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## **" The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East" (10)**

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### **Chapter 1 Wave of nationalism and socialism (1945-1956)**

#### **1-4(10) Israel independence(2): Who is a Jew?**

No one will object to saying "Israel is a Jewish country." But defining the "Jewish" is awkward. If the Old Testament tells the truth, the Jewish root are Abraham's clan who settled in Canaan (Promised Land) of Palestine around the 20th century BC. They belong ethnically to the Sem family and are the same lineage with the Arab peoples. The Jews would not like to be equated with Arabs, but they are the same strain in terms of biology or folklore.

The ancient Israelis believed in monotheistic Judaism, and lived together honoring religious leaders as prophets. Moses, who came back to Canaan with his clan detained in Egypt in the 13th century BC, was one of such prophets. In the 10th century BC, King David and his son Solomon built a temple in Jerusalem and prospered as the kingdom of Israel, and then the kingdom of Judah. However since the 6th century BC it was often invaded by the neighboring Babylonian Kingdom. The Kingdom of Juda was conquered, and the Jews were forcibly relocated from Jerusalem to Babylonia (Babylon captivity). Later, they were released by Cyrus II, the founder of Achaemehid Dynasty in Persia who destroyed Neo-Babylonian Empire. They returned to Jerusalem and reconstructed the temple of Jerusalem under the rule of the Egyptian dynasty, and Kingdom of Judah had controlled under the reign of the Roman Empire from the BC to the AD.

As a result of frequent revolt against the Roman Empire in around AD 100s, Jews were prohibited from living in Jerusalem, being thoroughly repressed by Roman Emperor Hadrian in 135 AD. From this time long Jews' discrete (Diaspora) began. They had to settle in various places of Europe.

Semian Jews who kept their own religion were despised and persecuted in Europe where Christianity deeply rooted. The stigma of Judas who betrayed Christ was burdened on the Jews. Christians constrained the Jews to "ghetto" (residential district) and pressed them the dirty job.

One of such job was the moneylending. In the medieval Christian society moneylender was regarded

as a filthy occupation. It was because the financial business in which human beings were bound by greed. Greed to gold was incompatible with the purity of religion. To avoid the moneylending business was not only in Christianity but also in Islam. Islam was more strictly interpreted and even now Islamic society thinks that the interest is "Al-Haram (repelling)" and is prohibited to take interest. As shown in Shakespeare's play "Merchant of Venice", the moneylending business at that time was monopolized by Jewish people. In Europe, even highly educated man like Shakespeare hated Jews. Such a stereotypical Jewish view remained until the first half of the 20th century, and the biggest tragedy was the Holocaust by Nazis in Germany.

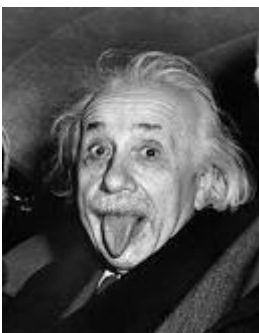
Looking back over the history of Judea as described above, It is extremely difficult to answer the question "Who is a Jew?" in a single word.

First of all Jews can not be described as one ethnic group in biological meaning. There is no doubt that their origin was Semites. But the current Jews who have survived Diaspora for nearly 2,000 years do not share the DNA's identity.

Can we define the Jews in religion called Judaism? No. Those who convert from Judaism to Christianity also refer to themselves as Jews. Most Jews in the United States are Christians. Jews are ambiguous in terms of religion.

Eventually, Jewish people are whom other people say that "You are a Jew" or who say that "I am a Jew". This is a synonym repetition and is not definition of Judaism.

In Europe until the early modern days the Europeans tried to look down Jews and confine them in the ghetto. The Jews who didn't want to live as Christian but as Judaism lived quietly in a corner of society concealing of Jews.



However, when Jewish bankers like Lord Rothschild had the ability to play a role in warfare, or one genius in natural science such as Albert Einstein appeared in the history, it occurred that the movement to make the identity clearer among the Jews. All those who self-termed Jews was regarded as Jews. After the World War II through the Holocaust, all of Jews were assured safety and prosperity. They, therefore, declared themselves as Jews in public. In that sense, among the Jews immigrating to Israel from Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there is no doubt that some of them are nothing to do with the genuine Jews.

Israel was established by genuine Jews and non-genuine Jews who self-proclaimed as Jews. Israel is still growing and expanding.

(To be continued ----)