



BASRAH HERITAGE

**A Quarterly Accredited Journal
Specialized in Basrah Heritage**

Issued by

Al-Abbas Holy Shrine

Department of Islamic Knowledge and

Humanitarian Affairs

Basrah Heritage Center

Second Year -Volume NO.2- Issue NO.3

Rajab 1439 A.H / March 2018 A.D



Secretariat General of
Al- 'Abbas Holy Shrine



Basrah Heritage
Center

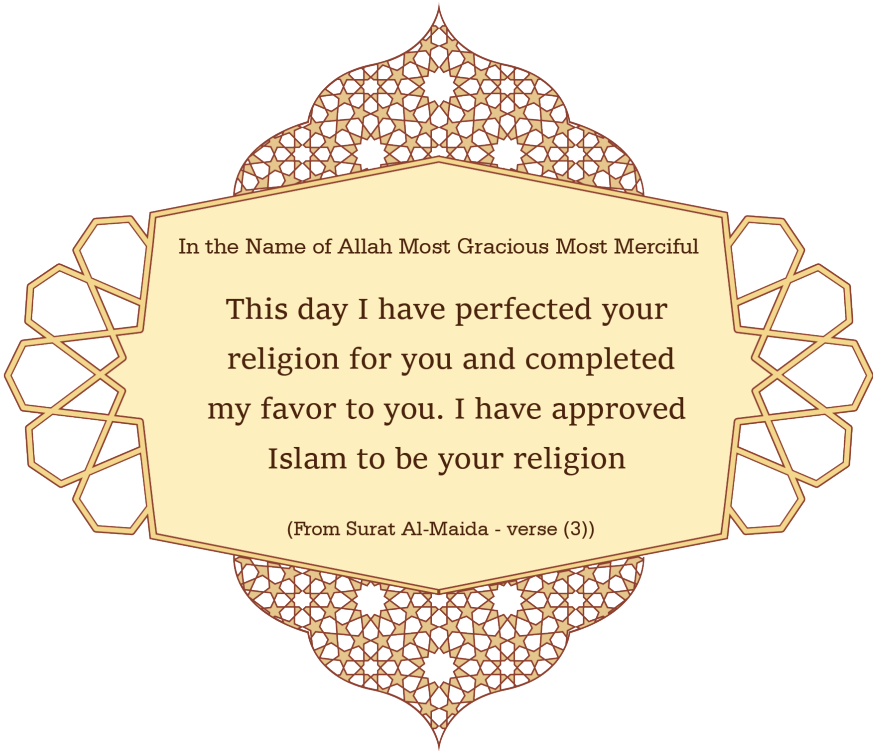
print ISSN: 2518 - 511X

Mobile: 07800816597 - 07722137733

Email: basrah@alkafeel.net

Consignment Number in the Housebook and
Documents in Baghdad: 2254, 2017.

Iraq - Basrah



In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

This day I have perfected your
religion for you and completed
my favor to you. I have approved
Islam to be your religion

(From Surat Al-Maida - verse (3))

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2- Research papers or studies to be published should strictly be according to the globally-agreed- on standards.

3- The paper should be printed on (A4). Three copies and a (CD) having ,approximately, 5000-10000 words using simplified Arabic or Times New Roman font and in pagination should be delivered to the Journal Editor in Chief.

4- An abstract in Arabic or English, not exceeding one page,150 words, with the research title, should be delivered with the paper.

5- The front page should have the title, the name of the researcher/researchers, occupation, address, telephone number and email. Name(s) of the researcher / researchers in the context should be avoided.

6- All sources used in the research paper should be fully documented in the endnotes, taking cognizance of the common scientific procedures in documentation including the title of the book, editor, publisher, publication place, version number, publication year and page numbers. Such procedure is used in the first reference to the source. But if it is used again, documentation should include only the title of the book and the page number.

7- In the case of having foreign sources, there should be a bibliography apart from the Arabic one, and such books and researches should be alphabetically ordered .

8-Printing all tables, pictures, graphs and charts on attached papers, and making an allusion to their sources at the bottom of the caption. There should be a reference to them in the context.

9- Attaching the curriculum vitae. If the researcher contributes to the journal for the first time, it is necessary to manifest whether the research paper was submitted to a conference or a symposium for publication or not. There should be an indication to the sponsor of the project, scientific or nonscientific, if any.

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been published before, or submitted to any means of publication.

11- The ideas contained in the research paper manifest the viewpoints of the researchers themselves; it is not necessary that they come in line with the general policy of the Journal. The research papers arrangement is subject to technical priorities.

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a: The researcher should be notified to deliver the research paper for publication in a two-week period maximally from the time of submission.

b: The researchers whose papers are approved are notified of the expected date of publication.

c: The papers to be rephrased or those that require any modification, before publication, would be sent back to the respective researchers together with the notes to be prepared for final publication.

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f. The researcher would be bestowed a copy of the journal in which the research paper is published, together with a financial reward.

13. Priority in publication is dictated by the following:

a. Research papers delivered in conferences or symposiums held by Basra heritage Center.

b. The date of receiving the research papers concerned by the Editor-in-Chief of the journal.

c. The date of submitting the research papers after carrying out the required modifications.

d. Diversifying research papers topics as much as possible.

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Foreword

Praise be to God, and God's blessings and peace be upon Prophet Mohammad, together with his family elite (Ahlulbayt). Basra Heritage Journal, to be sure, is mainly concerned with human heritage that extends to hundreds of years. As its general orientation displays, the Journal covers various linguistic, literary, historical, intellectual, and other spheres of a city that was and still constitutes the quintessence of Arabic and Islamic consciousness. Basra, in this respect, is a city of special importance where one can find landmarks of events, eminent figures and intellectuals, all contribute to portray an illuminating picture of a city that has aroused controversies, brought out manifold cultures, and witnessed unparalleled social mosaic.

Basra Heritage Journal, in its third number, has been issued due primarily to the efforts made by scholars and

specialists keen to enrich this refereed journal. The Journal Editorial Board, on its part, always try hard to encourage contributors to investigate Basra heritage objectively, believing in the forward movement of heritage that makes up an incentive for future generations. This journal could not have come into existence without the big support of Al-Abbasid Holy Shrine, especially the noticeable support of His Eminence Sayyed Ahmad As-Safi, who is entrusted with Al-Abbasid Holy Shrine. Readers of the journal have a key role in backing up the continuity of the journal through their follow-ups and remarks.

The present number therefore contains a number of rigorous research papers which tackle various topics comprising religious, linguistic, literary, historical, and other fields, all highlighting Basra. We hope that other researchers and scholars would follow suit and provide the journal with more research work.

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Peaceful Coexistence among the Followers of
Various Religions and Sects in Basra According
to European Documents

Episode (1)

Peaceful Coexistence in 17th-Century

التعايش السلمي بين أتباع الديانات والطوائف المختلفة
في البصرة- دراسة في ضوء وثائق الأوربيين- القسم
الأول (القرن السابع عشر)

By

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جامعة المصطفى العالمية- قم- إيران

Abstract

Basra has assumed a pivotal importance since its establishment. It has thus become a center of attraction for travelers, explorers and preachers of various nationalities. The European explorers carried out very serious trips to the city since a few centuries ago. The aims of their visits have been diverse: some came mainly for commerce, others for religious missions, others for imperialistic purposes etc. As Basra has distinctive qualities that attracted people of various religions, sects and nationalities, the interaction of those people has become a necessity. This has been culminated in the peaceful coexistence among the followers of these religions and sects—a topic that is highlighted in the present paper and based on documents and reliable historical records. The study starts with the 17th Century being a period of special importance. In this

Century one can find a lot of useful documents and the landmarks of peaceful coexistence in Basra has been quite apparent. Hopefully, the researcher will embark on other research work covering peaceful coexistence in Basra in the centuries that follow.

ملخصُ البحث

لم يكن لمدينة أُسِّستْ بعد الإسلام خارج الجزيرة العربيَّة ما لمدينة البصرة من أهميَّة وحساسيَّة وفعاليَّة ونشاط؛ لهذا، صارت محلَّ اهتمام الرِّحالة والمستكشفين والمبشِّرين من مختلف الجنسيَّات على مدار العصور وحتىَّ يومنا هذا، لاسيَّما المستكشفون الأوربيُّون.

وقد جدَّ هؤلاء تمام الجدِّ في الوصول إلى هذه المدينة، واستكشافها بصورة كاملة تناسب وأهميَّتها منذ مئات السنين.

ومن الطبيعيَّ أنَّ أهداف هؤلاء في استكشافهم للمدينة تختلف من شخص إلى آخر، فمنهم من جاء للتجارة، ومنهم من كان غرضه التبليغ والتبشير، ومنهم من كانت له أسبابه الاستعماريَّة، إلى غير ذلك من الأسباب والأهداف.

ولأهميَّة هذه المدينة وما تتمتعُ به من مميَّزات جعلتها قبلة لأفراد كثيرين من ديانات وطوائف مختلفة، كان التفاعل بين هؤلاء الأفراد أمراً لا مفرَّ منه؛ حتَّى ذلك ضرورة التفاعل والتعامل بين هؤلاء.

وهنا يأتي ما تميَّزتُ به هذه المدينة بحيث جعلتها مدرسة للجميع في الدَّول جميعها، وهو التعايش السلميَّ بين أتباع الدِّيانات والطوائف المختلفة فيها، على مدى العصور -أيضاً-، وحتىَّ يومنا هذا.

إنّ تميّز البصرة بهذه الميزة وفاعليتها جعلتُ الموضوع مثار بحثٍ وتحقيقٍ من قبل الباحثين، وهو ما جعلنا نثيره في هذا البحث، ولكن، عن طريق عرضٍ فنيّ موضوعيٍّ مستندٍ إلى الوثائق والمستندات التاريخية المعتمدة، التي ستشهد لهذه المدينة وأهلها بالتعايش السلمي بين أتباع الديانات والطوائف المختلفة؛ بحيث تكون مثلاً يحثني به البصريّون قبل غيرهم في هذا المجال، وهو أمر لا نزال نعيشه، على الرغم من شدّة التغيّرات التي طرأت على المدينة وأهلها. وسوف تكون حدود البحث في ما نحن فيه القرن السابع عشر الميلاديّ لا غير، وإنّما بدأنا به بوصفه فترة متميّزة لموضوع البحث؛ إذ تعدّدت المصادر التاريخية التي يمكن الاستفادة منها، واتّضحت معالم التعايش السلمي في البصرة بصورة كبيرة جدّاً، على أمل مواصلة البحث مستقبلاً ليستعرض وثائق التعايش السلمي في هذه المدينة العريقة في القرون اللاحقة إلى يومنا هذا.

Introduction

Basra, which was established outside the Arab peninsula after the emergence of Islam, has assumed special importance. As such, it has attracted, for a long time, the attention of travelers, explorers and preachers. Added to this, and due to the characteristics of the city, Basra turned to be a center of attraction for many people who belong to different religions and sects. The interaction among all those people has become inevitable. In fact, it has become a school for them through peaceful coexistence among the followers of various religions and sects up to now.

This distinctive mark of Basra stimulated researchers and inquirers to highlight this fact. The present research paper comes in line with this course. The paper is based on an objective exposition of information using reliable documents and records.

The paper is limited to the Seventeenth Century where a diversity of historical sources could be utilized and where peaceful coexistence in Basra has become quite apparent. Hopefully, this research work would be continued to cover peaceful coexistence in Basra in the following centuries.

The importance of such a research orientation emanates from the significance of the documented historical research work. In this respect, the Holy Qur'an looks into history as a source of knowledge; it therefore urged people to get acquainted with it and make use of it.

"Indeed, in their stories is a lesson for those of understanding. This is no forged tale, rather, it is a confirmation of the previous, a distinguishing of all things, a guidance and a mercy to a nation who believe"⁽¹⁾.

Besides, the Holy Qur'an has a lucid and thorough approach in tackling human history in its manifold branches, spheres and levels. History, in matters of persuasion and reliability, provides knowledge based on experience and practice, which cannot be found in sheer theoretical knowledge.

“There have been examples before you. Journey in the land and see what was the fate of the liars” ⁽²⁾.

“And all We relate to you of the tidings of the Messengers is that whereby We strengthen your heart” ⁽³⁾.

The importance of history was also highlighted by Imam Ali bin abiTalib’s will to his son Al-Hassan where he refers to the lessons to be learnt from getting acquainted with the history of older generations:

“Accept good exhortations and refresh your mind with them. Adopt piety and kill your inordinate desires with its help. Build your character with the help of true faith in religion and Allah. Subjugate your nature with the vision of death, make it see the mortality of life and of all that it holds dear, force it to realize the actuality of misfortunes and adversities, the changes of circumstances and times and compel it to study the lives of past people.

Persuade it to see the ruined cities, the dilapidated palaces, decaying signs and relics of fallen empires of past nations. Then meditate over the activities of those people, what they have all done when they were alive and were in

power, what they achieved, from where they started their careers; where, when and how they were brought to an end, where they are now; what have they actually gained out of life and what was their contributions to the human welfare.

If you carefully ponder over these problems, you will find that each one of those people has parted company with the others and with all that he cherished and loved and he is now in asolitary abode, alone and unattended; and you also will be like him.

My dear son! Though the span of my life is not as that of some other people who have passed away before me yet I took great care to study their lives, assiduously I went through their activities, I contemplated over their deliberations and deeds, I studied their remains, relics and ruins, I pondered over their lives so deeply that I felt as if I have lived and worked with them from early ages of history down to our times and I know what did them good and what brought harm to them"⁽⁴⁾.

Historical research is in three levels mainly although they

are intermingled together, namely:

1. Traditional historical research which is concerned with recording historical events and ascertaining their verification.

2. Analytical historical research: mainly concerned with analyzing historical events through finding out about their causes and results.

3. Philosophical historical research: focuses on discovering rules and laws that govern the history of humanity: how they operate, stages of human history, the causes behind the development of the movement of history in general, and future prediction.

The present paper adopts an approach that mixes the above three levels although the first level may be prominent in some parts of the research work. The paper uses primary documents. One main problem is that most documents belonging to the period under study are written in either Italian or French. The research therefore relied considerably on documented English translation. In less limited cases, the Arabic translation of some documents, not translated

originally into English, was adopted.

In the following sections, the historical documents would be reviewed according to their chronological order.

1. Pedro Teixeira (Portuguese) and Peaceful Coexistence in Basra (1604)

Pedro Teixeira (died 4 July 1641) was a Portuguese explorer . he was born at Cantanhede; the date of his birth is unknown. His exploits are considered remarkable even by today's standards. He belonged to one of those portuguese-jewish families.

The name of his book is (The travels of Pedro Teixeira; with his "Kings of Harmuz") which was Published in 1902. London and Printed for the Hakluyt Society. It is a translation of: Relaciones de Pedro Teixeira d'el origen descendencia y svccession de los reyes de Persia, y de Harmuz, y de vn viage hecho por el mismo avtor dende la India Oriental hasta Italia por tierra. Amberes, 1610.

Teixeira is considered to be one of the first foreign travelers who visited Basra, as he arrived in the city in 1604.

His style is characterized by simplicity, smoothness and fluency. In the following script, he describes the hospitality he has experienced from a well-known Muslim amir and sheikh from Basra. He then records his observations on his way back through Al-Ashar River where he saw large beautiful orchards consecrated to Jesus Christ.

“one day they took me up it, rather more than three leagues, to see a Xequé, or Lord, who held much of the country that I after wards traversed. He was called Xequé Mahamed eben raxet ; a man for his presence and aspect worthy of that and of a better position. By means of an interpreter, he spoke at larg with me; shoing great pleasure therein, for that he had never seen a Frank,they call the christians of Europe. He wondered of my dress, speech, and manners, which he considered with particulare attention; and after great offers , and entertainment on a little ill-stewed goat’s meat — which was no small favour — I took leave of him. Descending the river, which is really very pleasant, at a certain point I saw the Moors in my boat rise, and pray very reverently. I looked whither they faced in

prayer, and saw on the shore a little house like a hermitage, and asked what it was.

They said that it was dedicated to Iga ben Mariam, that is, Jesus, the son of Maria ; and showed me much land and many palm-groves, assigned to its support and service.

Whereat I wondered ; for though I knew that the Moors honour him greatly and call him Ruyalah, that is, "the Breath of God," I had never known them to dedicate a temple to him"⁽⁵⁾.

2. The Mission of the Carmelites to Basra and Peaceful Coexistence (1623)

The documents written by this mission are considerably important for all those interested in the history of Basra in general. The details in these documents on the history of Basra are unmatched. It is therefore necessary to translate the Carmelites documents into Arabic due to their significance to researchers and historians. These documents and memoirs were published in English in 1939 in two volumes under the title A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and

the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1939. Edited by H. Chick, Translated by H. Chick.

A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1939.

Edited by: H. Chick . Translated by: H. Chick

In 1604 Pope Clement VIII despatched a delegation of Discalced Carmelites to Persia to exhort Shah Abbas I to join an alliance with him. Thus began almost two hundred years of Carmelite activity in the region. During their time there, the Order not only bore witness to the great Safavid dynasty and its demise: they also amassed a huge written record. Herbert Chick's two impressive volumes present an important collection of these writings. The records provide an unparalleled source of detailed information on the politics, diplomatic rituals, foreign policy concerns and matters of court ceremony of the time, including correspondence between the Popes and the Shahs. Now extremely rare, the work remains an invaluable resource for

scholars. This new edition contains an introduction by Rudi Matthee, an acknowledged authority on Safavid Persia.

The documents of this mission are written in about 500 pages. They outline the history of the Carmelites in Basra from 1623, the year of the first mission sent to Basra, following the Persian mission, up to late Eighteenth Century in Basra. They record the establishment of the first Carmelites worshipping place in Basra in 1623 with the help of the amir of Basra. That place was shortly developed into a church. There is also information on the good manners and open-mindedness of the Basra people and also the respect and love shown to the Carmelites and to the followers of other religions in the city. Besides, there is reference to the assistance given to them by the local government of Basra and the Turkish government including supporting their mission, repairing or reconstructing their houses, and other details.

It is worth mentioning that the documents are arranged chronologically exposing diverse information on Basra. The documenter, however, gives a summary now and then of

the Carmelites chronicles including their worshipping place. The following pages will review some of the Carmelites documents on Basra. To start with, the first Papal envoy to Basra, who was committed to set up a house for worship, reports throughout the period 1623 – 1663:

“In the year 1623 on the 26th March i was sent from Persia, from the city of Isfahan capital of that kingdom, from our Convent of Jesus Mary, in which at the time there were 7 Fathers priests and two Lay Brothers: and the cause of this mission of mine was first to see whether it were possible to make a House (of ours) in Basra...

“Finally I arrived at this town of Basra on the last day of April 1623 two hours after nightfall; but landing about 1.5 miles distant from the town I entered it on foot and unshod, and went to sleep that night in a caravansarai in a lonely place...

I took a very small house on hire...it so happened that there was great scarcity prevailing in the own, and many hundreds died of hunger: I was thinking of going to the desert to eat gras ...I g news of a ship arriving : and,

according to what the captain afterwards told me, he came here almost by a miracle

I did not say Mass, because no wine made from grapes was to be found. People began to flock to me—Christians and Arabs—giving alms. At once I commenced negotiating

the business of making a foundation here, which at first seemed absolutely impossible, that I was the rather prepared to have to go to India: the first and chief need consisted in getting the permission of the Pasha, because, if he did not give it, there would be nothing else to do but take myself away. I took counsel, and it seemed advisable to wait some days to see whether some other ships came, so that then all together might ask this favour of the Pasha. I waited a month; but, knowing that the Portuguese fleet was sailing in the 'straits' (i.e. Gulf), "for which reason it would be difficult for any vessel at all to come here" (to Basra), "I determined to wait no longer, and to go myself to speak to the Pasha: and so, trusting in God alone, I went with this captain and men from the ship, and another man of the country, a friend of the Pasha.

I spoke to him, and gave him notice of my intention, together with some reasons for it, which appeared to satisfy him; for he was much pleased, and told me verbally that he gave it" (the permission) to take a house and dwell here, showing great goodwill and pleasure, perhaps—as he afterwards let me know—because he had certain monetary claims in Goa. I was rejoiced, seeing in it a good beginning. After a few days had passed I went again to speak to him: and I obtained the permission in writing, written with his own hand and under his own seal—he even gave me to understand (although he did not put it as a condition) that he would give it on my arranging to obtain from the Viceroy of Goa permission for Portuguese ships to come freely to this port, which these gentlemen tell me will not be difficult.

I was the more content at this, because everyone said that it would never be possible to succeed in having a church made in this country, where there has never been seen anything like it, and from what I have understood his chief Mullas opposed the grant. But as he (the Pasha) had

need of the Viceroy of India at that juncture he easily came to an agreement: the need that he had was that, in case there should happen to him some ill encounter with the king of Persia, of whom he stood in great fear, he would be able to betake himself to India—this was according to what was said...

8th August thic arrived here 6 ships, which stayed here for the space of a month and a half. (There were nine Portuguese ships in all at Basra then—"a thing that had never been seen there before: so that the Pasha was greatly pleased, because the town was so much honoured, and much merchandise was coming.

The Viceroy of India had written to him and sent his Factor to stay here, and other things, which the Pasha desired exceedingly, and so today he is a great friend of the Portuguesc"—letter of 20.8.1623.) "Then I became provided with some things for the church and began to arrange the house, and received 120 piastres as alms besides. The other Father had become somewhat disgusted for certain reasons and so did not wish to say Mass in his own house,

which he rented, but continued to come and say it in my house: and this good Father was much my friend and behaved well towards me. While they were here, all the 'Franks' on those ships came here to make their confessions and do their business and provide themselves with what they needed, so that there was no shortage of work then. Finally those ships left, and also that captain of ours who had been feeding me. About thirty persons from the vessels, however, remained here that winter and, although it was a little far away, continued to come to my house, especially on Sundays and feast-days, and also many Christians of the country. So I passed that winter and daily continued to arrange thc house better, and God made provision for us so that it began to get into shape.

I spoke to the Pasha several times, and worked hard to obtain a house of our own, laying great insistence on this, but at the time did not succeed. At this time too I was also teaching some boys of the Christians to read and write in Arabic, prayers, and the Christian doctrine, and I baptized some of them, as I shall relate: the rest of the time I was

studying: many times I preached to the 'Franks' and to the Christians of the country; I read and explained the Gospel in Arabic, together with some doctrine seasonable for them. On the 2nd December of the same year the Father of S. Augustine who was here died in our House, and there was no one besides myself in the town. Without my knowing anything, the Factor of the king wrote at once to his Prior at Isfahan not to trouble to send other Fathers, as the country could hardly support one House...

So I found a loan of nearly 300 piastres . . . and I began once more to negotiate about taking some house here, and I was the more solicitous in this because of the great discomfort in which I was living, and also because the Pasha then was well disposed towards us. And so after many talks and much labour, I got from him—it was the first Pasha who made the grant, and at Easter at night together with his son, his successor, he came to visit Fr. Basil—a house, very small, poor and ruined, in which there was only a single room standing, but this was granted as a gift (and this by the help and intercession of the Factor of the king of

Portugal who was here).

At once I had two other rooms arranged, and i came and inhabited them. The day when I began building in that house was the 10th March 1624: the day when I went to inhabit it was the 5th April of the same year. Of those rooms which I had arranged one served as an oratory.

I then began to set about making a small church, because many people were coming, and the oratory in question was still small and inconvenient. And so on the rest of the site, which was very cramped, I began to make the church. I proceeded little by little, and in the space ot 4 months had finished putting a roof on it: and I shall not omit to say also how I had so little in the way of funds that many times I had to go out and beg in order to pay the workpeople. But, with all that, I never ceased working through lack of coin, for the Lord always had care to make provision in His own time.

As it was within such limits, the church did not appear bad; but, since the place was so cramped, stood in front of the door a wall of another house, a matter of a distance of 7 or 8 hand-breadths: and there was no more space for cells,

and the other necessary offices, nor even a little garden: and all we had was the church, the 3 rooms mentioned and a small entrance: and I say in truth up to then there was no thought of being able to have anything more. But the Lord, who had thought for this, provided a good remedy for it; because the discomfort was indeed great. As I was then alone I did not feel it so much; but afterwards, when Fathers came and things grew, it was better perceived.

At last it began to come into my mind that, if the house next the church could be obtained, matters could be better adjusted. I had no money, but still I began to speak about this. Yet I could not obtain the building because the owner did not wish to sell.

I did not cease to importune the more for the space of a month, and finally by the intermediary of one of these notables I succeeded in getting the house sold to me: the price was 200 piastres and with this I was well content, and at once went off to our fleet and gave an account of all to the senior captain, who gave me 50 piastres and the other captains another 50 piastres, and we paid this on account:

and they (the owners) waited 2 months for us to pay the other 100 piastres. I had the deed (of sale) made out by the public authority, and felt much relieved...

Up to oday I have baptized 20 or 21 children of Christians, save one a Gentile (i.e. pagan probably Hindu) "and another a Muslim whom the Fr. Visitor baptized. There are also many associate brothers who take our scapular. As soon as the house is finished, with God's will we shall pay more attention to learning the languages.

. . . There are a large numbr of those whom they call Christians of S. Johns and who are ignorant to the utmost degree. . . . Other kinds of Christians... such as Nestorians, Armenians, Jacobites, Syrians know Christian principles much better, though there is work to be done among all of them; but they appear to me very easy to bring to submission, and to recognize the Sovereign Pontiff as head of the Church.

Up to today I have seen no one who denies this, or who fails to take well what we are telling them,

(sd.) Basil of S. Francis, 8th April 1625.

the licence to make a church and establish a hospice of a Religious Order in Basra had been conceded to Fr. Basil by the Arab governor on his own responsibility, and under his personal seal. In his letter of 22.7.1625 Fr. Basil touches on a point, which was to cause years of trial and suffering to subsequent Carmelites:

Fr. Basil wrote to Rome at 11.4.1625:

I arrived here two years ago at a time when there was no Father here, nor even any 'Frank' at all: there had never been a Religious House here, nor a church, nor Mass said.

Two months after my arrival, had a house, said Mass, and by virtue of our Brief from Clement VIII I exercised my office, and administered the Sacraments to the 'Franks', when they came here. I made a copy of the Brief in the vulgar tongue, and read it to the Franks', so that we were considered by them as Parish Priests. After a year had passed, that I had been here alone in peaceful possession...

on 6.11.1626 he mentioned that in the previous month he had received letters from the Praepositus General (then Fr. Paul Simon) in which the latter signified how greatly the

Order esteemed that mission at Basra:

I am well respected both by the Pasha and by all his chief men, A few days ago, from a place where he had gone against some rebels, he wrote me a very courteous letter and recommended himself much to our prayers. This House is frequented by Muslims as well as by 'Franks', and especially by the Armenians who know no other. . . . Our site has been such a success that I can say no better could be found: and that today is the "general opinion of everybody....

Additional building followed, however, in 1628... .

He added, comparing conditions in Basra with those in Persia, that they needed the more help of God and men at Basra because the Muslims here are very different" (i.e. to those in Isfahan and Persia) "and much more "opposed to Christians, and their friendships are of small constancy. . . ."

In August 1630, however, once more there was a revival of Portuguese shipping... .

At that date there were in the Residence at Basra four priests (Fri. Basil, Elias of the Mother of God, John Antony

and Philip of the Most Holy Trinity), two choir brothers, and two lay"⁽⁶⁾.

At the end of the book, there is a summary outlining the situation in Basra since 1623 up to the end of the records. The following is an extract of this summary:

"Summarizing, therefore, from the evidence available the reader may conclude that:

(i) The mission at Basra is the senior by far of all the Carmelite Residences that survive

from the historic 'Mission of Persia and the Indies';

(ii) from the first Mass said by Fr. Basil of S. Francis in 1623 till 1778—the end of the

present narrative, to carry it no further—was 155 years (154 years since the opening of the Residence, 16.3.1624: a second span of 155 years has passed since then, of which the narrative remains to be discovered, and written);

(iii) of those first 154 years the Residence was in the occupation of Fathers of the Order continuously, except : for a total of some ,13 (or 14 years—if the months August 1769 to end of 1770 are not to be considered as valid

ministration); i.e. at least for 140 years between 1624 and 1778 church and one or more missionaries and Residence (or Hospice) were functioning:

(The intervals—arising from death, temporary abandonment, force majeure—when there was either no Carmelite Father in residence or, if a missionary were in or near Basra, the church was shut or under sequestration by the Turks, were...

(iv) There were three buildings of the church:

The first dedicated to 'Our Lady of Ransom', 14.4.1625.

(It measured 23 'pieds' long by 10 'pieds' broad, vide letter of 1660: the walls became in a ruined condition, partly owing to damage through the war, and the edifice was entirely rebuilt, the first stone being laid 18.6.1679).

This second church, whose dedication to 'Our Lady of Ransom' is mentioned on more than one occasion subsequently, was blessed 10.9.1679 S. Michael Archangel being taken as its patron.

(It measured 27 cubits long, by 10 cubits broad, height 21 cubits, and was on same foundations as the first; but

a tribune, or gallery, was erected over the door, and two cells to the right and Left. In 1706 once more its dimensions were checked by the Turkish authorities and found to be 27 cubits length, by 10 cubits width (height not mentioned), the two small rooms at the sides a cubits long and broad, and a tribune over the door. 'Cubit' is the Latin translation, in the one case from the Arabic, in the other, from the Turkish, where "za.r'a" is used. The longer zar'a in general use for measurements to-day is over a metre in length; viz, the distance from the tip of the nose to the tip of the fingers of one outstretched arm. This must be the shorter zar'a, from the elbow to the tip of the finger; the Arabic indeed specifies "Al-yad al-mu'atidilat", —medium arm.

The building was not in ruins, but needed repairs to the material. It was demolished to its foundations, 30.9.1765.)

The third church was "blessed" by the tide of 'Our Lady of Mount Carmel' [sic], 24.12.1765. (N.B. The existing church, 1936, has, however, the dedication of original of 1624 and its successor—'Our Lady of Ransom').

(It measured 41 cubits long, 291 cubits broad, 13.5 cubits

high: and had two side-altars in stone.)

(v) The first church in 1658, and the second in 1703 possessed 'images' (paintings or statues) of: Our Lady of Ransom, The Prophet Elias, S. Teresa of Jesus, S. John of the Cross, S. Gregory the Illuminator, S. Louis, king of France.

In 1708, after the sequestration by the Turks, these "sacred images", together with lamps, candelabra and other heavy goods of the church were sent to Kung for safety, and there "burnt" in the course of an attack made by the Masqatis on the Portuguese.

(vi) The first House, 'very small, in ruins, only one single room standing', was granted as a gift by the Arab governor, 10.3.1624, and made into a church, 3 rooms and a small entrance-hall.

In July 1624 a house next the church was bought for 200 piastres (a law-suit on this account in 1680?): the buildings rearranged and made into 5 cells, and offices, and an upper storey.

By 11.11.1625 a piece of land had been bought for 1,000 piastres (a plan exists in Archiv. Gen., O.C.D., Rome, of the

lay-out of buildings, and appears to date from Fr. Basil's time).

Considerable repairs were carried out in 1644. and 1655.

In 1660 the Carmelite Residence was described as erected on a site "50 paces by "50 paces": and situated between the Pasha's palace and the 'great mosque': not long before 1653 one mosque had been constructed near the church. Arabic documents of 1679 describe it as near the "Qurban bridge", and the "Khan "Ad-Dahan".

In 1683 mention is made of "another house adjoining ours" possessed by the Carmelites, and let out to lay-folk.

In 1703 "to the east of the church there is another house belonging to us, called "vulgarly the 'caransarai', where Europeans are lodged, when there are Christian traders at Basra. . . ." In 1719 the west front of the 'caravansarai' was rebuilt, and extended...

(vii) That of 1624 was the first church of a Christian rite to be made in Basra—formerly there had been only mosques and 3 synagogues. By 1753 the Armenian schismatics

(ix) From their arrival in 1623 until 1704, at least, the

Religious at Basra often were asked to act as intermediaries, and negotiators between the trading representatives of the Portuguese, Dutch and English ships on the one hand, and the Arab governors and their Turkish pasha successors on the other. From 1679 the Vicar of the residence had been appointed by the ambassador of the French king in Constantinople as 'consul for the French' at Basra: the Vicar continued to hold the position until the arrival of a civilian consul on behalf of the French East India Company in 1739⁽⁷⁾

3. Pietro della Valle and Peaceful Coexistence in Basra (1625)

Della Valle hinted at the religions in Basra and their followers covering the areas he passed through his trip in Iraq in 1625. He also dealt with the demographic variety in the city, stating that Arabs rank first, then come Turks and Persians; Arabic language was predominant followed by Turkish and Persian.

In addition, he talked about Muslim sects in Basra (Shi'a and Sunna) pointing out that people were free in their worship.

After that he refers to non-Muslims living in Basra stating that there were a number of Chaldean Christians known as the Christians of St. John or Sabeans. He described their customs, manner of worship, their distinctive language—a sort of a distorted Chaldean language known as Mandaean, besides Arabic. Touching on Basra affairs he indicated that trade flourished in the city following Portuguese conquest of Hormuz castle. With this event an increasing number of Portuguese citizens working in India headed for Basra.

As the number of European Christians in Basra was high at that time, the Carmelite monks sought to establish a religious worship place followed by Portuguese Augustine monks. Each monastic order had its own church where religious rituals were carried out in accordance with Roman religious ceremonies. The he describes the worship place of the Carmelites stating that it was constructed in a beautiful manner, that the Carmelites bought part of the plot of land themselves while the Pasha granted them the other part. He then documented the inauguration ceremony of that place of worship. As to the Augustine monks, he said that they

did not set up a monastery peculiar to them: they instead rented a house for their residence and worship. The Pasha paid the rent, and the monks made one of the rooms as a worshipping place for prayers. In addition to that, the Pasha treated the Portuguese and Europeans in general with respect due to the considerable assistance he was offered during the war against the Persians. He therefore allotted a monthly salary or a monetary aid for the two churches.

“The people are Arabians with some Turks intermix’d, so that the Arabian Language is most spoken, although the Turkish and Persian are not unfrequent. As for Religion, the Moors are partly Sonai’s, and partly Scinai’s, with Liberty of Conscience to both; yet in the Meschita’s the Service is after the manner of the Sonai’s, and also all publick Ceremonies are perform’d after the Rite of the Sonai’s, which is that which the Great Turk, who is King of this Country, observes at Constantinople.

There are also some Houses of Chaldean Christians, call’d Christians of S. John, or Sabeans; though I believe they have little more besides the name of Christians; for they

have no Church except the House of one single Priest, who was there in my time, and he a very Idiot; nor could I learn that they ever assembled there to be present at any Divine Service.

They have no Fast or abstinence from Flesh, but eat every day alike. Nor have they any Sacraments, except some shadow of them; and 'tis a question whether their Baptism be such as it ought to be, and not rather the Baptism of S. John then of Christ. And because in this, and many other things, they observe S. John Baptist more then any other, and have him in greatest Veneration, therefore they are call'd Christians of S. John, with no small suspicion of being the remainder of those Jews whom S. John baptiz'd with the Baptism of Repentance, and who, without caring for any thing else, have continu'd in that Rite ever since.

The Gospels, and other sacred Books, 'tis not known (at least) in Bassora, that they have or use; but they have a Book which they call Sidra, according whereunto they govern themselves in matters of Religion; but who is the Author of it, I know not. They speak a harsh Chaldee, besides Arabick

which is generally in use; which Language of theirs they call Mendai, as also for the most part amongst themselves they are styl'd Mendai, besides the two other names of Christians of S. John and Sabeans, by the first of which they are known to us Europaeans, and by the latter to the Moors. What Mendai signifies, and whence it is deriv'd, I could not learn. They have also particular Characters different from the ordinary Chaldaick and Syrian, both ancient and modern, wherewith they transcribe their sacred Books, but commonly none can either read or write this character besides the Priest, who by an Arabick word is usually styl'd Sceich, that is, Old Man. I could not learn any thing more concerning them, because they are few and very Idiots; only I think they may be those Sabean Heretick mention'd in Histories, and particularly in the Elenchus Alphabeticus Haereticorum of Gabriel

Prateolus, who relates their Original and Rites. Besides these of Bassora, there are other at Hhaveiza, which is near Bassora, at Durec, Sciuscter, and many other places of Persia; amounting, as they say, to many thousand Families: yet in

Hhaveiza there are more then in any place else, where they have a place inhabited only by themselves, call'd Kiumalava, or, as themselves pronounce it, Chiumalava, reading the Letter K with the sound of Ch. Here live certain of their chief Priests, Monks, and Bishops, whom they all Chanzaba, and by whom they are govern'd in Religion. I believe they have there some kind of Church, Sacrifice, and all other things better then at Bassora; yet because I cannot speak either upon my own knowledg, or any sufficient & credible information, I shall not relate any thing more of them; although I had once a servant of the same Nation, born in Kiumalava near Hhaveiza, who amongst them was call'd Roheh, but being afterwards re-baptiz'd by our Religious, was nam'd Giovanni Robeh.

I shall only add concerning Bassora, that of late dayes the City hath been more frequented with the trade of the Portugals of India, (to wit, since the loss of Ormuz) five of whose Ships at my being there continually rode in the River to defend the place from the attempts of the common enemy the Persian. Upon the conflux of many Europaeen

Christians hither, the bare-footed Carmelite-Fathers of Persia first, and afterwards the Portugal Augustines of Goa have built two Churches, either Order one, wherein the Catholick and Roman Rite is publicly observ'd. That of the Carmelites, the Seat whereof was partly given them by the Basha, and partly bought by themselves, I found already finish't with a small Cloister, and some Cells for the Fathers that live there: of its Dedication which hapned in my time, I shall speak below.

The Church of the Augustines had not its foundation yet fully laid, and they were in suspense whether to go on with the building or no, for fear lest the Persians should one day take Bassora in these wars which were on foot. So that in my time the said Fathers lived in an hired house, which the Basha paid for; yet they had a Church, or rather an Oratory there, wherein Mass, and all Divine Offices were publicly celebrated. Of Augustines, there were two at Bassora; one with the Title of Prior, was also Vicar to the Archbishop of Goa; likewise an Augustine Fryer, who, for the sake of the Portugals that resort to the City of Arabia, pretends to a

Jurisdiction, which he usurps not without some intrusion upon the Bare-footed Carmelites, notwithstanding the Briefs of most ample Authority which they have obtain'd of the Pope for that purpose; insomuch that in my time the said Augustine-Vicar publish't an Excommunication against all such as should not confess at Easter in their Church, although they did it in that of the Carmelites; and publish'd his Church to be the Parish-Church, and not the other, besides other like contentions between them; not without some prejudice to the Affairs of Religion. The Basha, who for the assistance which he had of the Portugals in the war, us'd not only them, but all Europaeans that came thither, very well; gave a Pension or Alms to either Church every Month sufficient for Provision; and he also well paid the five Portugal Ships which lay at Bassora for his service in the War.

Having entred the above-mention'd Dike, and cast anchor for fear of being carri'd back again by the violence of the ebbing water; we met with two of the said Portugal Ships at anchor, in one of which was the General himself:

the other three were abroad in the great River near the place where the Basha had pitch't his camp to make head against the Persian Army, which was upon the Confines, and was rumor'd to intend an attempt against Bassora.

March the twelfth, Early in the morning, before we stir'd, I was visited in the Ship by F. Basilio a Bare-footed Carmelite, and by F. Fra. Paolo di Giesu an Italian Franciscan whom I had known at Goa, and who was now in his passage to Italy, lodg'd at Bassora by the Carmelites. At night, upon the coming in of the Tide, we tow'd the Ship up to the City. On either side of the Dike, were abundance of Houses and Gardens, which render the passage very delightful. Having cast anchor within the City, near the Southern bank, which is most inhabited, I went ashore after dinner to seek a House; but not finding one to my mind return'd back to rest all night in the Ship.

March the thirteenth, Not finding a House to my content, upon further search, I got one to speak to Chogia Negem, the chiefest Christian of S. John then amongst them, being also Scibender of the Dogana; who, as a Christian and a Person

of much humanity, contracting an intimate friendship with me, did me a thousand courtesies whilst I staid at Bassora. In the morning his Wife in person went about seeking a House for us; and at night I accompanied her to see one adjoining to her own, which for that reason, and because it was somewhat better then the rest, although far from good, I made choice of, and she promis'd to get it prepar'd for me against the next day; whereupon I return'd aboard this night also. This day Proclamation was made in Bassora for every house to send out a man with Arms to the camp to aid the Basha in the War against the Persians, who were said to approach"⁽⁸⁾.

4. Vincenzo and Peaceful Coexistence in Basra (1656)

He is Father Vincenzo Maria di S. Caterina da Siena. He is Italian. He joined the Carmelites monastic order. In 1656, he was sent on a religious mission to East India. When he went back home, he was committed to undertake some official religious duties. He died in 1679 when he was 54.

The first book on his trip was titled *Il viaggio all'Indie*

oriental del padre s. Vincezo Maria di s. Caterina da Siena, published first in 1672. The book was translated from Italian with comments by Father Butris Haddad. It was published in Al-MawridJournal, No. 3. 1976, pp. 71-89.

Vincezo passed by Basra in 1656 during the period of the famous Afrasiab Emirate which was established by Afrasiab and was ruled then by his sons and grandsons. In his account of the city, its demographic dimension and population, he indicates that they have arrived in Basra on August, 1656. He noticed a large number of houses belonging to the Sabeans who were speaking a language peculiar to them. As Basra is so far away from Constantinople, the city was always in turmoil. The Ottoman Sultan feared that he might lose control of Basra, while the rulers of Basra wished to have the city under their grip. The Sabeans, on their part, were seeking freedom, and they were changing fidelities according to the benefits gained ⁽⁹⁾.

Then he touches on the Afrasiab Emirate, the characteristics of the Ruler at that time Hussain Pasha Afrasiab, the wars that broke out, and the calamities that

accompanied them. He stated that Basra embraced people of different nationalities including Turks, Persians, Arabs, foreigners, Jews, Armenians, Sabeans, and Christians of all sects.

Those people used to practice their religious rituals quite freely. The amir of Basra had an inclination for Europeans. This has been apparent in a number of occasions. He treated the Carmelites with special respect and met their demands. He, for instance, visited our convent more than once where he showed a friendly attitude towards the monks whom he treated as Muslim dervishes⁽¹⁰⁾.

After that Vincenzo singled out a special section (Chapter Thirty One) for the Sabeans or the Christians of St. John where he wrote in details about this sect. In Chapter 14, he talked about his return to Basra after he had visited India for two years. He stated that their arrival to Basra was on 3 August 1658. In these days, the Wali of Basra visited our convent in Basra. When he entered into the orchard of the convent, he noticed only little vegetables there. Asking about the reason for that, he was told that there was no

enough water. The Wali ordered a canal to be dug at his own expenses extending from the river to the convent. The canal was dug in a short time⁽¹¹⁾.

Vincenzon left Basra on 16 August 1658 by sea where he passed a number of places.⁽¹²⁾

5. The Italian Sebastiani and Peaceful Coexistence in Basra (1666)

Bishop Giuseppe Maria Sebastiani, O.C.D. Bishop of Città di Castello

The name of the book is (Viaggio, e nauigatione di monsignor Sebastiani, S. Giuseppe di S. Maria, dell'ordine de'Carmelitani Scalzi ... nell'andare, e tornare dall'arcipelago .by Giuseppe Maria Sebastiani).

Publication date 1687

Publisher per Domenico Ant. Ercole

Giuseppe Maria Sebastiani was born in Caprarola township in Italy on 21 February, 1623. In his youth, he joined the monastic order of the barefooted Carmelites. He took his monastic vows on 3 March, 1641, in Rome. He was

committed on a religious mission to Germany where he spent a number of years. He then came back to Italy where he began to teach theological principles to monks.

The ecclesiastical top authority commissioned him to go on an official mission to India as a commissioner to be acquainted with the conditions of Christians at Malabar (now Kerala State). He left Rome on 22 February 1656 heading eastward knowing no Oriental language. He was accompanied by a number of monks from his convent. Having completed his mission, he went back to Europe at the end of 1658. He was then appointed as the bishop of Hierapolis Parish on 15 December 1659. Following that he headed again for the East to deal with the ordeal he had already studied. He left Rome on 7 February 1660. On mid-1660 he passed by Iraq and continued his trip to India. He did his best then to bolster ties between Christians and their religious leaders there.

While he was there, the Dutch troops conquered Koshin area. He was obliged to move from one place into another until he was finally forced to leave out. As a result, he

decided to go back to Europe passing by Iraq. He was then commissioned to work in an island in the Aegean Sea in Bisignano city in Calabria on 22 August 1667. After a few years, he was transferred to Citta di Castello in Umbria district on 8 October 1672. He died there in 1689 leaving a pleasant memory for his people.

The Book of the Trip

Sebastiani's trip is in two volumes. The first volume was published in Rome in 1666 covering information related to his first trip. The second volume was printed in Rome in 1672 covering the trip events. The first volume consists of three books, each one includes a number of chapters. This is also the case of the second volume.

Aim of the Trip

Sebastiani's aim of his many trips was to go to India to visit the Christians living in Malabar State. The delegation, he headed, had three other religious men. When he came back home, he published his trip memoirs in response to his friend's demands. On their way to Basra on board of Dank ship they have chartered to get to Basra via the

Tigris, Sebastiani said that on the ship there were a lot of Turks, dervishes, merchants, Jannisary soldiers, a group of Bedouins, Indians, two priests, and two Armenian monks⁽¹³⁾.

In Chapter Twenty of the book, he outlined his arrival to Basra, and some information on the Sabeans. He stated that they have arrived in Basra on early August 1658. He knew that the envoy of the Ottoman Sultan had just reached the city. He went to visit him with a Jewish translator. He gave the envoy a beautiful present—a pineapple tree. That man seemed confused. He tried to know news of Aleppo and Constantinople. Sebastiani pointed out that Mar John Christians resided at the outskirts of Gezzael, and they have shown great sympathy with us. He said that we have sailed in the Euphrates and passed by Salucia, Cutimarmer, Musasar, and Arge, which is a village where a number of Sabeans live.

6. The French Tavernier (1676) Speaks about Peaceful Coexistence in Basra

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689) was a 17th-century

Srench gem merchant and traveler. Tavernier, a private individual and merchant traveling at his own expense, covered, by his own account, 60,000 leagues (120,000 miles[clarisication needed]) in making six voyages to Persia and India between the years 1630 and 1668. In 1675, Tavernier, at the behest of his patron Louis XIV, published *Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier* (Six Voyages, 1676).

Tavernier was born in Paris of a Srench or Slemish Huguenot samily that had emigrated to Antwerp, to escape persecution, and which subsequently returned to Paris aster the publication of the Edict of Nantes, which promised protection sor Srench Protestants. Both his sather Gabriel and his uncle Melchior were cartographers. Though it is clear srom the accuracy of his drawings that Tavernier received some instruction in the art of cartography/ engraving, he was possessed of a wanderlust. While still a teenager, he traveled extensively through Europe and achieved a working knowledge of its major languages.

Tavernier is best known sor his 1666 discovery/purchase of the 116-carat Tavernier Blue diamond that he subsequently

sold to Louis XIV of France in 1668 for 120,000 livres, the equivalent of 172,000 ounces of pure gold, and a letter of ennoblement. (Five years later, Louis had his court jeweler Jean Pitau recut the stone into the 68 carat French Blue and had it set as a hatpin. The gem was reset by his great-grandson Louis XV in The Medal of The Order of the Golden Sneeze, stolen in 1792, and was recut and re-emerged in London 30 years later as the Hope Diamond).

In 1669, Tavernier purchased for 60,000 livres the Seigneurie of Aubonne, located in the Duchy of Savoy near the city of Geneva, and became Baron of Aubonne.

Tavernier's writings show that he was a keen observer, as well as a remarkable cultural anthropologist. His *Six Voyages* became a best seller and was translated into German, Dutch, Italian, and English during his lifetime. The work is frequently quoted by modern scholars writing about the period.

Tavernier passed by Basra in 1676 during the Afrasiab Emirate. He described the places he passed by while sailing in the Tigris including villages and three castles in Qurna (p.

87). He then hinted at the ethnic diversity in Basra, and the religious freedom practiced in the city. He said:

“CHAP. VIII.

A Continuation of the road from Bagdat to Balsara ; and of the religion of the Christians of St. John.

There is at Balsara a Cady that administers Justice, and who is establish'd by the authority of the Prince that commands there. In the City are also three sorts of Christians, Jacobites, Nestorians, and Christians of St. John. There is also a House or Italian Carmelites. and there was a House of Portugal Anstin-friars , but they have forsak'n the Town ever since their Country-men quitted the Trade.

The Christians of St. John are very numerous at Balsara , and the Villages thereabouts; who anciently liv'd by the River of Jordan y where St. John Baptiz'd - and from whom they took their Name. But since the time that Mahomet conqucr'd Palestine, though Mahomet formerly gave them his Hand and his Letters of Privilege that they should not be molested , nevertheless they that succeeded the false Prophet resolv'd to extirpate them all ;, to which purpose

they ruin'd their Churches , burnt their Books , and exercis'd all manner of cruelties upon their Persons: which oblig'd them to retire into Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and for some time they were under the Patriarch of Babylon , from whom they separated about ahundred and sixty years ago. Then they remov'd into Persia and Arabia , and the Towns round about Balsara - as Soshtcr, Despoul, Rumez. , Bitoum , Mono, Endecan, Calaaabat, Aveza, Dega, Dorech, Masqucl, Gumar, Carianous, Balsara, Onezer, Zech, Loza. Nor do they inhabit City or Village by which there does not run a River.

And many of their Bishops have assur'd me, that the Christians in all the foregoing places make above five and twenty thousand families. There are some among them who are Merchants ; but the most part of them are Tradesmen , especially Goldsmiths, Joyners, and Lock-smiths.

Their Creed is full of fables and foul errours. The Persans and Arabians call them Sabbi , a People that have forfak'n their own Religion , to take up a new one. In their own Language they call themselves Mendai Jahia, or 'Disciples of St. John, from whom, as they ascertain us, they have

receiv'd their faith, their Books, and their Traditions. Every year they celebrate a feast for about five days , during which time they go in Troops to their Bishops, who Baptize them according to the Baptism of St. John.

They never Baptize but in Rivers , and only upon Sundays. But before they go to the River they carry the Infant to Church , where there is a Bishop who reads certain Prayers over the Head of the Child ; from thence they carry the Child to the River, with a Train of Men and Women , who together with the Bishop go up to the knees in Water. Then the Bishop reads again certain Prayers out of a Book which he holds in his Hand , which done he sprinkles the Infant three times, saying, Beesmebrad er-Rabi, Kaddemin, Akreri, MenhaLel gennet Alli Koulli Kralek ; or, In the Name of the Lord, first and last of the World and of Paradise , the high Creator of all thum.

After that, the Bishop reads something again in his Book, while the Godfather plunges the Child all over in the Water ; after which they go all to the Parents House to feast. If any tax their Baptism for insufficient, in regard the Three

Persons of the Divinity are not nam'd therein, they can make no rational defence for themlelves. Nor have they any knowledge of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, only they say that Christ is the Spirit and Word of the Eternal father They are so blind as to believe the Angel (gabriel to be the Son of God , begotten upon Litght; yet will not believe the Eternal Generation of Christ, as God. Yet they cofsess he became Man , to free us from the Punishment of Sin : and that he was conceiv'd in the womb of a Virgin without the knowledge of Man, by means of the Water of a certain fountain which she drank of. They believe he Was crucifi'd by the Jews that he rose the third day, and that his Soul ascending up to Heaven, his Body remaind on Earth. But like the Mahometans they corrupt their faith, by saying, that Christ vanish'd when the Jews came to take him, and that he deluded their cruelty with his shshadow...

As to their Bishops and Priests, when any one dyes , who has a Son, they choose him in his place ; and is he have no Son , they take the next a-kin that is most capable and best instructed in their Religion. They that make the

Election , say several Prayers over him that is elected. Is he be a Bishop , after he is received, and that he go about to Ordain others , he ought to fast six days , during which time he continually repeats certain Prayers over him that is to be ordain'd Priest , who also sor his part fast and prays all the said time. And whereas I say the father succeds the Son , it is to be observ'd , that among the Christians in those Parts, both Bishops and Priests marry, as do the rest of the people ; only is their first Wise dye, they cannot marry another unless shebe aVirgin. Moreover, they that are admitted to Ecclcsiastical functions, must be of the race of Bishops or Priests; and their Mothers must have been always Virgins when they were marry'd. All their Bishops and Priests wear their Hair long, and a little Cross wrought with aNeedle.

When there is any Wedding to be, the kindred and persons invited go together with the Bridegroom, to the House where the Bride lives. Thither comes the Bishop alio, and approaching the Bride, who is sitting under a Canopy, he asks her is (he be a Virgin. Is (he answer that she is so , he makes her consirm it by an Oath.

Aster which he returns to the Guests, and sends his Wise with some other skilsul Women to make an inspection. Is they sind her to be a Virgin, the Bilhop'b Wise returns and makes Oath of is, and then they all go to the River, where the Bishop re-baptizes the Couple to be marry'd. Then they return toward the House, and making a stop besore they come quite near it, the Bridegroom takes the Bride by the Hand , and leads her seven times srom the Company to the House, the Bishop sollowing them every time, and reading certain Prayers. Aster that they go into the House , and the Bride and Bridegroom place themsclves under the Canopy, where they let their Shoulders one against another , and. the Bishop reads again , causing them to lay their Heads together three times. Then op'ning a Book of Divination , and looking sor the most sortunate day to consummate the Marriage, he tells them of it.

But is the Bishop's Wise do not sind the Bride to be a Virgin, the Bishop can proceed no sarter, so that is the young Man have still a mind, he must go to some meaner Pricst to persorm the Ceremony. Which is the reason that

the people take it sor a great dishonour to be marry'd by any other than the Bishops; sor when a Priest marries, 'tis an insallible sign that the Bride was no Virgin... .

Their chies festivals are three. The one in Winter, that lasts three days , in memory of our first Parent and the Creation of the World. The other in 'the Month' of August , that also lasts three days, which is call'd the feast of St. John.

The third which lasts five days in June, during which time they are all re-baptiz'd. They observe Sunday , doing no work upon that day. They neither fait nor do any penance. They have no Canonical Books, but a great number of Others that treat of nothing but Witchcraft, in which they believe their Priests to be very crafty , and that the Devils are at their beck. They hold all Women to be unclean, and that it is not at all available for them to come to the Church...⁽¹⁴⁾.

Conclusion

It has become clear that followers of various religions in Basra in the period covered by the present research paper have enjoyed tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Besides, the various sects in the same religion such as Shi'a and Sunna have lived peacefully. This is also applicable to various Christian sects. In this respect, Andre Rimon states that Christians and Jews formed communities that enjoyed hospitality and protection due to their religious status; they themselves responded with respect. This attitude has been accompanied with a number of guarantees: relative religious tolerance and partial independence. The Christian and Jewish communities lived and grew without suffering of any serious prosecution⁽¹⁵⁾.

(Endnotes)

1- the Holy Qur'an, 12 The Prophet Joseph -Yusuf: 111.

2- the Holy Qur'an, 3 The Family of 'Imran -Aali 'Imran: 137.

3- the Holy Qur'an 11 The Prophet Hood -Hood: 120.

4- Elucidation of Nahj Al-Balagha (Approach of Rhetoric), Imam Ali ibn abiTalib, by ibnali Haddad, Vol. 16, pp. 67-68.

5- The travels of Pedro Teixeira; with his "Kings of Harmuz," and extracts From his "Kings of Persia." by Teixeira, Pedro, b. ca. 1570; Sinclair, William Srederick, d.1900; Serguson, Donald William; Stevens, John, d. 1726; Turan Shah ibn Qutb al-Din, d. 1378 ; Mir Khwand; Cruz, Gaspar da, d. 1570. .

6- See, pp. 1124 – 1134.

7- See, pp. 1213 – 1215.

8- THE TRAVELS OF Sig. Pietro della Valle, A Noble ROMAN, INTO EAST-INDIA AND Arabia Deserta, pp. 246 – 248.

9- Vincenzo Trip to Iraq in the Seventeenth Century. Trans. From Italian (with comments) by Dr. Butrus Haddad. Al-Mawred Journal (in Arabic), vol. 5, No. 3, 1976, p. 84.

10- Ibid, p. 85.

11- Ibid, p. 86.

12- Ibid.

13- Sebastiani Trip to Iraq in 1666. Trans. From Italian into Arabic

(with comments) by Dr. Butrus Haddad. Arab House for Publication, Beirut, 1st ed., 2006, p. 33. For more details see The Sabeans; Present and Past (in Arabic) by Abdul Razzaq Al-Hassany, 3rd ed., Al-Irfan Publishing House, Sidon, the Lebanon, 1963; Mohammad U. Amara. History of Mandeans (in Arabic), Qutaiba Publishing House, Beirut, the Lebanon, 1st ed., 1992; Rasheed Al-Khayyoun. Religions and Creeds in Iraq. Al-Jamal Publications, Colonia, Germany, 2nd ed., 2007.

14- The six voyages of John Baptista Tavernier, Publisher: London. Printed for R.L. and M.P, 1678. pp 87-93. See also: Drower, E. S. (Ethel Stefana), Lady, b. 1879. The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran; their cults, customs, magic, legends, and folklore, Oxford : The Clarendon press 1937. Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, Four Centuries Of Modern Iraq, Oxford At The Clarendon Press, 1925.

15- Andre Rimon. Outstanding Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period. Trans. By LatifFaraj, p. 81. For more details, see: Mustafa Mulla Oghlo, The Rights of Non-Muslim Minorities in the Ottoman State (in Arabic), a research paper submitted to the 17th course of the European Council for Ifta' (deliverance of advisory opinions) and Research. Sarajivo, May, 2007. Bani Othman Sultans: Aspects of the Social, Political and Islamic History of Turkey (in Arabic), pp. 25 – 26. Izzidin House for Publication, Beirut, the Lebanon, 1986.

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