocide is not Shoah, Shoah is not war, war is not killing, killing is not war and so and so. We should not mix words, we should not use words to designate whatever we want without being sure about the definition we give to every word. The problem is that when we accept to use a wrong word to designate or to describe a phenomenon just because we want to show how it is important for us we forget that the danger is then that we can be the victims of this kind of technique. Because this is popular technique and journalistic technique from of the media and very quickly it becomes the technique of our enemies. So every man every person has to be very careful about the words he choose to designate things. We here as research and academic persons we should be more careful about the words and I thank him about raising this problem in a very large scale not only about our subject today which is secularization.

Considering my paper when I began to write it I felt reflection about this specific point. My presentation will be in three parts. The definition, not necessarily good one but it is mine, and the definition of the terms I will use. So we can at least understand what I am speaking about. We have not yet general and concensual definition of secularization. Second part I will speak about the rites transferred within religions at the sphere of lay person. And in the second part I will just say a few words about religious authorities and how they perceive this kind of transfer of religious rites. This morning somebody said that secularization is a concept coming from the west. I am not
sure it is exact and I do not think so. I will try to demonstrate it through some specific examples from the case of Judaism. My definition for this paper to expression of secularization is this: how religious phenomenon and rites are transferred? They receive a new meaning in this new sphere and vice versa. How secular practices are transformed into religious practices at least apparently religious practices. And how they come back to the religious system and are perceived as a religious rite even though in the beginning in the origin they were not religious rites. So since it is a very huge topic, I will try to limit my paper on 19th, 20th, 21st centuries. Because for the history of Judaism 19th century and mainly emancipation of Jews in Europe was very important chapter in their history. Permit me to make a little remark. I will use the word of Judaism. But we have to remember always there is no one Judaism and what is right for one movement or one trend of the Judaism is not necessarily right to say about another one. There is no one Judaism.

There is Orthodox Judaism, the Reform Judaism, the Conservative Judaism, the Liberal Judaism and some else more that I can not list them. So we can not speak about the Judaism. I do not think we can speak Islam and Christianity either. Because we have trends, movements and every movement has his own perception of the things. So in my paper I try to take common examples for all the trends. But it does not mean that Judaism is like that. So we should use the term Judaism in plural and not in singular. In the nineteenth century secularization is link to emancipation of Jews in Europe. As a phenomenon did not follow the same rhythm in different European countries. Actually distinction must be made between evolution of this process in Europe and that of Turkey and Balkan countries. Because emancipation of Jews occurred in those countries but not in the Balkan and Turkey. The result is that the secularization has other aspects and other phenomenon. This emancipation influenced every community and we have to analyze every community in itself because the phenomenon did not happen in the same time everywhere for all Europe, Balkan and Turkey. Let us separate these two parts. Since the emancipation did not occur in the Balkan and in Turkey what happened Jewish communities living in these countries go on conserving their religious courts and personal status what you call in Jewish law was determined by the religious authorities Jewish one, Muslim one etc. It is very important point this happened in the Balkan and in Turkey especially because Turkey in this regard has special history for Judaism. On the other hand, in Europe where process of emancipation of Jews began and it has been affected by the French Revolution. There was separation of this kind of courts from the other courts in Judaism. Since Jewish people in European countries under the affect of emancipation could not have any more the power to make any decision about personal status. It was the privilege of country courts not anymore religious courts. The religious courts go on dealing with other subjects except personal status. It is very important because it will influence and we will see it in my examples it will influence the way that Jewish people deal with civil marriage, religious marriage whatever they are. The other point is the general behaviours of the Jews in these countries. Since I do not have lot of time to describe in theoritical way this phenomenon. I would like to give some examples because I would have like here example for my colleagues for the other religions. The first example is concerning the religious festivals. I defined secularization by transferring rites from the religious spheres to not religious sphere and vice versa. The first example is the festivals and here two of them. The feast of Rosh Ha-Shanah which is Jewish new
year. It is a feast which lasts two days and with prayer in the synagogue and then some family rites at home. It is quite defined but since few decades even more than that. Rosh ha-Shanah becomes of course it is still new year is has no any significance for the lay man not for the Orthodox. They transferred it it is a kind of 1st January like the civil new year. They offer gift one another they meet for a meal and it is the Rosh ha-Shanah, the new year. Another example is Hanukah which is the feast of light. Rites is to light candils during this feast. Since this feast occurs few weeks before Christmas “new rite” is to give children not adults lot of gifts on the occasion of the festival like the Christians do for the Christmas. These two examples we have very simple behaviour, rite but it became a rite because from the sociological point of view you have a transfer of a behaviour from secular area to a religious one. Because it happens only on Hanukan and on Rosh ha-Shanah. It could happen in July why not. But this process of secularization happens exactly during these feasts but in a non-religious way. The other problem is Kibutz. In Kibbutzim in the feast of Pesach rite is read the Haggadah of Pesach. It is a little book. It is read few hours in family. Traditional one it is very known every museum. Jewish section has a book like this. It is a religious rite. The Kibbutzim which were created by the first pioneer and socialistic ideology. They were not practicant. They do not practise Judaism. They do not believe God. Religion was not important for them. But Passover as a feast, national feast was important. So what they did? They make meal for the member of the Kibutz and they create a new book for Pesach. It has nothing strictly to do with the original one. What you have in this book: how state of Israel has been created? How war has been existed? This war where Jewish people had an important role. They tell about this. You have a kind of little book of history with songs of course. But it has nothing to do with Passover, idea of Passover, the symbolism of Passover in the religious way. But it occurred during the Passover time and in the eve of the Passover and with a book like the religious tradition. So you have transfer from the religious to non-religious and backward to the religious. Because this people leave the tradition and they have their own tradition. But they created a new tradition which they call not religious. But it occurs when a religious feast happens. It is really amazing how works. The last example I would like to give is the question of personal status. It did not develop it enough. In the countries where the seperation between religion and state people can marry in a civil marriage. So, no problem for Muslim who wants to many with Christian, or Christian marries with Jews etc. But one a person lives in a state where there is a seperation between religion and the state, there is a problem for this kind of people and another kind of people the ones that are not religious, they do not believe in nothing and they say I do not want to go priest. I want to do something else. They can not insist in that kind of country. I want to give example from the state of Israel. Some Jewish people in Israel, not religious and they do not want to have any symbol of religious. They decided by themselves to creat something new without law, without any decision, political and religious decision. They decided since there is no civil marriage they will go to the lawyer and they will sign a kind of contract between them and say you are my husband and I am your husband. It has not any legal significance but it permits them to have marriage without religion. And this is kind of secularization of the rite of marriage and escaping from it. I will conclude on three points. The transfer of the rites are going one way and back one way. We have to think about it. What is the movement of the rites in this process of
secularization. The second point is that it is not only question of religion in my view. I think it is question of identity. The identity is the Muslim, Christian person. I think it is common to all religions. Who says I am Christian, I am a Muslim, I am a Jewish. I do not believe in God. I do not want, I do not believe in the Qur’an, I do not believe in the Bible. But I am this one. I want this link. I want it without religion. It is difficult and complicated. So it is not only in my view question of religion but it is also the question of identity in relationship with the religion. The third question is the question of authorities. I did not speak about them. How the religious authorities perceive them? Sometimes they agree they accept this kind of change but sometimes they reject them. But we have to discuss about it. And in the last point, religion is organized usually by the religious authorities. With the new process of secularization, it is not the religious authority who organized the religion but laymen and lay women. It is very amazing and very uncomfortable for a specialist of religion. How to deal with non-authoritical person who makes religion.

Thank you for your attention!