

Chapter Two

I. Judaism

1. The word Jew is derived from the name of Judas (Yehudhah) "Yahûd," the fourth son of Jacob "ya^cqûb," whose tribe, together with that of his half-brother Benjamin "Binyâmin", constituted the kingdom of Judah, as opposed to that of the remaining tribes (Israel) Isrâ^{îl}, "Enc. Bri vol. 13 p. 42". In the early days, the Israelis lived in the northern half of Palestine, and the Judas in the south, until Moses "Mûsâ," was entrusted with Divine Revelation, and took "Hârûn "(Aaron) as Minister, (And indeed We already brought Mûsâ (Moses) the Book, and We made with him his brother "Hârûn (Aaron) as minister) "'Al-Furqân, The Criterion-35".
2. In 561 B.C. the captive Judean king was received cordially by Nebuchadrezzar's son, and under Darius, the Temple was rebuilt, and it took four years to complete it in 516. B.C.

But the country was still under Persian domination. Then came the period of contact with Greek culture, during which age, after many misfortunes, the Jews saw a revival; "and their religion and patriotism "neither misfortune could kill nor prosperity corrupt". Enc. Br. vol.13, p. 51". The same cordial relations existed between the Jews and Alexander, and it is a noteworthy fact "that great conquerors, Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, have cordially treated the Jews".

3. Ever since the time of Mûsâ and Hârûn, Jewish history has been full of numerous incidents of disobedience and disbelief, as has been presented earlier here. That explains their history of dispersal and

persecution. Even when the time came, and Christ " 'Al-Masîh" proclaimed his Message to them and to the whole world, arrogance and disobedience were their answer to the Divine Revelation expressed in the "Injîl" Gospel, which testifies to the truth of the "Tawrâh" Torah, their Book, revealed to "Mûsâ" Moses.

4. Most of the incidents of dispute and disobedience are related, sometimes in detail, in the Qur'ân when referring to the Message of Mûsâ, (Surely this Qur'ân narrates to the Seeds of 'Isrâ 'îl most of that concerning which they differ), "An-Naml, The Ant, 76". Such instances are the disputes about the "Cow", their disobedience as regards the Sabbath, and their insistence on trying to see ('Allâh openly, so the stunning thunderbolt took you while you were looking on). "Al-Baqarah, The Cow- 55".
5. When 'Îsâ "Jesus" came with the Supreme evidences, (he said, 'I have readily come to you with (the) 'Wisdom, and that I may make evident to you some of that concerning which you differ; so be pious and obey me) "Az-Zukhruf, Decoration- 63". Thereon differences arose among the various parties; and finally they plotted to kill Jesus. Such a heinous crime could never be fulfilled, and Jesus was saved through Divine mercy.
6. The penalty for such disobedience and plotting was the Divine promise that the true followers of Christ will be dominant over Jews till the Day of Resurrection. The disbelievers will be severely tormented (in the present life and the Hereafter; and in no way shall they have any vindicators. And as for the ones who have believed and done deeds of righteousness, then He will pay them their rewards in full; and 'Allâh does not love the unjust ones). 'Âl 'Imrân, The House of 'Imrân- 56-57".

7. Finally, the final gathering of the Seeds of 'Isrâ'îl is explicitly stated when 'Allâh said, after the drowning of Fir^cawn and his people, "Dwell in the land; then when the promise of the Hereafter comes, We shall cause you to come " 'Al-'Isrâ, ²The Night Journey- 104". That Divine promise is now taking effect by the establishment of ²Isrâ'îl in Palestine again, but Divine punishment is still forthcoming, in case they go to disobedience and corruption. (It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you; and in case you go back "to corruption", We shall go back; and We have made Hell a place for "severe" detention to the disbelievers "'Al-'Isrâ, ² The Night Journey- 8".

II. Christianity

1. The ancestry of Jesus Christ is traced to the family of David, and his birth is ascribed to the miraculous act of (God) 'Allâh. At the age of 30, he appeared in public, continuing the proclamation of the Message of worshipping in the way that all previous Messengers had done; and he went on with his call for 18 months, or till he was 33, when he was raised up to (his God) 'Allâh: (in no way did they "the disbelievers" crucify him, but a likeness of him was presented to them. And surely the ones who differed about him are indeed in doubt about that. In no way do they have any knowledge about him, except the close following of surmise, and certainly in no way did they kill him. No indeed, 'Allâh raised him up to Him; and 'Allâh has been Ever-Mighty. Ever-Wise). "²An-Nisâ, ² Women- 157- 158".

2. Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church, and before the 5th century after the birth of Jesus, there was no consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar. The Gauls are said to have celebrated his birth on Wednesday, December 25, in the 42nd year of Augustus; and they believed that the resurrection is supposed to be on March 25. Other historians mention that he was born on Friday, December 25, the 15th day of the new moon- though, in fact, December 25 after his birth was a Sunday "Enc. Brit. vol. 5. p. 642".

In Britain, December 25 was a festival long before the conversion to Christianity and as late as 353 in Rome, the birth Feast was celebrated in the West on January 7, the same adopted by the Copts in Egypt.

3. The unusual birth of Jesus, as well as his miraculous deeds have driven many Jews to deny that his birth was through the Divine Word to his mother; but they have also driven many of his followers to ascribe divinity to his person. The truth about all of this has been revealed in these Words, (Surely the likeness of ^ĀĪsâ in the Providence of 'Allâh is as the likeness of 'Âdam. He " 'Allâh" created him of dust, thereafter He said to him, Be: and so he is... Surely this is indeed the true narrative, and in no way is there any god except 'Allâh; and surely 'Allâh indeed, Ever He, is The Ever-Mighty, The Ever-Wise) ^Ṣ"Âl-^ĀImrân- 59-62". The only difference between 'Âdam and ^ĀĪsâ is that 'Âdam, by Divine Decree, was entrusted, together with Eve and their progeny, to inhabit the earth until the Day of Resurrection. But ^ĀĪsâ did not get married, and was raised up to assume the angelic origin from which he came when the

angel breathed into his mother (of Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign to the worlds) "Al-'Anbiyâ, The Prophets- 91". From his cradle, ʿĪsâ said to those who accused his mother of unlawful conception, and to the whole world, (Surely I am a bondman = slave, worshipper of 'Allâh; He has brought me the Book and made me a Prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I may be and He has enjoined upon me prayer and Zakât (poor-dues) as long as I am alive.. And peace be upon me, the day I was begotten and the day I die, and the day I am made to rise again alive). "Maryam, Mary- 30-31-33".

4. The teachings of Christ centered around the love of God " 'Allâh" and love for fellow-men "Luke xii. 29-31". Christ also emphasized that God "ʿAllâh" calls for forgiveness, mercy, righteousness, and truth... in the realm of daily life, for (we are to forgive our brethren as we ask to be forgiven) "Matt. vi. 12; Luke xi.4".
5. The concept of "Jesus as the son of God" came into existence with St. Paul's epistles; and the same concept was interpreted into the Trinity (in Jewish sources, although modified by Greek influence). Then the Nicene creed spoke of Jesus (God who redeemed the soul. Through him men were to understand the Father and to understand themselves as God's children) "Enc. Brit Vol. 5.p. 533". Then the Catholic church began to take form in the 2nd century, and through Luther, Western Christianity became divided into Catholic and Protestant, although in Russia, Egypt and other areas the Orthodox church still represents the official doctrine; and still in the United states, they speak of 350 different denominations.

Migration

In spite of assumed secularism, differences between various Christian sects drove many European Christians to leave Europe and migrate to the New World. These migrations first came from Spain and from England to settle in South and North Americas. Such migrations, reminiscent of Muslim migration to Ethiopia and Madīnah, did not enjoy the tolerant attitude that early Muslims experienced in either Madīnah or Ethiopia; for, in the early days, "a good Indian was a dead Indian". Such American natives were replaced later by Africans to work as slaves for the European newcomers.

The Crusades

The first encounters between Muslims and Christians were tolerant and even cordial in Ethiopia and in Rome, especially as compared with contacts with polytheism on the eastern side of the world. But when Muslim invasions of Europe began to take on the mundane desire of power and dominion, the reactions, as expected, were the military offensives, sometimes under the aspect of holy war and at others in retaliatory offensives.

During the past two centuries, the occupation of Muslim countries by the Christian West led to the growth of the popular enthusiasm for freedom, after decades of Western colonial rule, during which some Muslim soldiers were led by Western armies to free Eastern Asia from Japanese rule while chanting the Muslim call "'Allāhu 'Akbar, "'Allāh is Greater". But by the end of the last century, the call for tolerance in various fields led by such eminent figures as Prince Charles, and various European dignitaries, Ecclesiastical and Political, is gaining ground for mutual understanding and co-operation.

III. Islam

The history of the Prophet Muḥammad, and his two successors 'Abū Bakr and 'Umar, may be taken as an ideal period in Muslim civilisation, as well as human history. The Prophet's migration from Makkah, after 13 years of persecution, enabled him through Divine Revelation, to establish the first Muslim state in modern times. The defence of the State against Jewish aggression, enabled the believers to propagate ٱIslām in Asia and Africa during the time of the four Caliphs with a sense of dedication and tolerance. During the time of ٱUthmān, the third Caliph, intrigues began to take shape, and soon ٱUthmān was killed. During the time of the fourth Caliph ٱAlī, there was dissension and he was also killed by treacherous rebels.

2. With the reign of the ٱUmayyads and the ٱAbbasids, the Muslim state began to grow as a naval power with the resultant contacts with Europe. Although Constantinople was not yet conquered, Muslims began to achieve relative supremacy over the neighboring seas. Such a supremacy was achieved only during the Turkish rule; and for the first time in modern history, we are witnessing the fact that mastery over the seas means mastery over the world, for several centuries.

3. Then the Crusades began in 1095, when the European forces captured Palestine, including Jerusalem and other coastal areas of Syria. After the battle of Hittīn, Ṣalāḥuddīn, who died in 1194, was able to recapture Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine. Later on, battles between Europe and Turkey went on, during which time Muslims ruled over most of Asia, and large areas in the Balkans, until (the time of 'Atā.- Turk, who relinquished the role of Caliph, and thus the fall of the Caliphate was declared in 1924.