



ETHNO-GENESIS OF AFGHANS: THEORY OF AFGHAN DESCENT FROM ISRAELITES

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ABSTRACT

The Afghans, Pashtuns, or Pathans, as the race is indifferently called, is an ancient race having its own identity, specific values, norms and traditions. However, the origin of the Afghans is involved in obscurity which has given rise to a variety of opinions. Various theories have been presented by scholars in different periods. The topic is under discussion since very long that who are the Afghans and what is the origin of the Afghans? But this question has not been answered yet scientifically. Some believe that they descended from the soldiers of Alexander the Great. Others try to trace their ancestry to the Copts of Egypt, the Chaldeans, and even the Armenians are supposed to be their ancestors; but the majority of writers consider them to be the descendants of the 'Ten Lost Tribes of Israel' and this is the opinion of the Afghans themselves. The theory of Afghans being the descendants of Ten Lost Tribes of Israel became very hot and famous for academic discussions among the historians and researchers. However, It is still disputed question whether the Afghans are of Jewish descent, and as the subject is one of the great interest, I have looked up all that I can find as bearing on the point at issue, and included it in this paper. In this paper Israelitish origin theory of Afghans has been discussed with references and evidences. This study seeks to analyze the cultural similarities between Afghans and Israelites. It tries to justify the claim of Afghans as being the "Bani Israil or Children of Israel" with historical as well as existent evidences. It tries to establish the historicity of the claim of Israelite origin that Afghans make.

Keywords: *Bani Israel, Khalid Bin Walid, Jews, Hebrew, Pashtunwali, Khaybar.*

Introduction

The medieval Arabic and Persian geographies and chronicles make only few and scattered references to the Afghan tribes prior to the sixteenth century. It is thus ironic that the problem of Afghan origins is the only issue of medieval Afghan history which has generated considerable debate among scholars. Since information is so meager it is not surprising that the debate remains unresolved.

Their own Theory of Origin

The Afghans¹ consider themselves as *BaniIsrail*, or the children of Israel. They believe that they are the direct descendants of *Saul* (or *Talut*), the first king of Israel. It would be pertinent to mention here briefly the claim of Afghans to be *thechildren of Israel*, which was first systematically recorded in *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, a history compiled by an Afghan chronicler Niamatullah around 612 A.D. for Khan-i-JahanLodhi,an Afghan noble and a courtier of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. According to this claim Afghans are the descendants of *Afghana*, the grandson of King *Saul*. It is stated that *Bukht-un-nasr*, or *Nebuchadnezzar* who invaded Jerusalem and destroyed it, expelled Israelitish tribes. After this they took refuge in the *Kohistan-i-Ghor* and the *Koh-i-Faroza*. In these localities they were called by their neighbours as *Afghan*, or *Aoghan*, and *BaniIsrail*. In the mountains of Ghor and Faroza the *BaniIsrail* increased greatly after a long period of warfare with original heathen inhabitants of the hills in which they had taken refuge. When Afghans heard of the advent of the new prophet through a fellow Israelite, Khalid bin Walid, the most famous of the Prophet Mohammad's *Ansar* (Companion) and in a very few years, being convinced of truth of his new doctrine, adopted his religion. This Khalid bin Walid, son of Walid, was an Israel who had settled in Arabia after the dismemberment and dispersion of the Israelitish nation. On the receipt of Khalid bin Walid's message by the Afghans, they deputed a number of representatives of the Afghans of Ghor, led by *Qais* who belonged to one of the Afghan families. He was accompanied by some six or eight of the chief men and elders of the Afghan people. All of them accepted Islam at Medina. The Prophet lavished all sorts of blessings upon them; and having ascertained the name of each individual, and remarked that *Qais* was a Hebrew name, he gave *Qais* the name of *Abdur Rashid* or *the servant of the wise* and observed further to the rest that, they being the posterity of Malik Talut, it

was quite proper and just that they should be called Maliklikewise and when *Qais* was about to depart for his own country, the prophet conferred on him the title of *Pihtan* or *Pahtan* also.²

There are many modern scholars who support this claim of the Afghans. Those who advocate the theory cite the striking cultural similarities between the two people and the names of various clans, which resemble the names of the Israelite tribes that were exiled by the Assyrian Empire around seven hundred years before Christ, as evidence for this claim. It would be pertinent here to mention some of these similarities between these two people.

Similarities Between Afghans and Jews

The Afghan race question is more puzzling than any other aspect of Afghan history, but the weight of evidence and opinion is in favour of the traditional account, namely that the Afghan nation is of Jewish descent, and very probably the remnant of “*the lost tribes*.” The modern scholars have found a close physiognomic resemblance of Afghans with Jews.³ Tradition, features, geographical position, and many peculiar customs obtaining amongst tribes of Afghans, e.g. the Passover-like practice of sacrificing an animal and smearing the doorway with its blood in order to avert calamity, the offering up of sacrifices, stoning to death of blasphemers, the *wesh* land tenure, etc.,—all support this view.⁴ The modern scholars have found a close physiognomic resemblance of Afghans with Jews. There is a striking resemblance to the Jews in the Afghan’s tall and well-built body, fair complexion, blue eyes, brown head, long beard⁵ and especially the long nose slightly curved. The strong descent claim of Afghans is further strengthened by similar Israelitish customs and habits which, despite the passage of centuries and change of religion, have persisted. Afghans to this day observe customs, practice habits and observe festivals which establish similarities with those of the Jews.⁶

The polity of Afghans also seems similar in nature with that of the Israelites of old. We read that the Israelite kings were no absolute oriental monarchs. David, the king of Israelites, was king by “covenant” with his people.⁷ When the King Hezekiah or king Josiah of Judea wished to introduce reforms they had to consult the people and enter into solemn covenants with them. In a later age Nehemiah, although officially installed as governor by the king of Persia, did the same thing.⁸ Thus the king was king by a contract with his people which left them freemen and his brethren. We have the same experience of political practice among the Afghans. Among most tribes the organization is democratic, the hereditary *khan* having restricted power. More important matters are settled in consultation with the chiefs of the sub-tribes and clans, and the

tribal or village council (*Jirga*) plays an important role.⁹ Even during their rule in India Afghan chiefs enjoyed great power and looked upon the king as a comrade and only as a first among equals.¹⁰ The whole history of Afghans shows that they have great love for freedom. Such, in brief, are some of the principal customs and observances of the Afghans which all tend to substantiate the claims of the Afghans to an Israelitish origin.

Resemblance of Afghan Place and Tribe names with Biblical Names

Other grounds on which the Afghan claim is justified are the names of various Afghan clans, which resemble the names of the lost Israelite tribes. These names are either replicas of biblical names or bear close resemblance to them. H. W. Bellew gives us a list of names of many Afghan tribes which he found similar with the tribes of Israel.¹¹ The small deviations, he believes, are both a product of time and change of language and some distortion.¹² The prevalence of Biblical person names, such as *Yusuf (Eusof)*¹³, *Ismail, Musa, Isa, Daud, Sulaiman*, etc. have also been brought forward in support of this theory. George Moore traces the etymology of the word *Kabul* to the Scriptures. He, while referring to the Bible (Kings I, 9:13), says that *Kabul* was the name applied by *Hiram* to the land of *Galilee*, or that part of it containing the cities which *Solomon (Sulaiman)* gave him. He further writes that as per '*Talmud*' the word signifies sandy; and this term certainly would well apply to much of Afghanistan.¹⁴ According to Firishta *the Muslim Afghans* after occupying Peshawar around 682 A.D. erected a fort in the mountains of Peshawar which they called '*Khaybar*'.¹⁵ The word "*Khaybar*" in Hebrew is supposed to signify a castle. D'Herbelot makes it to mean a pact or association of Jews against the Muslims.¹⁶ There is also a famous *Khaybar* pass connecting *Kabul* with Peshawar. And *Khaybar*, in north of present day Madina (in Saudi Arabia), was before the rise of Islam a fortress town inhabited by Jews which fell to the Muslims after the battle of *Khaybar* between them and Jews in 628 A.D.¹⁷ Besides, the existence of places like '*Dast Yahudi*' (The Jewish Plain) and '*Qilla Yahudi*' (Fort of Jews) is said to substantiate the claim of Afghans.¹⁸ There are also few more similar names given by Afghans to their places which can be said to have Israelitish origin. For example, '*Kohat*', a city in the NWFP, was the second son of *Levi* and father of *Amram*.¹⁹ He came down to Egypt with *Jacob*, and lived to the age of one hundred and thirty-three years.²⁰ Same can be said of '*Zabul*', one of the modern provinces of Afghanistan, located in the south of the country. It is the old name of the country to the south of *Kabul*. *Zabul* was the son or grandson of Prophet Israel (Yaquub) and after him the name of the tribe '*Zabulon*', one of the twelve tribes of Israel.²¹

According to the Bible the ten tribes were exiled to *Halah*, *Habor* and *Hara* and the river *Gozan* and to the cities of *Medes* (Media).²² Modern scholars have identified *Halah* with modern day *Balkh* (Greek *Baktria*), *Habor* with *Pesh-Habor* or *Peshawar* (*Pesh* means over and thus *Peshawar* means over *Hawar*), *Hara* with *Harat* city of Afghanistan and the river *Gozan* with *Amu Darya*, called by Europeans *Oxus*.²³ This is the whole area where the exiled people of Israel are believed to have taken refuge. Besides, the presence of *Takht-i-Sulaimani* (The throne of King Solomon) is also taken as an example of close affinity of Afghans with the house of Israel. Even the Arabs call them *Sulaimani*.²⁴ The *Sulaiman Mountains* are also said to be the earliest known home of the Afghans.²⁵

For the people of Afghanistan *Afghan* and *Pathan* (or *pukhtun*) terms are used interchangeably. The title of *Pathan* is said to signify “*rudder*” in Syrian language.²⁶ If this is so, it at once indicates a connection between Afghan and the Syrian captives of Israel. The word *Pathan* can be said to be a modified form of “*Pethan*”, the name of the great-grandson of King *Saul* and grandson of *Jonathon*.²⁷

Explanation for Language Difference

Some modern scholars disapprove this claim of Afghans without giving good reasons for it. One such reason is the language difference of the two people. Language as per these scholars is “most useful criterion” for deciding the race of people.²⁸ There is no doubt that the Pashtu, language of the Afghans, is a sub group of the Eastern group of Iranian languages.²⁹ However, many scholars do not subscribe to the idea that language is most determining factor in deciding the race of a people. S.D. Gotein, a prominent scholar of Jewish history, writes that in general the assumption that all the people who spoke a Semitic language had a common racial origin has no scientific foundation whatsoever. He further writes that the fact that Negroes in the United States of America talk and think exactly like other Americans does not prove that their forefathers and the English once formed a single race. He says that Jews readily gave up their own language and frequently exchanged one language for another. It was only in the 20th century that they reinstated their language—Modern Hebrew—when language became almost the only certain criterion of nationalism.³⁰ The tendency of such people to easily change their language can be found in Walter Lawrence’s book ‘*Valley of Kashmir*’. He noticed among the Afghans of Kashmir, who had settled there during the Afghan rule in Kashmir (1753-1819) that the old men still spoke Pashtu, but the younger generation resembled Kashmiris and spoke their

language.³¹ The language of the Israelites changed from time to time for many reasons. During the B.C. era, Hebrew was spoken. And for some time, Arabic was spoken when they were in Syria. When King Bakht Nasr caught 'Bani Israel' in Palestine and sent them to Iran, then their language turned to Persian instead of Hebrew and Arabic. When these people settled into Afghanistan their language was changed to Pashto. The diffusion of language is a most complicated affair, which must be investigated separately in each case. Moreover Pashtu is not altogether devoid of influence of Hebrew, the language of Jews. *Bellew* while admitting that the Pashtu is mainly composed of a mixture of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian words and derivatives, writes: "the grammatical construction of the Afghan language is simple, but the irregular formation of its verbs, in which particular it resembles the Hebrew, is striking feature of the language".³² Besides, Drs. Carey and Marshman assert that the Pashtu language has more Hebrew roots than any other.³³ Moreover, two edicts of emperor Ashoka in Afghanistan have been found with Greek inscriptions, one of these being a bilingual edict in Greek and Aramaic languages. Greek communities lived in the northwest of the Mauryan Empire, following the conquest and the colonization efforts of *Alexander the Great* around 323 B.C.E.³⁴ These communities therefore seem to have been still significant during the reign of Ashoka. However, we have no trace of these languages later in history of Afghanistan or Indian subcontinent. But the discoveries of *Aramaic* scripts and language at multiple locations in Afghanistan are certainly interesting when considering the possible Semitic presence there and its implications for the ethno genesis of Pathans and show that its presence there was not merely coincidental but of quite some importance. There is possibility of some kind of Semitic presence in ancient Afghanistan, and very probably an Israelitish one, considering the claims made by peoples of the area today. It must be noted that the lingua franca of Israel and Judea throughout most of their history was not Hebrew but Aramaic. In fact, even in the first century AD Jesus still spoke Aramaic in public.³⁵ It was the language of the common folk.

Explanation for Afghan Hatred towards Yahudis (Jews)

The Afghans call themselves *BaniIsrail* and yet reject their Jewish (*Yahudi*) descent. They hate *Yahudis*(Jews) with a traditional hatred. *Burnes* writes: "the Afghans call themselves "*BaniIsrail*" or children of Israel; but considered the term "*Yahood*", or Jew, to be one of reproach".³⁶ Many other modern scholars have noticed this hatred of Afghans against Jews but no one has given any explanation for it.

This hatred cannot simply be explained as an outcome of their conversion to Islam. Before their exile around 721 B.C.E. the northern tribes of Israel have separated from the southern tribes of Judah (*Yahuda*) and Benjamin. Thus we read that after the death of King *Solomon* (*Sulaiman*), great discords came to prevail. The nation of Hebrews was split into two divisions, Judah in the south with *Jerusalem* as its capital, Israel at north with new city of Samaria as the seat of its Kings.³⁷ The northern tribes after the excesses of king *Rehoboam*, the successor of *Solomon*, rose into rebellion and invited *Jeroboam*, who after being governor of northern tribes under *Solomon*, had rebelled and fled to Egypt, to be their king. *Jeroboam* had spent his exile in Egypt where he had won friends. The breach thus created was never healed.³⁸ The two kings were sometimes in harmony, but often in feud and sometimes the disparity in power was such that one was tributary to other.³⁹ The northern kingdom of Israel even sought help against Judah from the Assyrian king *Jareb*.⁴⁰ Thus the hatred of Afghans against Jews is the persistence of difference among the two kingdoms of Judah (*Yahuda*) and Israel of ancient Palestine. *Burnes* thus writes: “The Afghans entertain strong prejudices against the Jewish nation; which would at least show that they had no desire to claim, without a just cause, a descent from them”.⁴¹

Critique of Sources and Afghan claim

Modern scholars have mainly relied on *Makhzan-i-Afghani* for explaining Israelitish claim of Afghans. While some termed it nothing more than a “*fairy tale*”, written by an Afghan to found proud pedigree for the Afghans because they had secured royal authority, others believe that there is no such tradition recorded in any text prior to *Makhzan-i-Afghani*. However, Niamatullah himself provided the reasons for non-existence of this tradition in historical works prior to him. He says it was the ignorance of the Afghans in their mountains and desert homes, and lack of possession of royal power which was responsible for not recording this tradition in systematic order.⁴² It is important to note that this was by no means a novel or invented history at the time of the Niamatullah’s writing. The Afghans being the descendants of Israelites had also been briefly sketched a few decades earlier in the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abu’lFazl.⁴³ The narratives in the *Makhzan-i-Afghani* therefore had precedents not only in the oral historical tradition of the Pashtuns themselves but also, in some cases, in the Persian historiographical tradition patronized by the Mughals. It was thus in the shadows of the grandiose historiographical projects of the Mughals that the *Makhzan-i-Afghani* made the first attempt to provide a systematic account of the Afghan past.

Moreover, before recording the tradition of Afghans being the descendants of Israel, he provides us the reference of earlier sources like *Tarikh-i-Guzida and Majma-ul-Ansab* where in the few references had been already made about the Israel descent of Afghans.⁴⁴ The work *Tarikh-i-Guzida*, written in Persian by Hamdu'llah Mustawfi-i-Qazqwini in 1320 A.D. has been survived to us only in fragments and has been translated into English by Edward G. Browne. While providing the details about the conflict between Mubarizu'd-Din, a ruler of *Muzaffari* dynasty of Iran (around A.D. 1330's), and Afghans, Hamdu'llah had made a mention of fort of Afghans at *Jiraf* named *Qila-i-Sulaimani* (Fort of Sulaiman).⁴⁵ Joseph-Pierre writes that Afghan evidence for their claim is that they hold that When Nadir Shah, marching to the conquest of India arrived at Peshawar, the chief of the tribe of *YusafZais* (Sons of Joseph) presented him with a Bible written in Hebrew and several other articles that had been used in their ancient worship and which they had preserved; these articles were at once recognized by the Jews who followed the camp.⁴⁶ So the presence of the Bible among Afghans shows their Israelitish origin. Bellew writes:

*The Afghan's accounts of Jacob and Esau, of Moses and the Exodus, of the Wars of the Israelites with the Amalekites and conquest of Palestine, of the Ark of the Covenant and of the election of Saul the King to the Kingdom, etc., are clearly founded on the Biblical records, and clearly indicate a knowledge of the Old Testament, which if it does not prove the presence of the Christianity at least corroborates their assertion that the Afghans were readers of the Pentateuch(Torah).*⁴⁷

It is also stated in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* of Minhaj Siraj that in the native *Shansbani* dynasty there were people called *Bani Israil* living in that country, and that some of them were extensively engaged in trade with the countries around.⁴⁸ Moreover, *Hudud-al-Alam*, a work by an anonymous Arab geographer who wrote in 982 A.D., also contains few references about these people. The word *Afghan* first appears in this work. It speaks of a pleasant village called *Saul* on a mountain as being inhabited by the Afghans. It also makes a mention of a King in a place called *Ninhar*, who shows a public display of conversion to Islam, and has over thirty wives who are described as Muslim, Afghan, and Hindu.⁴⁹ The distinction between Muslim, Hindu, and Afghan is very intriguing. Because this shows that they were neither considered Muslim, nor Hindu, but rather something else. Such tradition is somewhat corroborated by the finding, in a cemetery near Jam (Ghor province), of graves with Jewish inscriptions, dated from 1012 to 1249 CE, that is at the time of the Ghor empire that collapsed in the 13th century.⁵⁰

Firishta's reference of Afghan origin has further created confusion. Firishta notes a tradition that the Afghans were descendants of the Copts of Pharaoh's army.⁵¹ A supposition can be made out of the tradition put forward by Firishta. There might be some tribes leaving in Afghanistan having such descent. Thus Charles Masson in his travels supposes that the *Jajis* of Afghanistan belong to the Coptic race. He writes:

*Jajis are called in the histories of Taimur as KoptJaji, seeming to intimate that to them referred the tradition; it is equally certain, that they have precisely the same cast of countenance as the Copt inhabitants of Cairo.*⁵²

The Afghan writers who refer to the Israelitish descent of their race exclude many Afghan tribes from the genealogies of this descent.⁵³ Thus some groups of people claiming to be the Afghans today might be of some different origin. It does not follow, therefore, that other Afghan tribes are branches from the same stem; on the contrary, everything leads to the conclusion that, although they all speak a common language, the Pashtu, the tribes are not all of the same origin,—they are distinguished by marked characteristics, moral as well as physical. One tribe repudiates another, and denies its Afghan origin. We may believe that, being enemies in bygone ages, their union, such as it was, progressed only by degrees, with a view of delivering themselves from slavery, and repulsing the common enemy.

There is also a debate among the scholars that when did the Afghans convert to Islam. The medieval Arab and Persian writers mainly ascribe this job to Ghaznavids.⁵⁴ However, there are some evidences which speak to the contrary. As per the Afghan tradition they were converted at the hands of Prophet Mohammad in the 7th century A.D. However, they do not claim the overall conversion of all tribes. It was a group of people led by seven tribal leaders who converted at the hands of prophet. Then the job of converting the rest of the population was mainly taken by these early Afghan converts.⁵⁵ Though a very considerable portion of Afghan nation early embraced Islam in 7th and 8th century, it is very probable that hill tribes were not converted till a long period after their brethren dwelling in the plain country and its borders. The Muslim Afghans did try to spread the faith of Islam among the other tribes of Afghanistan. This supposition is supported by the fact that “*the Muslim Afghans*” appear first in the seventh century of the Christian era; when about 682 A.D., they issued from their mountainous habitations, and caused desolation and destruction in Peshawar and its surrounding territories, in which they were, however, checked by the Raja of Lahore. After that an Afghan, Sheikh Hamid was nominated governor of Multan and Lamghan.⁵⁶ The supposition that Islamisation of Afghanistan was a

long process is further supported by a tradition current amongst the Afghans to the effect that the Khaybar Mountains were formerly inhabited by a colony of Jews. And they are referred in a very favourite couplet, asserting the creed of Afghans as Sunni or Charyari Muslims, and denouncing all who disbelieve it. The lines in Persian when translated mean:

*My head is the dust of the road of each of the four chiefs—Abubakar, Umar, Osman and Haider(Ali). Abu bakar (is) the friend of (prophets) cave; Umar (is) the possessor of pearls (figurative of excellence); Osman is a royal knight, and Ali is a victorious Army. Whosoever denies any one of these is much worse than the bear, the pig, and the Jew of the khaibar.*⁵⁷

Conclusion

Thus the above discussion makes it clear that the claim of Afghans to be the *Bani Israil* (Children of Israel) is not founded on an oral tradition alone. There is a widespread chain of facts, events and proofs throughout the ages to solidify its validity. It is a well-known historical fact that migrating people carry with them their customs, their traditions and, sometimes, even the names of places of their original homeland. The names get distorted, and customs undergo some changes in the new environment, or by passage of time, but nevertheless they retain sufficient traces of their origin. The Afghans, who are now Muslims, retain to this day their tradition about their descent from *the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel*. It is an ancient tradition, and one not without some historical plausibility. It may be asked, where did this great resemblance, already mentioned above, between the two peoples stem from?

A number of travelers and students of Afghan affairs, who probed into literary sources, have referred to this tradition. Elphinstone remarks that the account is by no means destitute of probability, for, as regards the Ghor immigrants it is known (he says) that ten of the twelve lost tribes remained in the east after their brethren's return to Judea; and the supposition that the Afghans are their descendants explains easily and naturally both the disappearance of the people, and the origin of the other. In regard to the men of Mecca people he cites as confirmation the fact that 'the Jews were very numerous in Arabia in the time of Prophet, and that the principal division of them bore the appellation of Khyber, which is still the name of the district in Afghanistan, if not of an Afghan tribe'.⁵⁸

It is certain that there are some contradictions and inconsistencies in this tradition like in the record tracing the genealogies of present Afghan tribes to that of Israelites of past, but the fact that there is not an alternative tradition of origin among Afghans is itself a weighty consideration. More than two millennia had passed before the exodus of the *Afghana* narratives

were finally written down by Niamatullah and others. Before that these narratives were transmitted only by word of mouth for generations. Surely some details got distorted in the process.

¹ People mainly inhabiting eastern Afghanistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. There are also a few Pathan settlements in India. Pathans, Pashtuns, Pakhtuns, and Afghans are names which are often used interchangeably.

² Niamatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, tr. Nirodbhusan Roy, West Bengal, 1958, pp.1-8. See also Bernhard Dorn's translation of the same work as '*The History of Afghans*', Oriental Translation Committee, London, 1829, Part I, pp. 10-42.

³ Thus William Moorcroft writes: "The *Khaibarees* are tall and have a singularly Jewish cast of features". William Moorcroft and George Trebeck, *Travels in Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul, Kundz and Bokhara, from 1819 to 1825*, Vol. 2, Asiatic Society of Calcutta, 1846, p. 353.

⁴ C. Collin Davies, *The Problem of the North-west Frontier, 1890-1908*, first published in 1932 by Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition by Curzon Press, London, 1975, p. 43; H.W. Bellew, *Afghanistan, a Political Mission in 1857, with an account of the country and people*, London, 1920, p. 68.

⁵ Even Sher Shah Suri, an Afghan ruler of India (1540-45), fixed additional allowance to a trooper for having long beard—Shaikh Rizqullah Mushtaqui, *Waq'iat-e-Mushtaqi*, written in 1572, tr. from Persian by Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 1993, p. 142.

⁶ The peculiar code of laws or customs of the Afghans, known by the term "*Pashtunwali*"—an unwritten law, which though somewhat modified by the ordinances of Islam, is considered to be very similar in character and principle to that given by Moses to the Hebrews. H.W. Bellew, *Afghanistan and the Afghans*, Delhi, 1879, p. 213

⁷ James Parkes, *History of Palestine from 135 A.D. to Modern Times*, London, 1949, p. 26.

⁸ S.D. Goitein, *Jews and Arab: Their Contacts through Ages*, New York, 1955, p. 31.

⁹ Encyclopedia of Islam, vol.I, Published by Leiden: E.J. Brill, Netherlands, 1986, p. 217.

¹⁰ M. Abdurrahim, *History of Afghans in India*, Pakistan Publishing House, Karachi, Pakistan, 1961, p. 34.

¹¹ Thus we have *Rebbani (Reuben); Levoni (Levi); Ephriti (Ephraim); Ghaghi (Gad); Yusufzai*, which means *Sons of Yusuf (Joseph)*; etc. According to Bellew the *Yusufzais* reckon themselves true Afghans and call themselves *Banilsrail* (or children of Israel). In their country there are many such place names which have close affinity with Biblical names of old Israelites such as the hill of *Peor (Pehor)*, the mount of *Moriah (Morah)*, the peaks of *Ilam* and *Dumah*, the valley of *Sodom (Sudhum)*, the stream of *the Gadarenes (Gadhar)*, the plain of *Galilee (Jalala)*, etc., for places; whilst for tribes there are the *Amazites (Amazai)*, the *Moabites (Muhibwal)*, the *Hittites (Hottwal)*, etc. H. W. Bellew, *The Races of Afghanistan, Delhi, 1880*, pp. 74-75.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The ignorant Afghans, who are not influenced by the Persian culture, still pronounce it as *Eusof* and not its Arabic variant of *Yusuf*. *Eusofs* also used in Hebrew, the language of the Israelites—in a personal interview in January 2016 with Dr. Saud-ul-Hassan Khan Rohilla, Director Afghan Research Centre, Lahore and a polyglot of many languages including Hebrew. Dr. Saud also informed me about the Afghan practice of painting David star on passenger buses somewhere in Afghanistan.

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- Elphinstone also uses Eusof/Eusofzyes for name/tribe throughout his Account. See Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of Kingdom of Caubul, 2 Vols.*, London, 1842.
- ¹⁴ George Moore, *The Lost Tribes and Saxons of the East and of the West*, Longman, London, 1861, p. 147.
- ¹⁵ Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, translated from Persian by J. Briggs as "*The History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India*", vol. I, London, 1908, p. 8.
- ¹⁶ H.W. Bellew, 1920, op. cit., , footnote, p, 55.
- ¹⁷ W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, Oxford University Press, London, 1956, pp. 51 and 93.
- ¹⁸ H.W. Bellew, *An Enquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan*, Oriental University Institute, London, 1891, pp. 34 and 41.
- ¹⁹ The Holy Bible, *King James version*, London, 1611, Genesis, 46:11
- ²⁰ Ibid, *Exodus*, 6:18.
- ²¹ Ibid, *Revelation*, 7:8.
- ²² Ibid, *Kings II*, 17:6; see also *Kings II*, 18:11 and *Chronicles I*, 5:26.
- ²³ Michael Shterenshis, *Tamerlane and the Jews*, published by Routledge, New York, 2002, Page xxiv; also see, George Passman Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: a historical sketch*, published at 'Times of India Offices', Bombay and Calcutta, 1911, p. 11; see also Moshe Gil, *Jews in Islamic countries in the Middle Ages*, tr. from the Hebrew by David Strassler, Brill Leiden, Boston, 2004, p. 428.
- ²⁴ Mountstuart Elphinston, op. cit., p. 200.
- ²⁵ Encyclopedia of Islam I, op. cit., p. 217.
- ²⁶ H.W. Bellew, 1920, op. cit., p. 54;
- ²⁷ The Holy Bible, op. cit., *Chronicles I*, 9:14.
- ²⁸ M. Abdur Rahim, op. cit., p. 27.
- ²⁹ Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1927, p. 493.
- ³⁰ S.D. Goitein , op. cit., pp. 20 and 43.
- ³¹ Walter Lawrence , *The Valley of Kashmir*, Oxford University Press, London, 1895, p. 309.
- ³² H. W. Bellew, 1920, op. cit., p. 20.
- ³³ George Moore, 1861, op. cit., c.f., p. 146.
- ³⁴ R.S. Sharma, *India's Ancient Past*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2005, p. 173.
- ³⁵ Allen C. Myers, "*Aramaic*". *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ed. (1987),. p. 72
- ³⁶ Sir Alexandra Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, Vol. I, published by John Murray, London, 1834, p. 162.
- ³⁷ James K. Hosmer, *Jews: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, Published by T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1889, p.25-26.
- ³⁸ James Parkes, *History of Palestine from 135 A.D. to Modern Times*, Oxford University Press, London, 1949, p. 24.
- ³⁹ Ibid; also see James K. Hosmer, op. cit., p. 26.
- ⁴⁰ George Moore, op. cit., p. 49.
- ⁴¹ Burnes, op. cit., p. 64.
- ⁴² Berhard Dorn, op. cit., p. 2.
- ⁴³ Abu Fazl writes: "*The Afghans consider themselves the descendants of the Israelites. They assert that their remote progenitor, named Afghan, had three sons, viz., Saraban to whom the Sarabani clan trace their lineage; the second, Ghurghush from whom the Ghurghustis claim descent, and the third Batan*
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towhom the pedigree of the Batani tribe is ascribed". Abu Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, (tr.) H.S. Jarrett, Calcutta, 1891, pp. 402-03.

⁴⁴Niamatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, tr. Nirodbhusan Roy, Bengal, 1958, p. 5; see also Bernhard Dorn, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 and 37.

⁴⁵Hamdu'llahMustawfi-i-Qazqwini, *Tarikh-i-Guzida*, tr. from Persian by Edward G. Browne, Luzac& Co., London, 1913, p. 163.

⁴⁶ Joseph-Pierre Ferrier, *History of Afghans*, tr. from French by Capt. William Jesse, published by John Murray, London, 1858, p. 4.

⁴⁷ H.W. Bellew, *op. cit.*, 1891, p. 191.

⁴⁸ Cf. H.W. Bellew, *op. cit.*, 1880, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Anonymous, *Hudud-al-Alam (The Regions of The World)*, tr. by V. Minorsky, Luzac& CO., London, 1937, p. 91.

⁵⁰ B. Bruno, Notes on the discovery of Hebrew inscriptions in the vicinity of the Minaret of Jàm. East and West. 14, 1963, pp. 206-208.

⁵¹Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, tr. from Persian by J. Briggs as "*The History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India*", vol. I, London, 1829, p. 6.

⁵² Charles Masson, *Narrative of various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab, and Kalat*, London, 1844, pp. xiii-xiv.

⁵³ Encyclopedia of Islam, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

⁵⁴ Al Biruni (*Tarikh-i-Hind*) and Al Utbi (*Tarikh-i-Yamin*) both writing at the time of Mahmud of Ghazni give the credit of Islamisation of Afghans to Ghaznavids. Cf. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, Macllian and Co. Ltd., New York, 1958, p. 9.

⁵⁵ For details see Niamatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, tr. Nirodbhusan Roy, *op. cit.*, pp.1-8; also see Bernhard Dorn, *op. cit.*, pp.10-42.

⁵⁶Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7 and 9.

⁵⁷ Cf., H. G. Hastings, *Report of the Regular Settlement of the Peshawar District of Punjab*, Lahore, 1878, p. 22.

⁵⁸MountstuartElphinstone, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 205-06.