

Religious Approach to Extremism: A Comparative Study of Jewish and Islamic Sacred Texts

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Abstract

Nowadays Islam is focused as an extremist religion and a group of western thinkers and media is portraying Islamic teachings as war mongering extremist revelations. In this paper we will take a view of sacred texts of Islam and Judaism and analyze their approach towards extremism and practical context by using scientific primary and secondary documental research methodology. The reason of taking Judaism into research with Islam is that Judaism is the oldest Semitic religion and Jews have a hold over world media and economy. It concludes that if the extremism is related to the sacred texts and prophets then Judaism has a lot of sacred text which call upon extremism.

Keywords: Religions, Extremism, Islam, Judaism, sacred texts

Introduction

The Jewish concept that Jews are the chosen people due to the seed of Abraham and they are the righteous people on the earth has developed a sense of superiority in their minds which eventually leads them towards the superstition that they are chosen beloved nation of God and all other

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nations and religions are inferior and have to be led by them. One can easily see that they always adapted all right or wrong extreme ways to rule over the world. Actually due to this sense of superiority the whole globe has been covered with extremism. Genesis speaks: And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, unto thy seed will I give this land: and there bulided he can alter unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.³

Many extremist laws and beliefs in Judaism are based on this covenant that they are chosen people; this is the core of Judaic beliefs, some radical Judaic laws are as follows:

Laws against Gentiles (Non-Jews) in Sacred Books of Judaism

In Judaic society Talmudic teachings are more in practice as compared to any other sacred book. The Talmud particularly classifies all those who are not Jews as animals because they are not offspring of Adam. Talmud is full of such laws and teachings which are based on the violence and discrimination of Gentiles.⁴ Some of these Laws are as follows:

The Jews are called human beings, but the non-Jews are not humans. They are beasts.⁵ The souls of non-Jews come from impure sprits and are called pigs.⁶ Although the non-Jew has the same body structure as the Jew, they compare with the Jew like a monkey to a human.⁷ If you eat with a

³ Genesis, 12 : 1-7.

⁴ Richard Henry Popkin, *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews* (Netherland: E. J. Brill, 1990), 203; Fred Astren Karaite, *Judaism and Historical Understanding* (Carolina: University of South Carolina, 2004), 126.

⁵ Talmūd, baba mezia, 114b.

⁶ Talmūd, Jalkut rubeni gadol, 12b.

⁷ Talmūd, Schene luchos habirith, 250b.

Gentile, it is the same as eating with a dog.⁸ A pregnant non-Jew is no better than a pregnant animal.⁹ Sexual intercourse between Gentiles is like intercourse between animals.¹⁰ Gentile girls are in a state of niddah (filth) from birth.¹¹

Disobeying of Rabbis is prohibited (as of Brahmans in Hinduism)

Whosoever disobeys the rabbis deserves death and will be punished by being boiled in hot excrement in hell.¹² Talmud States that no rabbi can ever go to hell.¹³

Murder of non-Jew is permitted

Every Jew, who spills the blood of the godless (non-Jews), is doing the same as making a sacrifice to God.¹⁴ It is the law to kill anyone who denies the Torah. The Christians belong to the denying ones of the Torah.¹⁵ A heretic Gentile you may kill outright with your own hands.¹⁶

Crimes are permitted to Jews

Because Jews are selected people and they are beloved nation of God so they are allowed to do all evils whatever they feel like to do. If a Jew is tempted to do evil he should go to a city where he is not known and do

⁸ Talmūd, Tosapoth, Jebamoth, 94b.

⁹ Talmūd, Coschen hamischpat, 405.

¹⁰ Talmūd, Talmūd senhedrin, 74b.

¹¹ Talmūd, Abodah zarah, 36b.

¹² Talmūd, Erubin, 21b.

¹³ Talmūd, Hagigah, 27a.

¹⁴ Talmūd, Bammidber raba , 21c & Jalkut 772.

¹⁵ Talmūd, Coschen hamischpat, 425 Hagah 425.5.

¹⁶ Talmūd, Abodah zara, 4b.

the evil there.¹⁷ If a Jew finds an object lost by a gentile ("heathen") it does not have to be returned.¹⁸ Jews may use lies ("subterfuges") to circumvent a Gentile.¹⁹

Non-Jews have no Legal Rights

A Jew need not pay a gentile ("Cuthean") the wages owed him for work.²⁰ If an ox of an Israelite gores an ox of a Canaanite there is no liability; but if an ox of a Canaanite gores an ox of an Israelite...the payment is to be in full.²¹ If a heathen (gentile) hits a Jew, the gentile must be killed.²² The gentiles are outside the protection of the law and God has exposed their money to Israel.²³ A Jew may marry a three year old girl.²⁴ A Jew may have sex with a child as long as the child is less than nine years old.²⁵ When a grown-up man has intercourse with a little girl it is nothing.²⁶ A woman who had intercourse with a beast is eligible to marry a Jewish priest. A woman who has sex with a demon is also eligible to marry a Jewish priest.²⁷

¹⁷ Talmūd, Moed kattan, 17a.

¹⁸ Talmūd, Baba mezia, 24a & Baba kamma, 113b.

¹⁹ Talmūd, Baba kamma, 113a.

²⁰ Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 58a.

²¹ Talmūd, baba kamma, 37b.

²² Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 58b.

²³ Talmūd, Baba kamma 37b.

²⁴ Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 55b.

²⁵ Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 54b.

²⁶ Talmūd, Kethuboth, 11b.

²⁷ Talmūd, Yebamoth, 59b.

Hate and Abhorrence against Christians and Christ

Jewish sacred books also advocate hate and enmity against blessed Merry, Christ and Christians but it is really a matter of disappointment that religious books of Judaism have not any measure of tolerance for other religions, there are some example of blaspheme teachings of Talmud against Christianity. In the "uncensored" text of the Talmud it is written that Jesus mother, "Miriam the hairdresser," had sex with many men.²⁸ Jesus is being boiled in hot excrement.²⁹ On the eve of the Passover, Yesu (Jesus) was hanged...Do you suppose that he was one for whom a defense could be made? Was he not a Mesith (enticer)?³⁰ He and his disciples practiced sorcery and black magic, led Jews astray into idolatry, and was sponsored by foreign, gentile powers for the purpose of subverting Jewish worship.³¹ He was sexually immoral, worshipped statues of stone (a brick is mentioned), was cut off from the Jewish people for his wickedness, and refused to repent.³² Christians (minnim) and others who reject the Talmud will go to hell and be punished there for all generations.³³ And these are not considered just as orthodox teachings; we can see these are implemented by Jewish society in the modern world also. As Dr. Israel Shahak professor of Hebrew University reports that the Israelis burned

²⁸ Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 106a & Sahabbath, 104b.

²⁹ Talmūd, Gittin, 57a.

³⁰ Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 43a.

³¹ Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 43a.

³² Talmūd, Sanhedrin, 107b & Sotah, 47a.

³³ Talmūd, Rosh Hashanah, 17a.

hundreds of New Testament Bibles in occupied Palestine on March 23, 1980.³⁴

Genocide of Non-Jews is advocated in Sacred Books

"Tob shebe goyyim harog (Even the best of the gentiles should all be killed)"³⁵ this is the saying of Rabbi Simon Ben Yohai and is written in the original Hebrew Babylonian Talmud under Soferim 15 and Rule number 10, but in translations this quote has been concealed, it was quoted by Jewish encyclopedia in 1907 which was compiled by Isidore Singer Under the article "discrimination against Gentile". Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg stated, we have to recognize that Jewish blood and the blood of a guy is not the same thing.³⁶ University of Jerusalem Prof. Ehud Sprinzak illustrate Kahane and Goldstein's viewpoint: They believe it's God's will that they commit violence against goyim³⁷ Purposes of initiating a war and the laws for a war can be very clearly seen in the book (Torah) Old Testament. Because this is the basic holly book of Judaic religion and not all sects do agree upon other religious books like Talmud, Aqeebah and Mishnah, they have differences between them on these books. Torah is the only book on which all Jewish sects' belief without any disparity. Major part of Torah is comprised of tales and stories of wars and the only purpose of wars one can see in Torah is annexation, occupation of lands and territories. And the Lord spoke unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan,[near] Jericho, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say

³⁴ Israel Shahak, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion*, 21.

³⁵ Isidore Singer, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 617-621.

³⁶ New York Times (daily) (6 June 1989), 6.

³⁷ NY Daily News(daily), (USA: 26 February, 1994), 5.

unto them, when ye are passed over, Jordan into the Land of Canaan; than ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: and ye shall dispossess[the inhabitants] of the land and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.³⁸

Treatment with Conquered

On the other hand we cannot find any specific laws and principles or limitations of war in Jewish religion however the treatment with conquered nations or people what Judaism advises his believers to do with can be observed in Old Testament. Slaughtering of all men, women and children of conquered lands is ordered in Jewish religion as a religious duty. It is said: Lord commanded Moses, thy slew all the males. And they slew the king of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain [namely] Evi and rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian; Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword. And the children of Israel took [all] the women of Midian captives, and there little ones, and took the spoil of their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all the goodly castles with fire... And Moses said unto them, have ye saved all the women alive? Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known men by lying with him. But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him keep alive for you.³⁹ But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee [for] an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that

³⁸ Old Testament, Numbers, 33 : 50-54.

³⁹ Old Testament, Numbers, 31 : 1-18.

breatheth.⁴⁰ This shows that Judaism divides his enemies in two types, one who are not given by God in the inheritance of Israel, and second who are given in their inheritance. Roger burggraeve commented on these kinds of teachings of Old Testament, he said: "Old Testament is full of violence. The texts are evident on both, a violent society and a violent God. When we examine these texts of violence more closely, several noteworthy findings emerge. First of all, biblical traditions speak quite openly of the violence perpetrated by the people of Israel. No secret is made of the irreversible reality of violence."⁴¹

Remarks of *Mawlānā Mawdūdī* on the open violence advocated by Jewish sacred books are notable, he says: there is no need of any criticism or review the live review on these teachings is Palestinian state of Israel which has been established on the basis of imagination of inherited land and it (state of Israel) has done all that with Arabs in twentieth century which has been advocated by their religious books.⁴²

Study of Qur'ānic texts

Here we are going to take a deeper look into the Qur'ānic verses which are usually supposed to call upon extremism. But at the same time we see such sort of teachings and amendments in the sacred texts of Islam which apparently allow violence and extremism, teachings which are called teachings of Jihad in Islam, it is better to take a short survey of those Qur'ānic verses and hadiths that are considered to be advocating

⁴⁰ Old Testament, Deuteronomy, 20 : 16.

⁴¹Roger Burggraeve, *Swords into Plowshares*, (USA: W.B.Eerdmans, 1991), 109.

⁴²Al-Maodūdi, Abu al Ā'ala, *Yahodiyat Qu'rān ki roshni main*, (Lahore: EDārah tarjuman ul Qu'rān, 1999), 112.

terrorism (Jihad). Similar to every scripture, sacred scriptures of Islam be required to study within the communal and political perspective in which they had been revealed. It is not startling that the Quran similar to the Old Testament that has verses that deal with hostility and the demeanor of war. In Islam, there are two kinds of texts allowing clash or battle with others: first kind is of those texts which allow fight with non-Muslims and second is comprised of such teachings which permit encounter of some Muslims living in the Muslim state.

Qur'ānic Texts Allowing Brawl with Non-Muslims

Quran Says: And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but transgress not the limits.⁴³ Permission to fight (against disbelievers) is given to those (believers) who are fought against, because they have been wronged; and surely, Allah is able to give them (victory). Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: "our Lord is Allah." For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where in the name of Allah is mentioned much would surely have been pulled down. Verily, Allah will help those who help his (cause). Truly Allah is All-strong, All-mighty.⁴⁴ And kill them where ever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And *Al-fitnah* is worse than killing.⁴⁵ They said, "Why should we not fight in Allah's way while we have been driven out of our homes and our children (families have been taken as captives)?" But when fighting was ordered

⁴³ Al-Baqarah 2 : 190.

⁴⁴Al-Hajj 22 : 39-40.

⁴⁵Al-Baqarah 2 : 191.

for them, they turned away, all except a few of them. And Allah is All-aware of the *Zālimūn*.⁴⁶ And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah, and for that week, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women and children, whose cry is: "our Lord! Rescue us from these towns whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from you one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help."⁴⁷ Verily those who believed, and emigrated and strove hard and fought with their property and their lives in the cause of Allah as well as those who gave (them) asylum and help, these are (all) allies to one another. And as to those who believed but did not emigrate; but if they seek your help in religion, it is your duty to help them except against the people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance; and Allah is the All-seer of what you do. And those who disbelieve are allies of one another, (and) if you (Muslims of the world collectively) do not do so [i.e. become allies, as one united block under one *khilāfah* (a chief Muslim ruler for the whole Muslim world) to make victorious Allah's religion of Islamic monotheism] there will be *Fitnah* (wars, battles, polytheism) and oppression on the earth, and a great mischief and corruption.⁴⁸

All above mentioned texts that are allowing battle or fight with other nations or religions are demonstrating that the fight or attacks against others are allowed only in the case of defending oneself or for recompense or in order to protect Muslims from the oppression of oppressors either the oppressor is an individual or a cult or a government, this is moral duty

⁴⁶ Al-Baqarah 2 : 246.

⁴⁷ Al-Nisā'3 : 75.

⁴⁸ Al-Anfāl 8 : 72-73.

of Muslim Ummah to do Jihad in all those cases which are mentioned in above lines, so this is not the problem because in these cases all religions and the Laws of modern world not only allow the battle but legitimate it. Though these verses also emphasize that harmony, not aggression and fighting, is the custom. consent to brawl the opponent is balanced by a strong command of building peace, But As the Muslim society developed, queries rapidly came forward like, what would be the correct conduct during the epoch of war. The Quran present comprehensive guiding principles and policies concerning the behavior of war: who is to brawl and who is excused⁴⁹, while warfare ought to stop⁵⁰, how captives should be treated.⁵¹ Most significant, verses that stressed that conflict and the reaction to aggression and hostility ought to be proportional.⁵²

But there are the verses, which sometimes called the "sword verses," that call upon assassination of nonbeliever, like: So, when the sacred months expire, kill the *Mushriks* wherever you find them, and catch them and besiege them and sit in ambush for them everywhere. Then, if they repent and establish *Salāh* and pay *Zakāh*, leave their way. Surely, Allah is most Forgiving, Very-Merciful.⁵³ These are some of the Qur'ānic verses that are mentioned by critics to exhibit the innately aggressive and violent character of Islam and its religious texts. These verses are distorted when used isolated and also used or badly treated by religious extremists in

⁴⁹ Al-Fatah 9 : 91 ; Al-Tawbah 17 : 48.

⁵⁰ Al Baqarah 2 : 192.

⁵¹ Al-Nisā' 4 : 47.

⁵² Al-Baqarah 2 : 294.

⁵³ Al-Tawbah 9 : 5.

order to build up a theology of hatred and bigotry and to legitimate categorical combat against nonbelievers.⁵⁴ Fight against the who believe not in Allah, nor in the last day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and his messenger (Muhammad PBUH) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the *Jizyah* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.⁵⁵ Quran says: And fight them until there is no more *Fitnah*, and the religion (worship) will all be for Allah alone.⁵⁶

The great Muslim Mufassir Ibn Kasīr wrote in the explanation of this verse that the system given by God should outweigh upon all systems formed by men.⁵⁷ This is the main objective of Islam; even when in Mecca Jihad (Qitāl) was not obligatory. Efforts of Prophet (PBUH) for this purpose were clearly seen as he used to say numerous times that: I have been commanded to fight against people, till they testify to the fact that there is no god but Allah, and believe in me (that) I am the messenger (from the Lord) and in all that I have brought. And when they do it, their blood and riches are guaranteed protection on my behalf except where it is justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah.⁵⁸ In the explanation of these

⁵⁴John L. Esposito, *Unholy War* (New York: Oxford University Press, , 2002), 27.

⁵⁵Al-Tawbah 9 : 29.

⁵⁶Al-Anfāl 8 : 39.

⁵⁷Abul al-Fidā' Ibn Kasīr, *Tafsīr al-Quran al-Azīm* (Quetta: Maktabah al-Rashīdiyyah), 1 : 465.

⁵⁸Muhammad Ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Al-Riyādh: Dār al-Salām, 1999), Hadith # 25.

Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīths Muslim scholars elucidate and it is very clearly mentioned in Ḥadīths that battle with nonbelievers is allowed not for the conquest of lands and territories and not for wealth but to dominate the system of God on all other systems made by men which are unjust for weak. In order to eradicate the injustice, mischief and evil from the world so that all people can live with harmony and peace irrespective of color, nation, religion or race.

Qur'ānic Texts Allowing Brawl with Muslims

O You who believe! Al-Qisās (the law of equality in punishment) is prescribed for you in case of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But if the killer is forgiven by the brother (or the relatives, etc.) of the killed against blood-money and adhering to it with fairness and payment of the blood-money to the heir should be made in fairness. This is alleviation and a mercy from your Lord. So after this whoever transgress the limits (kills the killer after taking the blood-money) he shall have a painful torment.⁵⁹

It is a common practice that in order to weaken a society or state internal destruction and conspiracy is used as weapon against them so in order to combat with these dangers above mentioned commandments are given to the Muslims which show that Islam is against evil and mischief to which high extent. But as a researcher go deep in the study of religious texts and prophet's acts one came to know that Islam is a religion of moderation. It sets a middle-path for people and all principal laws of Islam are founded upon an equilibrium and neutrality. It is against all forms of excess and extremism. Quran says: Say "O people of the scripture exceed not the

⁵⁹Al-Baqarah 2 : 178.

limits in your religion other than the truth, and do not follow the vain desires of people who went astray before and who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the right path.⁶⁰

But like every religion the history of Muslims is also not clear from extremism, this fact cannot be neglected that from the beginning of Islam and the formation and development of the Muslim population, perception and practice of jihad has a critical value in Islam but some sects which emerged after the demise of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were based upon extremism they used and interpret sacred texts according to their desires. When we trace the roots of extremism in Islamic history *Khawārij* and Assassins seems as major terrorist and extremist groups in the history.

How the concept of chosen people and the belief that the land of Canaan has been given to them inheritably, compel the Jewish people towards extremism, this can be seen very well in 20th century and in this contemporary world. As there is no doubt that they have a very good opinion of themselves, think themselves nobler, on a higher level, superior to others⁶¹, so Jews start imposing their superiority on the whole world of gentiles from the land of Palestine because it was their 2000 years old dream to live and reside in the land of Jerusalem and this dream comes true after the World War I by using all deceitful and knavery tactics in 1948⁶². As according to them they have inherited this land from their

⁶⁰Al-Mā'idah 5 : 77.

⁶¹Joseph Herler, *The Future of Jews* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1945), 71-72

⁶² World War I derived the Zionist into three camps, in the two belligerent blocks and in neutral states. Zionist leaders continued their work in each of these

forefathers which was bestowed to them by God. But the reality is different from their imagination that they have inherited that land of Palestine as chosen people of God, it is wrong from many aspects. It is better to take a short analysis of their claim of Palestinian property right.

Conclusion:

From the above details we can conclude that if the extremism is related to the sacred texts and prophets then Judaism has a lot of sacred text which call upon extremism especially if we try to see this in the present context of Israel. We think it is not justified to say that the extremist Israel means a whole Jewish population is extremist in nature and terrorist in their actions. But the reality is that in present Israel from the day of its occupation some moderate Jews always dislike the policies of Israel Government and protest against planned terrorism and against the genocide of Arabs, as Noam Chomsky, Israel Shahak and many more like them. Many protests have been made by some Israeli Jews which can be seen on media. Extremist Orthodox Jews are against the policies of state policy makers. This aggression against all non-Jews by Israel is because "a dominant ethnic group sizes control of the mechanism of the state and

groups, though setting up in an international office at Copenhagen ("Copenhagen Bureau"). But while the central European Zionists only received vogue pledges upon turkey, WIEZMANN in England was able to induce the British government to issue the ball fore declaration (1917) approving the Jewish national home in Palestine. SOKOLOW succeeded in securing endorsement of the declaration from certain European powers (e.g. France and Italy) while US Zionist obtained the agreement of President Wilson. (The standard Jewish Encyclopedia, 1968)

ethnicity (and religion), rather than citizenship, become the key of the distribution of resources and power... land policy is founded on the "judaization of the Galilee" and "redemption of lands" for Jews only".⁶³ Same like that should be considered in the context of Islam, hate against Quran, prophet and a great department of people who are finding ways to demonize Islam and creating clash between civilizations leading towards a chaos have to focus on main causes rather than blaming other religions.

⁶³Dan Leon, *Who's left in Israel, The Palestinian Arab minority in Israel by As'ad Ghanem* (UK: Sussex books, 2004), 24-25.