



حبر أبيض  
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**Muhammad Al-Saed**

# The Ottomans and Zionism One-sided love!

The collapse of Granada in 1492 AD was horrific and painful for the Arab sentiment, and it remains present in the memory until now. Because most of the Arab world countries at that time was under Ottoman occupation, everyone expected that the Ottoman Sultan would get angry and declare a holy war against the Spaniards and their allies, but those were just some dreams that went away with the winds of the Mediterranean.

All of Andalusia collapsed in massacres committed by the butchers of Europe against Muslims, then forced migrations and mass flight of Andalusian Arabs began, in addition to the Jews who lived next to the Arabs who ruled for more than five centuries.

The Andalusian Arabs did not find a state that shared their faith and was able to rescue them except the Ottoman Empire, so they sent correspondences and asked for urgent help, but Astana's attitude was shameful and will not be forgotten by history, as it preferred its interests and its relationship with Europe over the Arabs. The Ottoman Empire received the Jews instead of the Andalusian Arabs. From that point, a story of political and economic love from one-side began. The Ottomans loved the Jews and embraced their interests and their dream, which would later be achieved by building their state in historic Palestine with the help of Sultan Abdul Hamid.

Contrary to what the Arabs and many other nationalities, such as the Armenians and the Kurds, were experiencing under the Ottoman occupation of persecution and the arrogance of the Turkish race, the Jews received a special and unique treatment that made them reach high positions in the Ottoman Empire.

The Jews were not strangers to the Ottoman authority, as the Zionists from the Donma Jews "Dönme" lived as an authentic part of the population component of the Sultanate in central Anatolia, but in coordination with the Zionist project, the doors and hearts of the sultans were opened to the Jews of Europe who fled because of the Crusades that affected the Jews as well. For example, Mehmed II sent to the Jews of Europe and Spain asking them to come to Constantinople, which he annexed to his lands in order to strengthen their role.

Sultan Mehmed II assured the Jewish immigrants and residents with a royal decree allowing them freedom of religion and belief, promising them to restore old Jewish synagogues, and authorizing them to convert homes into temples. This was a special treatment that was not applied to the rest of the races that lived under the rule of the Sultanate.

Whoever believes that this was the policy of Mehmed II is mistaken, because this was an inherited Ottoman policy until it reached Sultan Abdul Hamid, who believed in the Zionist movement and sympathized with it. He welcomed its leader Herzl and even awarded him the Medjidie Medal as an expression of his gratitude for the relationship between the Sultanate and the Zionist movement. That relationship later gave the okay to the Zionist movement to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Sultan Suleiman I, Selim II, Murad II and Mehmed III issued similar decrees that reinforced the policy favoring the Jews. The Ottoman House of Ifta was also instructed to issue fatwas in support of these decrees to strengthen them and to take a religious cover for the sultan's actions.

When Egypt was occupied by Sultan Selim I, the Jews were allowed to move to Palestinian cities to become a bridge in Palestine. The Jew Joseph Hamon was also assigned a prestigious position inside the palace, which was the position of the chief physician. Jews were also allowed to occupy positions in the functions of currency minting, money exchange and some financial positions.

There is no doubt that the relationship between the Jews and the Ottoman Sultanate lived its brightest days during the rule of the later sultans, as they were integrated into sensitive jobs, whether civil or military. Sultan Selim III comes at the top of the list of believers in integrating the Jews into the Ottoman society when he sent groups of Istanbul Jews to the army to work in the Ottoman navy and with this decision the Jews had a role in the army of the Ottoman Empire for the first time.

The Ottomans did not object to the increase in the number of Jews within the lands of the Sultanate, but rather they received more Jewish migrations, the most important of which was the migration of Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula to the Ottoman Empire. With this steady increase, an institution representing the Jewish community at the Sublime Porte was formed, and Rabbi Saltel was appointed as its first leader. It was a complete official declaration of the rights of the Jews and an exceptional treatment that other minorities did not enjoy.

Many of the Ottoman sultans used to consider the Jews as a civilizational bridge with Europe. Despite the apparent enmity between the Ottomans and the Europeans, the sultans relied on the Jews to solve these problems, as happened between Herzl and Sultan Abdul Hamid when he helped the Turks solve their problem with the Armenians and European creditors.