

## CHAPTER V : COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JESUS IN ABRAHAMIC TRADITIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

Abrahamic traditions are religions that are believed to have the same lineage originating from the Prophet Abraham. Each religion confesses to following the truth of the proper path as commanded by God. One of the controversial characters is Jesus, as each Abrahamic traditions differs when explaining and recognising who Jesus was as well as the teachings revealed by him. This chapter will clarify some similarities and differences regarding Jesus according to the Abrahamic traditions based on the criteria that have been studied.

### 5.2 Similarities

Similarities refer to the same point of understanding between the Abrahamic traditions in the assessment of what Jesus has done. The assessment can either be through the attitude, commentaries or opinion of the scholars in their respective religions that have been given during his time or in the present.

#### 5.2.1 Jesus Having a Good Moral Attitude

In general, morality is an act or behaviour that a person practices in every aspect of life such as when socialising with family or society. Whereas specifically, moral standards deal with matters which can either seriously harm or greatly benefit human beings. The standard measurement of moral behaviour depends on the particular

society, whether it is the result of processing that is human-made or morals taken from the Holy Book which is a revelation from God to be used as a guide.

According to the Islamic view, Jesus has good morals. During his life, he was an obedient son and was gentle towards his mother Maryam. He was also known as a pious person and lived a life like the previous prophets. In the society, Jesus was good in his interaction with others which attracted the people.

Meanwhile according to the Christianity perspective, Jesus is a great morality icon. He is a person who is very kind to people and always helps people in need. In his life, he was recognised as a tolerant person. Jesus was generous in nature and easily sympathises with society. As much as giving impetus to people, his life was also enjoyed by the people around him.

Besides that, according to the Judaism perspective, Jesus was known to be a good man to the people especially among the gentiles. His kindness has attracted many people to believe in him.

### **5.2.2 Jesus Was a Man of Knowledge**

In the Islamic perspective, Jesus is considered a very knowledgeable person. Islam acknowledges him as a servant of God who is given an understanding of religion from God including the teaching of Prophet Moses previously. Therefore, he convinces his community to follow the truth. He was also a person who practiced the previous religion similar to Prophet Moses. Even his life is mentioned in the holy book of Islam, the Quran.

Meanwhile in the perspective of Christianity, their followers believe that Jesus was also highly knowledgeable about religion, even to the extent of knowing the question of the law of which surpassed the interpreters of his time. In Jesus's life, by

designation he was known as a rabbi among his followers, indicating his understanding of the religion.

In the Judaism point of view, Jesus was also known as an expert in law and even some Jewish people of his day considered Jesus to be a rabbi. Due to that factor, Jesus's preaching gained some interest from the community when he conveyed ideas.

### **5.2.3 Jesus as a Caller to Goodness**

In the view of Islam, Jesus is also a person who always invites people to do good in life. In conveying the message, Jesus invited the people to follow the laws of religion as ordained by God. Among what is called by Jesus is to worship the One true God and for his community to follow the true sharia.

While according to the perspective of Christianity, they believe that Jesus also called the people at the time to live by the way of God that is to live with the concept of "the Kingdom of God". By implementing that life, it is believed to give a better life. In Christianity, Jesus always reminds his followers and the people that loving God is the most important thing and that the people should express their love with obedience to the commandment order and practice as God wishes with pleasure.

Meanwhile in the Judaism perspective, Jesus is also a person who calls people to goodness and to follow orders as revealed by the Prophet Moses but, he was only an ordinary person who called to the commandments of God just like other sects such as the Pharisees and Essene at the time. Among the exclamation of Jesus is to call out people of deliverance from sin.

### 5.3 Differences

Differences are contradicting points of view of the Abrahamic traditions toward Jesus whether during the birth of Jesus, his life or the nature of his mission to his community, the children of Israel. These differences led to the tenets and beliefs of their respective religions.

#### 5.3.1 The Birth of Jesus

According to the Islamic view, Jesus was the son of an Israelite woman, Maryam, who was an unmarried woman. Yet by the power of Allah, Maryam conceived Jesus without the intercession of men. For Muslims, Allah chose Maryam because she is a good and pious descendant from the Imran family. She is obedient and also believed in Allah. While from the point of view of the birth of Jesus, Islam sees the event to be the same as Prophet Adam which is considered more magical because he has no father or mother. God has the power to create everything without the need for a cause and also does not depend on others.

Meanwhile in the Christianity perspective, Jesus is a person who was born by a woman named Mary from Israel. The occurrence of Mary conceiving while being untouched by any man is a miracle which is why Jesus has been considered a child of God by Christian adherents. Christianity believes that Jesus's birth is to fulfil God's mission as the intermediary. The birth of Jesus has also been considered a fulfilment of a prophecy to be the one that had been foretold according to Jews.

Whereas from the perspective of Judaism, Jesus was a person born from Mary who at the time was still unmarried. Jesus was also considered by them to be an illegitimate child because his birth was not through a lawful marriage. The birth of

Jesus is not believed to be a miracle as in Islam and Christianity. In the Jewish understanding, the birth of Jesus was like any common birth.

### 5.3.2 Jesus's Missions

The meaning of a mission is a task that is undertaken or a goal that will be achieved by a person. In the success of the mission, various methods can be used either through intermediaries or by one's own self. However, in matters of religion, it is more about the presentation to the community for the understanding of the true content and meaning of the teachings.

In the Islamic perspective, Jesus has a mission to convey the teachings of *Tawhid* and to teach the sharia prescribed by Allah. It is necessary for humans to follow all the commandments willed by God, including in worship as well as divinity. For example, believing in the One true God and conveying the command to following some other laws.

Meanwhile from the Christian point of view, Jesus has a mission to convey the way of life that God wished such as living in the life of "the Kingdom of God" which is living according to God's commandments. Another important mission for Jesus is for Christians to make atonement for inherited sins such as redemption to ensure that human life is no longer burdened with the sin borne to mankind.

From the Jewish point of view, Jesus is not anyone important but, he is considered a person who invites to goodness. Jesus's call is considered to be like the call of other scholars who warned the people.

### 5.3.3 Jesus's Status

In this aspect, there are differences believed by the Abrahamic traditions in explaining the status of Jesus in their respective religions. Their understanding is based on a study of the teachings brought by Jesus. The teachings of Jesus are evaluated from the perspective of the root source of his teachings and also the role played by Jesus.

In Islam, Jesus is considered a prophet and messenger who was sent to preach to the children of Israel to follow the teachings of monotheism (*tawhid*) and true *shari'ah* like the previous prophets. Muslims believe that the prophets and messengers have a mission that comes from same God which is Allah. For the perseverance and patience of the Prophet Jesus in conveying his message, he was given the title of "*Rasul Ulul Azmi*".

Whereas according to the Christian perspective, Jesus is the Son of God whose presence is to save mankind from the inherited sin. The source of Jesus's teachings for Christians is believed to come from God who acted through Jesus to teach people to live as God wants.

Meanwhile in the Jewish view, Jesus was an ordinary man who invited people to follow good like other scholars of his day such as the Pharisees. Yet, the presentation of Jesus is considered to have led to public confusion because it is not in line with the authorities in Judaism such as the Rabbinic conception.

## CHAPTER VI : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Jesus as a figure gave rise to polemic debates in Abrahamic Traditions. Starting with the story of his birth, his teachings, his mission and even his status as a figure has been viewed differently by Islam, Christianity and Judaism according to their respective beliefs.

According to the Islamic view, Jesus was born without a father by the miracle of Allah to show His power. He was also promised to become a prophet and messenger ever since his mother, Mary was expecting, as commanded to the angel Gabriel by Allah to bring the news that the child that is to be conceived by Mary (Maryam) would be a messenger of Allah.

After receiving the revelation to be a messenger from Allah, Jesus began preaching to his people, the Children of Israel. His teachings are the same as the teachings of the previous prophets and messengers which is to bring the true teachings of monotheism (*tawhid*) and sharia from Allah. Muslims believe that all the teachings of the prophets and messengers are the teachings of Islam and a call for goodness and peace.

While according to the perspective of Christianity, Mary giving birth to Jesus is considered one of God's plans to provide mercy to mankind. God acts through Jesus as a man (The Son of God) to invite people to live as ordained by God. After Jesus grew up, he began his ministry to invite people to create "the Kingdom of God". That concept is an idea to make human life based on sources of teachings from God. Therefore, Jesus calls out for people to repent and follow all the commandments

given. At the same time Jesus is also believed to be a saviour from the burden of an inherited sin based on the perspective of their faith.

Meanwhile according to the Jewish perspective, Jesus is a Rabbi and not a person with a special position as believed by Islam and Christianity. Even so, Judaism believes that Jesus called the people in his time to follow the teachings of Moses. In fact, Judaism believes that Jesus did not bring a new religion but, is only seen as part of a different sect in the early days of his preaching.

The notable difference in these three religions is the concept involving the divinity of Jesus. Christianity believes that Jesus has an element of divinity. Islam and Judaism however, are very careful and express opinions that oppose to Christianity's religious beliefs. Judaism emphasises the Oneness of God and rejects the Christian concept of God in human form, whereas Islam believes Allah is *tawhid* and rejects the concept of humans as God due to idolatry.

Nonetheless, these three religions of Abrahamic tradition agree with each other on the opinion that Jesus is a person who has good character such as willingness in helping people, calling people to do good things and inviting people to follow the true teachings. With such views on Jesus, it has made it a platform for followers of the Abrahamic traditions to respect and follow their respective beliefs without making provocations that could lead to controversy.

Researchers assume that there is a need for respect and understanding between religions because it is important to make life peaceful and tolerant without provocations that can cause disputes between religions. Furthermore, mutual understanding will ease a country inhabited by various faiths and races to live in peace without causing any chaos.

Therefore, the researcher suggests further study on how Abrahamic traditions view the concept of respecting the religion of others. There are two reasons that spark this. First, to find out what is the understanding of the Abrahamic traditions on the concept of respecting religion based on their respective religions. Second, to find out what can and cannot be tolerated in the concept.

