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M. A. Al Rousan
Associate Professor, Al-Balqa Applied University
As-Salt, Jordan
ORCID: 0000-0002-6210-3553
E-mail: dr.mrousan@bau.edu.jo

T. M. Al Azzam
Associate Professor, Al-Balqa Applied University
As-Salt, Jordan
ORCID: 0000-0002-8591-7437
E-mail: ta.1973@bau.edu.jo

L. M. Rababah
Associate Professor, Jadara University
Irbid, Jordan
ORCID: 0000-0002-3871-3853
E-mail: rababah80@gmail.com

B. Bani-Khair
Associate Professor, The Hashemite University
Zarqa, Jordan
ORCID: 0000-0002-0738-7696
E-mail: bakribakr@yahoo.com

B. M. Al-Hawamdeh
Associate Professor, University of Jerash
Jerash, Jordan
ORCID: 0000-0003-1523-0661
E-mail: b.hawamdeh@jpu.edu.jo

N. A. Abu Zetun
Associate Professor, Hussein University
Amman, Jordan
ORCID: 0009-0001-2621-8687
E-mail: Nasser.A.zaytoon@ahu.edu.jo

N. A. Alatoom
Associate Professor, Al-Balqa Applied University
As-Salt, Jordan
E-mail: nabeel7171@bau.edu.jo

M. A. Rababah
Associate Professor, Jadara Research Center
Irbid, Jordan
ORCID: 0000-0002-0930-4030
E-mail: mrababah@bau.edu.jo

М. А. Аль-Русан
доцент, Прикладной университет Аль-Балка
Ас-Салт, Иордания
ORCID: 0000-0002-6210-3553
E-mail: dr.mrousan@bau.edu.jo

Т. М. Аль-Аззам
доцент, Прикладной университет Аль-Балка
Ас-Салт, Иордания
ORCID: 0000-0002-8591-7437
E-mail: ta.1973@bau.edu.jo

Л. М. Рабаба
доцент, Университет Джадара
Ирбид, Иордания
ORCID: 0000-0002-3871-3853
E-mail: rababah80@gmail.com

Б. Бани-Хаир
доцент, Хашимитский университет
Эз-Зарка, Иордания
ORCID: 0000-0002-0738-7696
E-mail: bakribakr@yahoo.com

Б. М. Аль-Хавамде
доцент, Университет Джераша
Джераш, Иордания
ORCID: 0000-0003-1523-0661
E-mail: b.hawamdeh@jpu.edu.jo

Н. А. Абу Зетун
доцент, Университет Хусейна
Амман, Иордания
ORCID: 0009-0001-2621-8687
E-mail: Nasser.A.zaytoon@ahu.edu.jo

Н. А. Алатум
доцент, Прикладной университет Аль-Балка
Ас-Салт, Иордания
E-mail: nabeel7171@bau.edu.jo

М. А. Рабаба
доцент, Университет Джадара
Ирбид, Иордания
ORCID: 0000-0002-0930-4030
E-mail: mrababah@bau.edu.jo

Religious Minorities in Iran: The Jews as a Model

ABSTRACT. After achieving victory, the Iranian Islamic Revolution made a commitment to protecting the rights of religious minorities, including the Jewish and Christian communities. These minorities are granted equal cultural, social, and political freedoms as other Iranian citizens, as stated in the constitution of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. However, there is limited research that specifically examines these religious minorities within the context of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the historical role of the Jewish minority in Iran during the modern era under the Iranian Islamic Revolution. It seeks to understand the relationship between the Jewish minority and the Iranian Islamic Revolution, as well as their participation, development, and engagement with Iranian state institutions. Using a historical and descriptive-analytical approach, this study provides context by gathering and analyzing existing literature and establishing the constitutional position of these minorities within historical frameworks. Additionally, it explores the stance of the Iranian constitution toward these religious minorities. The study's findings indicate that despite external influences that have affected this relationship, the Jewish minority generally coexists harmoniously with Iranian society. By shedding light on the role of religious minorities during the era of the Iranian Revolution and examining how the revolution addressed their concerns, this study offers insights into how the Iranian Islamic Revolution expressed its perspectives on these minorities through legal and constitutional frameworks.

KEYWORDS: Iranian Islamic Revolution, religious minorities, Jewish minority, religious freedom and security, social and political freedoms

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Религиозные меньшинства в Иране: на примере евреев

АННОТАЦИЯ. После победы Исламской революции в Иране была принята обязанность защищать права религиозных меньшинств, включая еврейскую и христианскую общины. Этим меньшинствам были предоставлены равные культурные, социальные и политические свободы с другими гражданами Ирана, как указано в Конституции. Однако существует ограниченное количество работ, специально посвященных изучению этих религиозных меньшинств в контексте Исламской революции в Иране. Поэтому данное исследование направлено на восполнение этого пробела, исследуя историческую роль еврейского меньшинства в Иране в современную эпоху, во время Исламской революции. В статье анализируются отношения между еврейским меньшинством и Иранской исламской революцией, а также их участие, развитие и взаимодействие с иранскими государственными институтами. Используя исторический и описательно-аналитический подходы, данное исследование предоставляет контекст, собирая и анализируя существующую литературу и определяя конституционное положение этих меньшинств в исторических рамках. Кроме того, оно раскрывает позицию Конституции Ирана в отношении этих религиозных меньшинств. Результаты исследования показывают, что, несмотря на внешнее влияние, оказываемое на эти отношения, еврейское меньшинство в целом гармонично сосуществует с иранским обществом. Раскрывая роль религиозных меньшинств в эпоху Исламской революции и исследуя, как она решала их проблемы, данная работа позволяет составить представление о том, как Исламская революция в Иране выражала свои взгляды на эти меньшинства в правовых и конституционных рамках.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: Исламская революция в Иране, религиозные меньшинства, еврейское меньшинство, религиозная свобода и безопасность, социальные и политические свободы

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INTRODUCTION

Iranian Islamic Revolution (IIR) worldview states that no nation today is made up of people who only identify as members of one nationality, ethnic group, language, or religion. Most countries have a majority with a shared history, civilization, culture, and language, along with smaller minorities that have their own distinct national and religious characteristics. The recognition and protection of the rights of these minorities, without segregating them, is an important concern for human rights organizations (Abu Melhim et al. 2023; Aljedayah et al. 2024).

After the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the preservation of religious freedom and the security of minorities, including the Jewish, Christian (Armenians and Assyrians), and Zoroastrian communities, became a significant focus. These minority groups enjoy the same cultural, social, and political freedoms as all individuals and classes in the Iranian population, as guaranteed by the Iranian Constitution. The rights of these minorities are specifically addressed in Article 13 of the current Iranian constitution, which recognizes Iranian Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians as the officially recognized religious minorities. They are free to practice their religious ceremonies within the boundaries of the law and can follow regulations regarding personal status and religious teachings (Al Etoum et al. 2024; Alhawamdeh et al. 2023; Melhim et al. 2023).

To ensure the protection of these minorities, the Iranian constitution mandates the inclusion of representatives from religious minorities. Article 64 specifies that minorities have elected representatives, with Zoroastrians and Jews each having one representative. These representatives take the constitutional oath, mentioning their respective holy books, as stated in Article 67 of the Constitution. Recently, the Islamic Consultative Assembly has decided that the ransom for minorities should be the same as that for Muslims. Furthermore, the Constitution of the IIR emphasizes that all Iranian people, regardless of nationality or tribe, enjoy equal rights, and factors such as color, race, or language are not considered grounds for discrimination.

The research employed a historical and descriptive-analytical approach to examine the situation of minorities, with a specific focus on the Jewish minority, in Iran's social and legal contexts (El Rabbaie et al. 2019; Golovnev 2024). Existing literature on the topic was collected and analyzed to understand the evolution and challenges faced by this minority during the Iranian Islamic Revolution. The study aimed to provide insights into how the revolution addressed these challenges at both individual and collective levels.

To establish the legal and constitutional position of these minorities, the research relied on historical and Persian-language books to explore the historical trajectory of the Jewish minority and the various stages they went through. The significant challenges they encountered were also analyzed. Additionally,

the study examined the stance of the Iranian constitution towards these minorities and how their legal and constitutional positions were formulated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study identified several shared cultural features that distinguish the Iranian and Jewish communities.

1. Fusion of nationalism with religion and sect: The historical connection between Iran and Jewish Israelis reflects this fusion. Nationalist and religious beliefs, combined with unique geographical conditions, contribute to this association. In the Iranian context, the Shiite sect serves as a model that expresses the alliance between nationalism and religion. Similarly, the Jewish character reflects the interdependence and harmony between Israeli identity and the Jewish religion through Zionism. These characteristics are exemplified by the Iranian Islamic Republic system and the State of Israel, which combine both aspects.

2. Orientation to the past and future: Both the Iranian and Jewish characters exhibit a deep connection to the past while envisioning the future. The Iranian character is connected to the coming of the long-awaited Mahdi and the creation of an international Islamic state, while the Jewish character is linked to the hope of returning to the Promised Land. Both personas see the future as an extension of the past, and they work to set the stage for their own objectives.

3. Civilizational renewal: The Jewish and Iranian individuals show a dedication to the evolutionary method of civilizational renewal. They actively devise means and strategies to accomplish their goals because they see themselves as the center of society. Both personas pursued a permanent revolution as their new governments took shape, with the goal of bringing humanity closer to perfection from their own points of view.

4. Intellectual views supporting essential interests: The Jewish and Iranian characters both anticipate the coming of a "Savior" who will bestow upon them special abilities that no one else will possess at the end of time. Each organization is divinely mandated, according to this view, to carry out a certain function in guiding the world and advancing spiritual perfection. It turns into a declaration of their inalienable claim to global dominance. But the historical experiences these identities have had have reinforced their divine selection and self-exclusivity, making them feel even more alone and alienated.

It is essential to examine the interplay between the Jewish and Iranian personalities in light of their common experiences in order to comprehend the tactics and policies that underpin the political systems of each nation. It also clarifies how they interact with other nations in the area and with each other (Hatamleh et al. 2023; Hatamleh 2024; Issa 2023a). Despite their seeming political antagonism, Iran and Israel's historical history has greatly influenced their current dynamics. Their reconciliation depends heavily on their

recollections of the Babylonian captivity. The Jews were set free from captivity by Emperor Cyrus the First of Persia, who also gave them full citizenship rights and allowed them to relocate in western Iran. Iranians saw the Jews as valuable allies since they were instrumental in creating and maintaining the old Achaemenid civilization. The two countries have maintained their historical ties over the millennia, and they have interacted in the present era.

There were political, military, economic, and cultural exchanges between Iran and Israel throughout the Pahlavi dynasty, especially under Mohammad Reza Shah. This exchange persisted throughout the Islamic Republic, aiding the government in overcoming financial and military obstacles in the conflict between Iran and Iraq (Issa 2023b; Kisser, Perevalova 2024). Israel supplied Iran with raw resources, weaponry, replacement parts, and strategic support. In the context of the Greater Middle East initiative, it is imperative to comprehend the reality of the relationship between Iranian and Jewish actors. In an effort to increase their power at the expense of the Sunni environment, both parties share a dislike of Sunni Islam and Arabs. They also share prophecies that seek to undermine Islamic sanctities in Mecca and Medina. Despite their apparent positions, there may be covert cooperation between Iran and Israel, and future events may reveal more about their true interactions at the ideological and national levels.

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN IRAN

In Iran, religious minorities are classified into three groups: Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. This discussion specifically focuses on the Jewish minority.

THE JEWS

The Jewish community is one of the oldest minorities in Iranian history, maintaining a close connection with Persian civilization throughout the centuries, even after the rise of Islam. Despite the fluctuations in Iran's history, the daily lives of Jews have continued alongside their fellow citizens. Jewish institutions were established to manage religious and cultural affairs and provide education on Judaism.

The presence of Jews in Iran can be traced back to ancient times, and like other societies, they developed various institutions to manage their religious and cultural affairs and educate their community. Historical records indicate that Emperor Cyrus, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, liberated the Israelites from Babylonian captivity and settled them in western Iran. The Jews played a significant role in building Persian civilization and engaged in trade and primary industries, which led to their prosperity.

Persian historians highlight that Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Palestine and even supported the construction of a temple in Jerusalem. Persian

rulers continued Cyrus's tolerant policies towards Jews in the Persian Empire. Persian sources emphasize a period of prosperity for Jews, particularly in the regions of Mesopotamia and Persia. Jews achieved economic success and held significant positions, including within the Persian court.

Even with the emergence and spread of Islam in the East, including Iran, the Jewish community maintained stability and achieved success. For instance, during the Ilkhanid era, Saad Al-Dawla, a Jewish figure, served as a minister. It is noteworthy that from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, many Iranian Jews converted to Islam for social and economic reasons. The history of the Jewish minority in Iran is characterized by their integration into Iranian society, their contributions to Persian civilization, and the tolerance they have experienced during different periods.

According to Iranian claims, the Jewish community in Iran experienced a phenomenon of adopting the Baha'i faith in the mid-nineteenth century. The conversion of many Jews to the Baha'i faith was seen as a significant factor in their integration into Iranian society. As a result, many Jews chose to conceal their religious identity by changing their names, converting to Islam, or severing ties with the Jewish community, aiming to improve their social and economic circumstances (Shariati 2016).

However, it is important to note that the Iranian regime does not recognize the Baha'i faith as a legitimate religion. They consider it a political party called Baha Al-Din, which opposes the Islamic regime and engages in activities against Islam and Shiites. As a result, the regime does not acknowledge the Baha'is and views them as a party that spies for Israel and aims to create chaos against Islam and Shiite doctrine. Ayatollah Khomeini expressed this perspective, considering the Baha'is a colonial party working for countries like Russia, Britain, America, and Israel (Shariati 2001).

In the early twentieth century, the liberal movement in Iran gained strength, bringing about transformations in the situation of Jews. The cultural status of Jews improved, and they engaged in diverse economic activities. Many Jews held positions in the army, government agencies, and significant economic roles within the state. During the reign of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, the Iranian economy thrived due to the discovery of oil, and Jews played an essential role in economic life. They were involved in sectors such as tourism, education at universities, and various medical professions (Rushdbeigi 1989).

Regarding the recent relations between Iran and Jews, Iran was among the first Islamic countries to recognize Israel in 1950, following Turkey. Iran and Israel, both US allies, cooperated to counter Arab nationalists supported by the Soviet Union. From 1941 to 1979, there was cooperation between Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Israel, evidenced by economic, cultural, and media agreements. Israeli intelligence service (Mossad) and the Iranian intelligence agency, Savak, also collaborated. Iran was the first country to establish active Zionist organizations, which later played a pivotal role in the Zionist

movement in the region. Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi played a role in improving Jewish charitable institutions, including Dr. Sapir Hospital, which provided health services to Iranians for 60 years and served as a bridge between the Jewish community and the Iranian people (Abbas 1984; Sternfeld 2014).

Throughout history, the Jewish community in Iran established institutions to fulfill religious duties while adhering to Iranian laws, respecting the rights of others, performing national duties, and upholding their religious principles. Temples and schools were established for this purpose (The Constitution of Iran 1986). The size of Iran's Jewish community varies, with official figures ranging between 45.000 and 50.000. Unofficial estimates suggest around thirty thousand Jewish communities in Iran (Taheri 1996), while the largest rabbi in Iran estimated their number at twenty thousand people. The US State Department estimated the community at nine thousand, according to the Jewish Committee in Tehran. In terms of population, Jews in Iran constitute the second-largest gathering after Israel[1].

After the Iranian revolution, a distinction was made between Judaism and Zionism. Fearing possible reprisals or expulsion, the Jewish community made an effort to communicate and interact with Ayatollah Khomeini. Following talks, Khomeini guaranteed their freedoms and rights by acknowledging them and setting them apart from Zionists. He issued a fatwa that forbade any attacks against Jews and offered them total security (Dashefsky et al. 2022).

The Iranian revolution distinguished clearly between Zionism and Judaism as the revolution's course became apparent. The Jewish community then tried to get in touch with Khomeini and arrange a meeting because they were worried about possible reprisals or being uprooted. After their talks, Khomeini assured the Jews that their liberties and rights would be upheld by openly recognizing their rights and stressing how they differed from Zionists. Khomeini also issued a fatwa that forbade any acts of violence against Jews and offered them total security.

Iran maintains that Jews are free to participate in various activities within Iranian society, including celebrations, festivals, and education in subjects such as calligraphy, language, history, art, and Jewish music.

After the Iranian Islamic Revolution on February 11, 1979, the relationship with the Jewish community became strained, leading to the severance of ties between Iran and Israel. Jewish leaders suspected of having questionable connections with Israelis were arrested, and some were detained on suspicion of espionage for Israel. Iran clarified that most of the pressure faced by the Jewish community during the revolution was not the fault of the revolution itself but rather the result of significant pressure from Zionist institutions to encourage Iranian Jews to immigrate to Israel. Consequently, Zionist

[1] *Sayah R.* Despite tension between Iran and Israel, Iran's Jewish minority feels at home // PBS News. 2018. Nov. 27. URL: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/despite-tension-between-iran-and-israel-irans-jewish-minority-feels-at-home (accessed: 10.07.2022).

organizations actively promoted the immigration of religious minorities. As a result, a wave of Jewish emigration from Iran ensued after the Iranian Islamic Revolution, resulting in a gradual decrease in their numbers. The majority of Iranian Jewish immigrants chose the United States as their destination, while many others relocated to Israel. Economic hardships and a sense of insecurity played crucial roles in motivating Jewish emigration, particularly to the United States.

The Iranian revolution highlights that the Iranian Jewish community coexists peacefully and harmoniously with their fellow citizens, despite certain challenges. However, Zionist organizations took advantage of certain issues to promote mass Jewish emigration from countries like Yemen, Egypt, and Iraq. Along with migrations within minority groups and even among Muslims, this tendency of migration had a severe influence on the Jewish communities in Iran by causing a drop in their numbers. Nonetheless, Iranian Jews persisted in their unwavering resolve to remain and carry on their lives in Iran. Because Khomeini issued a fatwa prohibiting harm to them, and because he was committed to their safety, they did not experience major persecution. This improved their relations with Iranian officials and Jewish communities as well as with their non-Muslim countrymen and the society in which they lived. They also promoted ties with Islamic establishments.

It is worth mentioning that the relationship between Iranian Jews who immigrated to Israel remains unbroken, with a deep loyalty to their Iranian heritage and identity. Most of these people have nostalgia for Iranian culture and travel to Iran, and they are against any military coalition against the country. Jews persisted in Iran throughout the revolution, as evidenced by their participation in a number of official institutions. Jewish youth were also found on the battlefronts, making sacrifices and becoming prisoners of war during conflicts imposed on Iran. The Jewish community actively supported the army in these battles, and their presence resonated throughout. Moreover, Iran erected a memorial during the revolution to honor the Jewish community as heroes and commemorate their sacrifices.

After the establishment of stability under the Islamic Republic regime in Iran, the social rights of Jews were observed based on Islamic laws, following the principles governing the treatment of Ahl al-Dhimah (People of the Book), which consider the shared aspects and commonalities between Islam and Judaism. However, some matters were considered secondary or private concerns by the revolution (Yashibi 2014).

At present, the Jewish community resides in central Tehran and is represented by an association or public forum. The association comprises 15 founding members who are elected every three years by the entire Jewish population of Iran, in accordance with the existing laws. The election results are submitted to the Ministry of Interior as mandated by the Law of Parties and Associations. Legally, the “League” of Jews in Tehran operates under the supervision of the

Endowment and Charitable Matters Organization, but its day-to-day affairs are managed independently by the General Authority and the inspectors of the Jewish Community Committee. This forum serves as an overseeing body for the Jewish community, responsible for the management and care of schools, synagogues, kindergartens, and facilities for the elderly. Thus, the General Forum of Jews in Tehran and other Iranian cities acts as a social institution, organizing the Jewish community and providing various services, social care, and charitable assistance. This organization has played a significant role in promoting Jewish religion and culture to a wider audience and supporting the younger generation within the community. Additionally, the Jewish Forum in Iran acts as a civil status department and a judicial authority, handling Jewish-related cases in the courts of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Conversely, Iranian courts consult the forum of the Jewish community and Jewish references when making judgments on cases, disputes, and matters concerning the personal rights of Jews (Westreich 2012).

With the establishment of the Islamic Consultative Council, religious minorities, including Jews, gained representation. Jews have a seat in the council's sessions, except for the first session, in which their representation was accepted by Ayatollah Behbehani. Following the victory of the Islamic Republic, Jews also became members of the Constitutional Experts Council, known as "Shour-ye Negahbn". They maintain a visible presence in Iranian legal institutions to protect their social and religious rights. In Iran, there are approximately 44 synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. Notable tombs include those of the prophets Daniel in Shush, Habakkuk in Tuiserkan, Esther and Mordechai in Hamedan, and the shrine of Sarah (the daughter of Asher) near Isfahan (Westreich 2012).

Cities like Tehran, Hamadan, Isfahan, Shiraz, Kermanshah, Rafsanjan, Borujerd, and Shush-Shustar-Nahavand-Kashan hold special significance for the Jewish community in Iran. In these cities, there are associations with elected members and charitable institutions that have long been instrumental in addressing the social, health, and economic challenges faced by Jews. The Jews have successfully maintained their cultural community and established numerous schools that operate within the framework of the state's education laws (Yashibi 2014). They celebrate official holidays corresponding to their festivals and occasions, with the Passover holiday lasting for a week (Shariati 2016).

Since the victory of the Islamic Republic, Jews have been permitted to expand their religious and social institutions, including synagogues, schools, cultural organizations, and groups for youth and women. They have also been given permission to establish more references, establish a public library, and set up social welfare centers. Additionally, they are allowed to open kosher meat shops in areas inhabited by Jews and in Jewish cities, adhering to Jewish dietary laws. The Jewish community actively publishes books and pamphlets

promoting and preserving Jewish culture, with publications like the "July" bulletin and the monthly magazine "Pina's Horizon" being supervised by members of the Jewish community. Furthermore, the Jewish community owns the "Prochim" publishing house, which plays a significant role in publishing books and conducting research in multiple languages in Iran (Yashibi 2014). The Chief Rabbi of Iran has mentioned that conditions for Jews in Iran are improving, with Jewish schools being allowed to close on Saturdays, the renovation of a Jewish ritual bath (mikveh) in Tehran, and the presence of kosher restaurants in Tehran, Shiraz, and Isfahan that adhere to Jewish law. Additionally, a Jewish religious school has been established in Tehran, from which Jewish students graduate to become future rabbis.

In terms of employment and professions, Jews in Iran are engaged in self-employment, working across various sectors such as manufacturing, services, specialized trades (including medicine, engineering, and art), as well as in the fields of art and academia. Many Jews have achieved notable degrees in the Sports Olympiad and have become well-known authors and researchers (Jafari Langroudi 2008).

At present, the majority of the Jewish minority in Iran are primarily engaged in trade and self-employment. While there are no legal obstacles to their employment, certain positions, such as roles in the judiciary and security services, are prohibited for Jews and other religious minorities. The Jewish community in Iran relies on three main institutions: The Jewish religious authority, the representative of Jews in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community in Tehran. The invitation to Judaism is limited to the Jewish sect itself, with no active efforts to invite other minorities or encourage conversion to Judaism (Shariati 2016).

In recent years, the Iranian revolution has promoted interfaith dialogues, with active participation from Jewish intellectuals in conferences and meetings. Their aim has been to use these dialogues as an opportunity to express their perspectives, bridge the gap between Judaism and Islam, and reduce religious differences by emphasizing commonalities. Throughout history, Iranian Jews have maintained a cultural relationship with their fellow Iranian citizens. The Islamic government has taken measures to prevent the persecution experienced by Jews in other Islamic countries, which led to mass migrations.

Iranian society is generally known for its tolerance and strong social bonds among neighbors, friends, and colleagues, as acknowledged by American-Iranian journalist Karmel Melamed. Robert Khalider, a member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Synagogue, confirms that the 1979 Islamic Revolution was a significant milestone for Iranian Jews, granting them rights and the freedom to practice their beliefs and rituals. As a result, they have become more devout and are committed to the religious and cultural freedoms provided to them. However, there has been an increase in propaganda targeting Jews, their sacred

sites, and rituals, causing concerns among Jewish community leaders in Iran. Nonetheless, Jews enjoy a certain degree of freedom of expression, and they have not hesitated to express their anger and objection to statements made by Iranian President Ahmadinejad, such as his denial of the Jewish Holocaust, which received significant international attention. Maurice Motamed, the Jewish representative in the Iranian parliament, affirms that Iranian society and the government do not harbor hostility towards Jews or their faith (Sternfeld 2014).

On the other hand, Iranian Jewish writers eagerly express their love and affiliation to Iran, consistently defending their homeland. The book "Iranian Jews" by Ali Asghar Mostafavi serves as a valuable source for understanding the role of Iranian Jews within the country. According to the book, Iran holds great significance for Jews as the land associated with Cyrus the Great, their savior. It encompasses the resting places of Esther and Mordecai, as well as the prophets Daniel and Habakkuk. Iran also holds the tomb of Shushandukht, the loyal Jewish wife of King Yazdegerd I, and Benjamin, the brother of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him). Since the conquest of Babylon by King Cyrus, many Jews have migrated to Iran, leading Jews worldwide to hold deep reverence for the land (Shariati 2016).

Despite the establishment of Israel as a Zionist government, which encouraged Iranian Jews to immigrate, they have chosen to remain in Iran. The number of Jews migrating from European countries to Israel far surpasses those who have left Iran for Palestine. Iranian Jews reject the invitation to emigrate to Palestine, as their love for Iran exceeds their attachment to Jerusalem. They do not have political interests but instead focus solely on their worship and prayers, as emphasized by an Iranian rabbi. However, there is apprehension about the reaction of Iranian society, which is why they express condolences for figures like Qassem Soleimani after their assassination. Jewish sources mention various measures implemented by Iran to discourage Jewish families from emigrating, such as travel restrictions allowing only one family member to travel at a time and placing them under surveillance. Despite these measures, the continued survival and non-immigration of the Jewish community in Iran can be attributed to the security and protection they receive, the support of the Iranian state, their strong attachment to the land, and the economic prosperity they enjoy (Dashefsky et al. 2022). Zionist attempts to instill fear and terror among Iranian society to motivate Jews to leave their homeland and return to Israel have proven unsuccessful. Consequently, the majority of Jews have chosen to remain in Iran, actively participating in the lives of their fellow citizens and providing support during both challenging and peaceful times (Sternfeld 2014).

The Jewish associations and intellectual community in Iran have been unafraid to voice their criticism of Zionist principles in their discussions and publications. This is exemplified by a speech delivered by Mr. Harun Yashaiyi,

the editor-in-chief of Tammuz newspaper, in 1986 at the University of Tehran's Faculty of Law and Political Sciences. Yashaiyi, affiliated with the Association of Jewish Intellectuals in Iran, shed light on the intellectual and ideological differences between Jews and Zionists by drawing on the perspectives of Jewish philosophers and religious leaders.

These writers effectively depict the dynamic interaction between Iranian and Jewish identities. Despite the Iranian government's hostility towards Israel and its prohibition of communication between Iranian Jews and Israel, there are still underlying connections, although they may not be openly acknowledged. Some of these connections run deep, as many Iranian Jews maintain strong ties with their families in Israel. Some have even managed to visit Israel through third-party countries. Moreover, Iran serves as a sought-after refuge for the Lev Tahor Jewish extremist anti-Zionist group, which openly expresses its loyalty to the Iranian Supreme Leader and the Iranian state. Additionally, a number of Israelis with Iranian roots advocate for the revival of the historical friendship between the two countries. It is also important to break down barriers between Iranian Jews and the Iranian people, as emphasized by Iranian Jews in Israel, who emphasize the strong bonds and similarities they share with the Iranian people regardless of the policies of the Iranian government. They argue that the perceived Zionist hostility in Iran is merely a reflection of the Iranian government's propaganda, a sentiment echoed by many Iranian Jews in Israel. Of course, this understanding relies on the absence of any conflict between Israeli national identity and Persian ethnic and cultural identity. A comparative and analytical study further reveals the communication elements and overlaps between these two groups (Jafari Langroudi 2008).

COMMON CULTURAL FEATURES BETWEEN IRAN AND ISRAEL

Iran and Israel share common cultural characteristics that blend nationalism, religion, and sect. Their intertwined legendary histories are rooted in narratives passed down through generations, nourished by religious and sectarian beliefs, as well as the unique geographical environment. The Iranian identity has established a strong connection between Islamic religion and ancient Iranian intellectual and cultural heritage, particularly through the Shiite sect, which represents a fusion of nationalism and religion. Similarly, the Jewish identity has fostered interdependence and harmony between the Israeli personality and the Jewish religion through the Zionist movement, where nationalism takes on religious significance and religion is intertwined with nationalism. While not delving into specific details, it is noteworthy that both the Islamic Republic system in Iran, based on the principle of the guardianship of the jurist, and the State of Israel, based on a religious system, serve as living examples of this characteristic blend between the two identities.

Another shared feature is the orientation of both personalities towards the past and the future, viewing the future as a continuation and reflection of the past. For the Jewish personality, the future is tied to the dream of returning to the Promised Land, while for the Iranian personality, it is linked to the awaited Mahdi and the establishment of a global Islamic government. Both devote efforts to prepare the necessary time, place, and conditions for these future events, including the establishment of an Islamic Republic under the rule of the Faqih or Imam. The events shaped by the Iranian and Jewish personalities demonstrate their hope, dedication, and creative thinking in pursuing a renewed revolutionism that positions them at the center of civilization.

From their different points of view, they create ways and means to accomplish their objectives and dreams, hoping to guide humanity towards perfection. Intellectual impressions are employed by Iranian and Jewish personalities to further their own goals. They feel unique and exclusive, differentiating themselves from others due to their unshakable faith in the coming of a savior at the end of time. This belief is used as a means of achieving a divine mission for each of the two peoples, which is to lead the world by advancing the notion of spiritual perfection that each of the two personas embodies. Their historical duty, a civilizing role that symbolizes the holy right to exert their sovereignty over the globe, is given to them by this imagined qualification. Their sense of alienation and isolation is reinforced by historical events, but it is nonetheless understood in the context of self-exclusivity and divine selection. It is important to study the historical contacts between Iranian and Jewish characters because it clarifies many of the methods and policies that underpin each country's political systems.

The reality of Iran-Israeli relations is not entirely reflected in the seeming dispute and political animosity between them. Trends today provide witness to the influence of past exchanges. For example, the Jews were saved from their plight by Emperor Cyrus I of Persia, who also gave them citizenship rights in his empire in western Iran. As recompense, the Jews contributed greatly to the development of the Achaemenid culture, earning them a unique status among Iranians akin to that of Cyrus among the descendants of Israel. With Iranian help, this Jewish role persisted over the centuries. The ways in which the two personalities interacted in the fields of politics, military affairs, economics, and culture were also obvious in the modern era, especially during the Pahlavi era, especially under Muhammad Reza Shah.

During the Iran-Iraq conflict, this connection gave the Islamic Republic of Iran the weaponry, resources, financial assistance, knowledge, and technical means it needed to overcome the economic and military blockade. It is essential to comprehend the reality of the interactions between Jewish and Iranian characters within the context of the Greater Middle East initiative. Their predictions demonstrate harmony and compatibility, and both personalities uphold their interests as the cornerstone of their beliefs and work to

expand at the expense of the Sunni environment. This allows them to assume public positions that may not reflect the true nature of their hidden dealings, justified by national or ideological thought, which may be revealed by future events.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of the study is to examine how the role of Iran's Jewish minority has evolved in modern history. It investigates the minority's perspective on the Islamic Revolution and their involvement in associated developments and events, particularly their interaction with the Iranian state and its institutions. The study acknowledges the general framework established by the Islamic Revolution to engage with the Jewish minority in civil and political matters. Despite external influences, such as Israel's attempts to recruit spies from the Jewish community, the Jewish minority generally lives harmoniously within Iranian society. It is important to note that any negative reactions from the Iranian regime towards this minority are not directed at the entire Jewish community and do not involve efforts to displace Iranian Jews in order to discredit the regime's image.

The existence of a significant Jewish minority in Iran reflects their desire to remain in their homeland. Although the slogan "Death to Israel" is frequently chanted in Iranian mosques and political forums, it has never been interpreted as targeting the Jewish minority within Iran. Even during times when Israel intensified its actions against Palestine and Lebanon, there were no negative reactions towards the Jewish minority in Iran. This suggests a deep level of tolerance towards Jews from the state, the revolution, and the Iranian people. Overall, the situation and conditions of the Jewish minority in Iran are relatively better compared to those experienced by other ethnic and sectarian minorities who have faced intolerance and discrimination under the Iranian revolutionary regime.

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