Social Conditions of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in Jerusalem

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ABSTRACT
This study focus on the social status of Armenians in Jerusalem, to reveal the social relations between Armenians and Muslims in the era of Ottoman Empire. This study also proved that the Armenians were and still one of the most important Christian denominations in Jerusalem which are mainly represented its social development, their role also appeared in establishing Armenians state in modern era.

Key words: Jerusalem, Turks, Armenians, Christians, Alqiama church

INTRODUCTION
No one can doubt that Jerusalem is the city that defined the great massage of peace of spiritual existence among the followers of different religions such as Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The history will never allow us to forget what the followers of Judaism had to face during the era of Jewish Zionism. Jews have suffered a lot for their religious status and for political purposes. The followers of Christianity especially Arabs have staked by the religious status by European countries interventions, specifically France, after its ability to conclude a treaty with Ottoman Empire in 1153 BC /1740 AD. That treaty had concrete effects on the relations of Armenians as one of the Christian communities in Jerusalem and social relations between them and the Muslims, therefore, this study of the social conditions of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in Jerusalem is a psychological study discussing the following aspects:

1- Armenian presence in Jerusalem in terms of the various sectors and their respective divisions.
2- The essence of the social conditions of Armenians in line with the regional conflicts.
3- Armenian relations with both the Ottoman Empire and the Muslims.

The Importance of the study
This study dives in the depth of the old Armenians – Muslim relations in one hand and in their relation with the Ottoman Empire in another hand.

The study is based on material to some documents, sources and historical references of some historians. The documents are analytical investigated and have been adopting the documented logical conclusion.

Social conditions of Armenians in Ottoman Empire era in Jerusalem
Jerusalem is known by the existence of multiple Christian denominations and each denomination has its monasteries and churches from all over the world, these communities were able to live side by side in spite of the multiple cultures and civilizations, that peace was so evident to the world especially after the Roman emperor Constantine Issued Milan edict in 310 AD, A decree which gave religious freedom in the empire of Roma.
Christian pilgrims began to flock to Jerusalem; some of them settled and established churches and monasteries, whether of Armenians, Greece, Copts, and others.

Islamic governor in all ages Rashid, Abbasi, and Omawi witnessed the Christians participation on building Jerusalem history and in return Christians guaranteed their religious freedom, they participated in building the society of Jerusalem having good treatment till the western movements called to free Jerusalem from Muslims.

So Christians faced a lot of problems in east during the Crusades.

And the first crusade was in 1096 AD to free Jerusalem from Muslims, since that time the Armenian's social and political role started to appear on helping crusader especially those who lived in Qalqelia and Qabadonia, they give all the places that were in and started to work as guiders to Jerusalem.

Some studies proved that during the 9th century the Armenians supported the Orthodox. Also some of Armenian came later as Pilgrims and immigrants, and stayed in south western part gathering around Deer Mar Ya’qoob.

Armenian divided into Orthodox and Catholic in the 16th and 17th centuries after the France Catholic pope visited religious places in Jerusalem. The Armenians become the third party in Jerusalem after Romans and Westerns, competing on having their religious places, because of the good relationship with the Westerns and their support too.

Armenian historian arkaskanjian said that Armenians were in a competition with other parties such as Roman and Western to get their spiritual places which increased the conflict there at that time.

The fact that Armenians were working in trade and agriculture made the Armenian society a rich one and helped a lot in controlling the social situation of Christians since the economic situation is a crucial factor. As a result of their richness they were able to build strong economic relationships with Jewish due to their wide economical activities such as selling and buying which gave them the power to control other parties.

As examples of the biggest Armenians families AL-ARMANI and ALSAMRA.

Armenians benefitted of the good treatment that they got of Muslims in Ayobyan and Mamloukyan ages, especially after getting their rights from Salah Aldine alayouby who gave to Muslims and local that had been taken by Crusades.

Salah Aldine Al-ayobi gave Christians what he gave to Muslims. They live their life working producing and having the freedom of religion.

After the coming of the sultan Saleem the first to Jerusalem 1516BC /922AD Armenians got good treatment and mercy of sultan Saleem since they were considered as a part of Jerusalem society they helped in maintain safety and organization there.

They had good relations with Muslims, they were paying taxes exactly as Muslims. Although Armenian lived in Jerusalem and had a good role in building the society but they still dream about having their own country.
Armenian situation in Ottoman Empire
Armenian were in the third place after Orthodox and Latin in Jerusalem but they were considered as followers of Orthodox and Monofezit so they tried to preserve their place by creating different religious houses and churches.

And they had got their rights in churches there especially AL-Qiama church and Setna- Mariam church as well as many Daers such as Daer Yaqoob, Daer Zytoona ,Habs –Al Maseeh church and Mario hana church they were making their rituals and worshiping Celebrations their occasions in peace and freedom ,this was the main reason of the witnessed increase in the number of Armenian in Jerusalem

Armenians were controlling the most important places in Jerusalem comparing to Muslims and Christians. And they had Ibrahim Basha the son of Mohammed Ali Basha next to their side. He gave them rights in AL Qiama church as they became one of the basic part of the Jerusalem society.

In 1840 Armenian lived a normal stable life in Jerusalem until the era started to suffer from the fast changes of Muslims leaders.

The Muslim leader Mohammed Basha Abu Maraq who started leading in yafa, Gaza, Ramla, AL led and Jerusalem imposing taxes, and cutting the road of pilgrims who come from Europe and Russia.

Armenians complained about this treatment which affected their economic situation since that they were depending on trade with pilgrims.

Armenians were known of their exquisite work. So their products were wanted and most pilgrims especially those who belong to the same vase from Anodal, Russia and Balkans.

The relationship between the Armenians and their Muslim neighbors was full of respect and mutual intimacy and such a relation affected the relation between Jerusalem leaders and the head master in Istanbul

Armenians dreamt of having their own country believing that their economic situation will pave the path for that so they were part of conflicts about some religious rights in AL- Qiama church.

Armenians asked for more rights in AL Qiama and Al jothmania church, the Ottomans replay came negative.

AL Qiama church had burned in 1808 and Armenians were accused of burning it. Armenians hurried to ask Sultan Mohammed II to allow them to rebuild what was burned but they were not alone in their request as Romans fernge had did but the Sultan orders allowed Romans to rebuild it because they are the oldest party and because they own visiting places in AL Qiama, Bait lahem and Edira. and the order also made all Christian parties under the government of the Batrereak of Rome.

As a reaction of not getting the right of building the church locals had attacked workers and builders who were working at church and when the Ottoman government had been informed of that an order had done to give Romans the right of rebuilding the church.
After that Armenian had asked for rights of getting religious rights in the church which led Ottoman government to end the conflict.

Armenians were obliged to visit the church in specific times.

Othman government refused the Armenian request to get the keys of the church.

The relationship between Armenians and other parties were affected after the conflict and some parties were making noise while the other party was doing prayers

After the Egyptians governor came to Jerusalem the situation was unstable, locals of Jerusalem and Armenians were very cheer greeting Ibrahim Basha as a leader. Armenians knew that the period that he'll lead will be better and will give them more immunity especially that he had good relations with Europeans.

Some studies mentioned that Armenians celebrated happily with Jewish because of Ibrahim Basha coming. But Muslims were afraid even they were greeting, because they had some bad feelings toward Egyptians control

Ibrahim Basha started as a governor of Jerusalem and most of the immunities he gave were to Christians

He canceled the price that paid by Russian instead of visiting AL Qyama church and didn't allow to get it in future. Armenians were helped because of that thing so they were allowed to visit the church at any time. However, he imposed the taxes on Muslims in addition to that they didn't get any immunities in his time.

That kind of treatment created a conflict between Muslims and Christian who were neighbors and brothers for long time.

Muslims refused those developments which lead to peasant’s revaluations 835-1839 AD, but they were faced by Ibrahim –Basha, as Muslim families replaced by Christians and Armenians and they get authority and effectiveness. These things last till the end of Egyptian rule. After that revaluation the ammunition which Ibrahim Bash gave to Christians stopped and the conflict was solved by 1890 AD/1250BC.

After that Armenians were supported by the European countries that adopted the Armenian propaganda of making national Armenian country exploiting the weakness of the Ottoman country since there were lots of European works, the national parties got increased and Christians started to call for their independence because of Europeans ideas

**SUMMARY**

This research includes the following points:

1. Armenians played main role in building the society of Jerusalem, also American families controlled the Economic status in the city
2. The social relationships between Armenians and their Jewish and Muslim neighbors were based on respect and intimacy.
3. The Armenians have received many religious, social, and economic privileges which were granted by Ibrahim Basha during his Rule of the city.
4. The Ottoman Empire considered the Armenian a part of the community.
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