

**Kult svatých v tradici marockých Židů. Význam kultu svatých pro židovskou marockou společnost v Maroku a Státě Izrael s přihlédnutím ke společenským změnám ve 20. stol.**  
**Cult of Saints in the Tradition of Moroccan Jews. The Role of Cult of Saints for Jewish Moroccan Society in Morocco and in State Israel with Regard to the Social Changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.**

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Presented thesis focuses on Cult of Saints, the outstanding feature of the Moroccan Jewish religion and its social role for the Moroccan Jewry in Morocco and in State of Israel, which became new home for majority of Moroccan Jews in the twentieth century. Moroccan Jewish community is one of the oldest communities of Diaspora whose inhabitants are continuously living in Morocco till today and its roots are supposedly connected with the time of the first Temple. During more than two thousands years Jewish religion and society were exposed to the influences of the native people Berbers and nations who passed the territory. The longest, most intensive and definitive change came together with the last monotheistic religion – Islam. Islam changed the character of almost all aspects of the country. It is possible to assume that the Moroccan Jewish religion was affected by cultural, historical, political, economical etc. influences of the nations, especially by Arabs and their religion. All the factors took part in the process of development of Moroccan Judaism and the today's result is the unique culture of Moroccan Jews which was created during the centuries.

Within the frame of Judaism, special traditions and habits were formed in Morocco. The most expressive character of the Moroccan Judaism is Cult of Saints. Veneration of Saints or *saddiqim*, as is the most common name in Hebrew, is phenomenon which is widespread all over Morocco among Jews. It became very unique in the number of Saints and intensity of worshipping. Visiting graves of *saddiqim* and pilgrimages on the day of their *hillulah*, the anniversary of death, was in Morocco unusually spread and still is today between the few thousands Jews living mainly in Casablanca.

Emergence of the veneration of holy men and its wide spreading is according to the researches due to the following factors. First, some of the pagan practices could have survive in the religion of Jews and their descends who came to Magreb many centuries before final destruction of the Temple. Second is the character of Berber religion. This native nation or

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tribes speaking different Berber dialects had always ability to absorb or accept new religion but to keep its own language and some expressions of popular belief. Their culture, habits and even language is different to the Arab ones. In Morocco they call today for bigger attention by political parties to support the development of Berber culture. There is certain parallel with the process of integration of Moroccan Jews in modern State of Israel as will be explained later. The incorporation of some of the Berber habits and beliefs into discussed phenomenon is obvious. Nevertheless the importance given to this fact is probably strongly supported by controversial idea of massive conversion of Berber tribes to Judaism. The rise of veneration of holy men was also reinforced by the deep-seated conception of the *saddiq* in the mystical Jewish tradition and spread of the most popular work *Zohar*. Veneration of holy men was not only popular among Jews but among Berbers and Arabs too. It is reasonable to assume that the proliferation of hagiolatric practices among all ethnics was influenced by North African Muslim *maraboutism*, veneration of holy men believed to have supernatural powers.

My aim is not to analyze Cult of Saints as religious phenomenon but to bring new perspectives from the sociological point of view. Concurrently I watch historical, ideological and sociological features. In Morocco described tradition was not only religious phenomenon but it had its important role as well in the social reality. This role was created by coexisting

with other ethnics which was determined by status of *dhimmi* and patron-client individual relation between Jews and Berbers or Arabs in different parts of land, so called *bilad almakhzan*

and *bilaad al-siba*. The main role of *saddiq* next to the role of healer was to be patron and guardian of the Jewish communities or single persons.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century conditions of Moroccan Jews deteriorated. Two processes were involved. First was foundation of the State Israel in 1948, second was Moroccan nationalism demanding independence of Morocco from France, which became true in 1956. Fears from unclear future, religious motives connected to the awaiting of Messiah demanding presence of all Jews in the land of Israel, finishing colonialism, Zionist ideology and other motives brought exodus of mostly all Jews from the country. Majority emigrated to the State of Israel, in smaller scale to France, Canada, United States of America and others. Over 220 000 Moroccan Jews arrived during 50's and 60's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to Israel. Until then it was the biggest ethnic group which came to the modern state.

Israeli society as a whole is composed of many different ethnic groups. The State of Israel was based on European Jewish experience and by ideologies which has started and passed in Europe. Basically, all economic, educational etc. power was centralized in the hands of representatives of Avoda party, mostly of Ashkenazi origin. Transfer from one society to 155

another one was not simple; lots of new Moroccan immigrants were disappointed by the economic, living, hygienic and other conditions they were exposed to in Israel. Worse than the physical distress and isolation in peripheral parts of the land was the inferiority they felt from the hegemonic part of society. Nowadays the situation has improved but still there are gaps between different classes in the Israeli society.

Studying process of the change of the role of Cult of Saints in Israel I have noticed three processes in different periods of ethnic development. First, after their arrival Moroccan Jews felt separated from the Moroccan *saddiqim* and their graves. Logically they started to profit from the new situation and turned their attention, except family celebrated *hilullas* at home, to the places connected somehow with Biblical, Talmudic and mystical personalities. Second, in the period when the Moroccan Jews finally got out of their shadow in Israeli society, which was followed by social protest movements and the process connected with acceptance of new home started. New shrines of Moroccan *saddiqim* appeared, as for example in Safed, where is the shrine dedicated to Rabi David u-Mošé. Third, in the development of Cult of Saints I see the crucial moment at the establishment of the new *saddiqim* such as Baba Sali and his son Baba Baruch. Due to the tradition formed in Morocco, they have important influence on their believers in Israel and they are influencing the voters for the profit of political parties, especially in the last years Shas. The aim of the Shas party is to support Sephardi culture but as well to get bigger power and change Israel into more "halachic" than democratic state.