

# “SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA”

Congregational Novitiate, Jerusalem



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## “Islam”

by Victoria Nabil July 07, 2014

The Socio-eco-political and religious situation in time of the prophet Muhammed was during 6<sup>th</sup> century in Arabia. The two leading superpower empires at that time were the Byzantines (Ghassauids) and Persian (Lakhmids). Arabia is a desert and at the same an oasis. There are plants growing in the midst of the desert. The people of the land were nomadic however there were also settlers in Arabia. Their basic source of livelihood was trading. Mekka is the center of Arabia, it is also a place for religious worship, the Ka'aba. The Arabian people during that time were polytheists. The religion was polytheism. They believed and worshiped many gods. There were also Christians (Heretics) and Jews present in Arabia. Also there was a religious movement at that time called Hanif. This movement did not arise from Judaism and Christianity. They were Arabians who got tired of worshipping many gods. Jews and Christians have Traditions and Scriptures while the Hanif do not have Scriptures to follow. The similarity of the three existing groups during that time was the belief in one God.

### Who is the Prophet Mohamed?

The Prophet Mohamed was born in Mekka in 570 (the year of the elephant, as written in sura 105 for the war). He belonged to the tribe of Quraysh under the branch, Banu Hashim. Muhamed father's name was Abdalah meaning servant of Allah and his mother's name was Aminah meaning faithful one. His father died before he was born and his mother when he was 6 years old. His uncle took care of him. His

uncle's name was Abu Talib and his cousin who became his younger brother and follower was Ali. The Prophet Muhammad was called by a nickname Ami which mean faithful one. During his time there was no school and so he learned how to be a trader. There was no television and electricity during that time and so the main source of information as well as learning was orally. Everything was done and transmitted through oral tradition. He had encountered different people and other countries. One day he met a beautiful and wealthy woman who asked him to marry her. He married Khadija (viewed as a promise to the Prophet Muhammad, see sura # 903). He was called Ummi, which means illiterate because he could not read or write, but is that really so? He lived in an oral tradition; Ummi could once also have been Umma which means nation. When he was 40 years old (610 C.E.) he experienced a crisis. He went to Hira cave to pray and meditate. It was also the beginning of his revelation. The Prophet Muhammad had seen visions and his body was shaking (see sura # 53, 73, 74). The Prophet Muhammad's visions marked the beginning of the Islamic tradition (see sura # 97).



## Islamic tradition

Islamic tradition started in the year 610-632 C.E. in which the Quran was given to the Prophet Muhammad in bits and pieces according to the needs. The Quran comes from a Syrian word meaning religious recitation. The message was that God is one, the creator of all that exists. The word Islam means submission to God.

### Four periods of Islamic tradition:

1- Mecca 610-615

2- 615 -619

3- Mecca 619- 622 (Prophecy) Khadija died and his cousin Abu Talib. During this year he proclaimed the message that he received from God. His call was reminding the people to worship one God.

4- the Prophet Muhammad in Medina , 622-632 Statesman, 632 the year he fell ill and died. When Muhammad died the group came and chose Abu Bakr his successor. Then Islam went to other countries in order to expand. They expanded through conquest or “Futuhah”. Muslims went into battle after the Prophet Muhammad died. In 638 the Muslims under the leadership of Umar conquered Jerusalem. People went against Arab tribes and denounced their faith, (call Ridda–Apostasy or denying one’s faith sometimes for political reasons).

### The five pillars of Islam

1. Professional faith (Shahada) the way to become Muslim.
2. Salat (Prayer) to show you are serious about your faith.
3. Alms-tax (Zakat) to help the community

4. Fasting (Ramadan) it means this community is different.

5. Pilgrimage (Hajj) we are an international community.

Our response and challenge in order to have Dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters as mentioned in Nostra Aetate, we must remember the past, re-read history together, and move on working together to “preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice, and moral values (Nostra Aetate # 3:7).

## Sr. Maureen Cusick: Class about Human Development

By: Joey P. Edevane



Human development, performed capability in physical, mental and social function through the different stages of

human life. “These stages are prenatal life, infancy, adolescence, youth and adulthood.” Human development corresponds the stages of growth. Our family, the environment where we have lived and the outside world influence us in building our own personality.

From childhood, we were taught according to the desires of our family and others. That desire is called “mimetic desire” the second desire is called “ultimate desire” the desire of God for us. In the book of Jeremiah 1:5 we read, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nation.” These two desires

help us to know more the purpose of our existence where God wanted us to be.

While in the process of knowing more about our own desires, we learned that in every phase of human life the functions of the ego develop which is responsible for protecting and helping us in working out how to present ourselves in public. Furthermore, having too high an ego can pull us down, so awareness and balance is fully advised in dealing with our ego.

We have also learned that together with our growth we develop “defence mechanisms.” We are projecting to others our own personality positively or negatively. This is quite challenging because not everybody is aware of this in dealing with this behavior. Here are some tips to know our own personality that we are projecting to others according to Sr. Maureen:

- name what you are projecting to others don't refuse to look
- take back your projection and own it
- be aware of what you are doing
- find strategies to do this better
- take it to prayer

Defence mechanisms can help us to know our unconscious desire and claim who we are. Different levels of intimacy lead us to discover our authentic self. Sometimes along the process everything is unclear because of our changing personality, which is also adjusting to the environment in which we are living. We should always remember that “crises lead us to regress our level in order to take steps forward” and never to forget to pray, to be honest with ourselves and with God.

I was inspired by the story of Lucy, our first ancestor who stood upright because the tendency of human nature is that when crisis strikes us we tend to get down and it takes time for us to stand up when we have fallen. This

person gives us courage when the time comes and we have lost our balance to find our equilibrium and live with fidelity.

## EIN KEREM

Put together by Rozeni based from the input of Sr. Kasia



Ein Kerem is an ancient village in the Jerusalem District and is now a neighborhood in southwest Jerusalem. *The Bronze/Iron age* (3000-732 BCE) Canaanite site was built around the spring in the valley of Ein Kerem (now called “Mary's spring”). According to Christian tradition, John the Baptist was born in Ein Kerem.

A spring that provides water to the village of Ein Kerem stimulated settlement there from an early time.

During the *Israelite period*, (1000–732 BC) Ein Kerem was within the region of the tribe of Judah. It may have been called Beth-Hakerem, or “house of the vineyard.”

According to the Christian Bible, Mary went “into the hill country, to a city of Judah” when she visited the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth. According to Catholic tradition and dogma, Mary, a virgin, gave birth to Jesus Christ. Theodosius (530) says that the distance is five miles from Jerusalem to the place where Elizabeth lived, the mother of John the Baptist. The researchers claim that a **water cistern** that was uncovered a number of years ago in the

cellar of the village's Church of St. John the Baptist is none other than **a mikveh, a Jewish ritual bath, from the Second Temple period (from 536 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.).**

In 1939, a British artillery unit camped in front of the church John the Baptist. The weight of one of the cannons formed a hole in the floor that proved to be an ancient cistern. Inside were fragments of a Roman period sculpture of Aphrodite and Adonis.

#### **1948 – on...**

Ein Kerem was an Arab village until 1948, comprised of Muslim and Christian families. Ein Kerem was one of the few depopulated Arab localities that survived the war with most of the buildings intact.

There is an urban legend that some of the previous residents hid sacks of gold inside the walls, and didn't have time to take them while running away from the war.

Legend or not, but in 1950, some Mr Maziano had opened a grocery store on the corner of ha-Maayan Street. He laughed at the stories of the village's elderly who claimed that his shop is the burial place of gold treasures, belonging to Dr. Joachim, who lived there until 1948.

A year after the Public Works Department started to expand the road, two bags of gold were found inside the destroyed walls. Needless to say that the owner of the house, who ran away to Jordan was devastated when he found out that his treasure was discovered, and rumor has it that he lost his mind. A year later, Arabs, former residents of the village, had broken into the house the had left, destroying a wall, and taking the goods their family hid three years ago.

#### **Today**

The Ein Kerem basin is the last remnant of traditional agricultural landscape in the environs of Jerusalem.

There are ancient terraces, orchards with grape vines, figs, almonds, pomegranates and carob and of course olive groves, as well as fragments of natural forest,

Ein Kerem also has the richest selection of traditional rural stone architecture in the country.

#### **Some Sites around Ein Kerem**

**Church of St John BaHarim** The church and monastery was built over the ruins of ancient layers - Herodian, Roman, Byzantine and Crusaders.

In the cave inside the church Christians remember the birthplace of John the Baptist, born to Zacharias the priest and Elizabeth cousin of Mary.

**Visitation church** This is a Franciscan church, built in 1955 and designed by the Italian famous church architect, Antonio Barluzzi, who also designed other churches such as the Mount of Beatitudes, Dominus Flevit and Basilica of the Agony in the Garden.

**Gorny Monastery** is a Russian Orthodox Monastery -built in **1871** it is also named "Moskovia" after the city of Moscow.

The name "Gorny Convent" refers to the visit of the Virgin Mary to her cousin St. Elizabeth "into the hill country, to a town in Judah", *gorny* means *mountainous* in Russian



**In the midst of tensions, conflicts, divisions, contradictions and war, life continuous**

**By: Arlyne**

It is almost a month already since the war between Israeli and Hamas group began. Thousands of people have been killed as a result of this conflict. Most of them were civilians. Every time there are rockets coming especially towards Jerusalem, "Air Raid Sirens sounded across Central Israel." There were rockets launched from Gaza that landed in Tel Aviv. The Israeli government advised people to stay in a safe place upon hearing the warning siren. This situation causes fear and restlessness to all because you don't know where and when the rockets will come. Since Hamas sent rockets into Israel, Israeli soldiers have attacked Gaza in defence. Daily we watched the news and became aware of the destruction on both peoples. Also we realized that it is not safe to go to Tel Aviv and have our planned holiday. And although the situation is really bad especially for the people of Gaza we had learned that life must continue with "hope against hope" that peace will be restored. Even though we decided not to go to Tel Aviv for security reasons we tried to make some plans to go to pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem, however unplanned circumstances happened. Some of us got sick and others were scared to go out and so our plans changed again. Many things have happened since the tensions, conflicts, divisions and war broke not only between Israel and Hamas group but also in the entire Middle East region. One thing I became more aware from this social reality is that life continues. Since we do not have holiday in Tel Aviv, we were able to pick up Sr. Ivone from

the airport and buy some Filipino food in the Central bus terminal. This also gave us the chance to be with Sr. Ivone during her first week in Ein Karem being welcomed by the warning sirens.

Our holidays had ended quickly but not the war. So life must continue, back to normal life. This means back to formation classes, house chores, cleaning our garden, harvesting fruits from our garden, praying for peace and the daily affairs in the novitiate. We started having inputs on basic Judaism with Sr. Anne Catherine, we had also sharing about community life with Sr. Marge and Sr. Juliana gave us input on prayer. Additionally Sr. Ivone shared her vocation story, ministry experiences and about community life. It had been two weeks already that Sr. Ivone arrived from Brazil, now our community is already complete. Finally after a long days of waiting Sr. Ivone arrived and started getting used to her new home. She will also take some classes on English conversation.



**As life continues let us also continuously pray for the restoration of PEACE, LOVE, JUSTICE and EQUITY between Israelis and Palestinians as well as in the entire Middle East Countries.**

**What can we find in the constitution about Community life from the writings of Father Theodore and from our Experiences?**

Written by Alejandra

At Sion we are called to live in community in the spirit of unity, love, hope and charity. Constitution 44.

The Spirit of Sion strives simply to reproduce the spirit of the early Christians of Jerusalem; they formed together but one heart and one soul. 5 (86)

We must always strive to maintain this Charity, this Christian unity and imitate the example of the early church where there was but one heart and one soul. 2. (297)

Our Father repeated that Union and Charity must be the distinctive characteristics of our community. 2. (299)

Your Charity must encompass everyone, especially all the needs of the works of Sion. 3 (178)

The thing that I want above all here is the love of God and Charity towards the neighbour, following the example of Jesus Christ who loved us enough to die for us. 3 (179)

To pray is to love, and when I speak about prayer. I am speaking about love. 3(181)

You must allow your heart to expand more and more by the practice of Charity. Charity? It is a divine virtue, the distinctive virtue of true Christians and consequently the virtue and quality characteristic of the daughter of Sion. 4 (70)

The rules of Sion begin and end with fraternal charity. 4 (148)

Let the Sisters of Sion be truly sisters in Jesus

Christ, and in virtue of this title let them cherish and esteem each other. But let them be careful to develop these sentiments of tenderness according to grace and not according to nature. 4 (148)

My dearest wish is that you remain lovingly united to each other, like true and faithful daughter of Sion. Let this sentiment of Charity always be super natural so that no cloud of our lower nature is ever allowed to darken or diminish it. Support and console each other: "WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, I AM IN THEIR MIDST" 5 (54)

Before Mass, our Father came to kneel once more at the foot of Calvary and the Holy Sepulcher (...) to put us all together in the Heart of Jesus in the same spirit of Unity, this is his own expression. 5 (65)

The Spirit of Sion strives simply to reproduce the spirit of the early Christians of Jerusalem; they formed together but one heart and one soul. 5 (86)

Father Theodore discovered, in the fever of the Orient, to what degree pardon is necessary in community life. 5 (89)

Father Theodore asks the sisters to pray for the reconciliation of all by fraternal charity. 5 (89)

I was counting more on the spirit of Sion which unites all souls in Charity and humility. 5 (227)

WE are aware how important is for the daughters of Sion to live in community with one heart and one soul. As sisters of Sion we have a big responsibility to live this value. For Father Theodore one heart and one soul is our great source, if we lose this important value we also lose our goal. I can see in the books of father Theodore and in the constitution, that Jesus Christ is the center of our lives. If we are close to Jesus we are able to forgive and ready to live

truth and reconciliation but it is also a free commitment to live in a community life. This is possible through prayers centered on Scripture, participation in the Eucharist and constant communion with Jesus Christ. Theodore was aware that living in a small community is very challenging so his recommendation to the sisters is; "Living so closely together, one can see defects more easily. Be indulgent with them, waiting until they disappear. Be helpful and attentive to one another, lighten each other's burdens. Fill your hearts with all the tact of Jesus Christ.

In community life we are called to increase charity in our daily life, because it is a human value. Fr Theodore likes using the word charity like "covenant" because from charity the other values automatically grow; such as solidarity, honesty, trust, respect and listening.

"Our community life is both the gift of God and the result of our Efforts." Constitutions No. 48 This authentic gift is under the influence of the Holy Spirit who intercedes insistently for us.

Living community today is a prophetic counter witness to the individualism prevalent in the modern world. (From document on 25th gen chapter, Rome 2010)

These are the essential values in living community life:

- Personal and community prayer;
- Faith sharing around the Word of God;
- Openness to reconciliation and transformation;
- Discernment to support and ensure the integrity of our lives;
- Inclusivity - being open to the other and welcoming others; (6) Sharing and celebrating our lives, talents and recourses with simplicity.

All of us we are living in community life, we

experience the openness, kindness and mission, and we all have had a similar virtue. In some communities of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion, the sisters are living with the associates and friends. We are inspired to continue to live in Sion, where God called each one to serve Him wholeheartedly.

### **DIFFERENT MOVEMENTS OF JUDAISM**

Written by María Clara Gutiérrez based on the input of Sr. Kasia and Sr. Anne Katherine



The word "Judaism" (יהדות-Yahadut) comes from the name "Yehuda" (יהודה), the fourth son of Jacob (Genesis 29, 35), which means "to praise the Lord". The word "Jews" (Yehudim-יהודים) appears only in the period of the second temple. We find it in the book of Esther (2, 5; 3, 4; 3, 6).

Before the people were called Israel and the children of Israel (בני ישראל), from the time of the Exodus (cf Exodus 1,1; 3,11 etc....). The name Israel has been found on Pharaoh Menephtah's stele who reigned 1213-1203 B.C.E.

And before this, during the Patriarchal period and before the Exodus the term Hebrews

(עבריים) was used (Genesis 14, 13; Ex 1, 16; 2, 11). From this we see that Judaism developed gradually as a culture and religion.

The temple for the Jewish people represented the presence of God; it was a place to speak to God; it had universal and particular meaning; it was a place to perform sacrifices and concrete gestures of justice. When the temple was destroyed and the Jews went into exile they experienced a big crisis of faith: Where is God without the temple? How can we meet and communicate with our Lord?

In fact the Temple was not the only institution that nourished the life of the people. There were other authorities like: the priests, the prophets, the kings. And with the destruction of the Temple, the priesthood disappeared and the kingship (Dan Greek 3, 38; Lam 2, 9; Hosea 3, 4) which was not restored after the reconstruction of the second Temple. Even though the Temple was rebuilt, there now existed synagogues, each one with a leader.

Thanks to prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the people were called to deepen and broaden their faith. Jeremiah developed the theology of **the New Covenant** and of **the Torah in the heart** (Jer 31, 31-34). The New Covenant is the same and unique Covenant established by the Lord with his people Israel at Mount Sinai, renewed and deepened throughout the history of the people, interiorized at a level that nobody and nothing can destroy (cf. Jer 31, 31).

God is not limited to a place. There are other ways to communicate with and to meet God other than in the Temple. The Temple is a sign of God's presence and dwelling concretely everywhere not just with his people but with all human beings.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Torah became the center of Jewish life. The

Jewish people began to develop prayers that kept the rhythm of the sacrifices in the Temple, 3 times a day. (Judith 9,1; Dan 6,10-11; Ps 55,18; Acts 3,1; 10,9; Luke 1,10; cf. Num 28:3-4). Even seven times a day (Ps 119,164)! This prayer was and is inspired by the Torah, and is also an original composition based on the Torah, and which emanated from the people.

**Denominations of Judaism:** Jewish movements are often referred to as denominations, branches of Judaism, and they differ from each other in some beliefs and thus in the way they observe Judaism. The differences between Jewish movements can affect: clothes, food, prayer and different melodies of songs. For example Sephardi music is livelier and Ashkenazi music is more melancholy, but they both belong to the same Judaism.

### **1. Ultra-orthodox**

Ultra-Orthodox Jews, which include Chasidic Jews, strictly observe Jewish laws and do not integrate into modern society by dressing distinctively and living separately.

One of the orthodox forms of Judaism and is divided in 6 branches: Haredi, Satmar, Chabad, Hasidic, Haredi burqa sect, Naturei Karta.

### **2. Orthodox Judaims:**

Orthodox Jews believe that God gave Moses the whole Torah (Written and Oral) at Mount Sinai. Orthodox Jews believe that the Torah (written and oral) contains 613 mitzvot (commandments) that are binding upon Jews. Modern Orthodox Jews strictly observe halakhah (Jewish Law), but still integrate into modern society.

Orthodoxy is often divided into Modern Orthodox Judaism and Haredi Judaism. Haredi Judaism is less accommodating to modernity and has less interest in non-Jewish disciples, and it may be distinguished from Modern



Orthodox Judaism in practice by its styles of dress and more stringent practices. Subsets of Haredi Judaism include: Hasidic Judaism, which is rooted in the Kabbalah and distinguished by reliance on a Rebbe or religious teacher; and Sephardic Haredi Judaism, which emerged among Sephardic (Asian and North African) Jews in Israel.

### **3. Conservative Judaism:**

Is situated between Orthodox and Liberal. It appeared in the 19th century as a compromise between both.

Conservative Judaism maintains that the ideas in the Torah come from God, but were transmitted by humans and contain a human component. Conservative Judaism generally accepts the binding nature of halakhah (Jewish Law), but believes that the Law should adapt, absorbing aspects of the predominant culture while remaining true to Judaism's values.

### **4. Humanistic Judaism:**

Humanistic Judaism, founded in 1963 in Detroit, Michigan by Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, offers a nontheistic alternative in contemporary Jewish life. Humanistic Jews believe in creating a meaningful Jewish lifestyle free from supernatural authority, in achieving dignity and self-esteem, and in reviving the secular roots of Judaism. Humanistic Judaism embraces a human-centered philosophy that combines the celebration of Jewish culture and identity with adherence to humanistic values.

### **5. Liberal or Reform Judaism:**

Reform Judaism is rooted in the Bible, especially in the prophets. They are anchored in Jewish thought and tradition. They consider all Jews to have full equality regardless of gender, or sexual orientation. The women have equality in all areas of Jewish life. They have a strong commitment to social justice and the principle

of inclusion not exclusion.

### **6 Reconstructionist Judaism:**

Reconstructionist Jews believe that Judaism is an “evolving religious civilization.” The movements do not believe in a personified deity that is active in history and does not believe that God chose the Jewish people. They may observe Jewish Law from God, but because it is a valuable cultural remnant rather than a divine command.



**WELCOME SR. IVONE,  
TO EIN KAREM!**



**NOW OUR NOVITIATE COMMUNITY IS  
COMPLETE! WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU.**