

CHRISTIANITY VERSUS ISLAM: RELIGIOUS COMPETITION FOR WORLD DOMINION

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Christianity and Islam, as two monotheistic and apocalyptic religions, share certain common characteristics with Judaism, from the roots of which they historically grew as its two deviations and aberrations. But these two historical faiths went beyond Judaism in their ecumenical claims, their fanatical zeal, their eschatological beliefs, their theocratic tendencies, and their progressively aggressive militancy in the name of the one "true God," God of Abraham, in their efforts to spread their message and dominate the world.

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Introduction

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Both fanatical faiths recognized as relevant God’s first revelation to the Hebrews through Abraham, and the election of Jews as the “chosen people.” But, in their eyes, the Jewish priests perverted God’s message of “true faith” and salvation to mankind. As a result of this sin the Jews lost their privileged position with God. God, subsequently, turned his attention to the Gentiles and bestowed his favor first upon the Christians and then upon the Muslims, as God’s newly “chosen peoples” and the real “true believers.”

Thus, these two sister religions and new faiths recognized Abraham as their “Founding Father,” that is, as the man of faith with whom God made his first Covenant. They also accepted Moses as God’s messenger and lawgiver to the Hebrews. But they differed radically regarding the respective roles of Jesus and Mohammed. For traditional Christians, Catholic and Orthodox, Jesus Christ was the alleged Messiah and the begotten “Son of God,” which Muslims openly deride as veiled polytheism and foolish blaspheme. For the devout Muslim believers, on the other hand, Mohammed is the last and best of God’s prophets, the “seal of prophecy,” a claim that Christians reject with disdain. Clever Jews, to whom these “new revelations” were originally addressed by Apostle Paul and Mohammed respectively, did not accept either of these strange and devious claims. For them, both Christ’s divinity and Mohammed’s privileged prophetic position are nonsense.

But billions of other credulous peoples during the last two millennia did believe in these faith-demanding and dangerous dogmas wholeheartedly. The zealots then spread their fanatical faiths all over the globe by the power of the word, or the power of the sword, according to the resistance of nonbelievers. Many women and even mature men believe in these religious doctrines fanatically even today. Some are prepared to give their lives, or to take other innocent lives, in the name of the one and only “true God.”

Hence the present pressing problem created by the revived religious fanaticism, in Islamic countries especially, and the concomitant terrorism which culminated in the atrocities of the 9/11/01, and led to the declaration of war on terrorism by USA. But, behind these recent terrorist acts there is a long history of religious intolerance and fanaticism connected to the spread of monotheistic, proselytizing, and ecumenical faiths, like Paul’s messianic Christianity and Mohammed’s militant Islam. It would be helpful to

examine briefly the textual roots of this kind of religious fanaticism as found in the Christian and Muslim Holy Books, and to draw the political implications for the present.

Foolishness of Pauline Christianity

According to Orthodox Christian theology, God had a grand plan for the salvation of the fallen Adam and Eve and their sinful and miserable progeny. For the sons and daughters of the protoplasts had inherited from the primordial couple, not only the earth, the labor and the sweat with which they would earn their daily bread, but also their inherently sinful nature as well as the “original sin.” Therefore, they were in dire need of bodily and spiritual cleansing. To prepare the way for such a radical catharsis, God in his mercy gave the Law of Moses to Ancient Hebrews. He also sent from time to time Prophets to remind them of their sins, make them repent and prepare themselves to receive the Messiah, the Anointed One (Christos in Greek, Christus in Latin, and Christ in English).

In primitive Christian mythology or Christology, the Messiah for whom the Jews had been waited for ages (some of them are still waiting for His coming) turned out to be paradoxically God’s “begotten Son.” Thus, thanks to Paul’s invention the one and only true God of Abraham had acquired suddenly a Divine Son! As we will see, Mohammed differs from Paul on this crucial point for monotheistic faiths: Allah has no sons, and no daughters! Be that as it may, for the traditionally faithful Christians, as opposed to recent heretic sects, the “Son of God” was incarnated and born miraculously as a baby to Virgin Mary in Bethlehem in a cold winter night. As a grown up man, Jesus Christ was destined to become also the sacrificial “Lamb of God,” whose innocent blood was supposed to cleanse Paul’s followers from their sins and hopefully save them from the fires of Hell.

Given their special preparation by their God, through a multitude of Prophets, the Mosaic Law, and an endless list of dietary taboos, the Jews ought to have accepted the son of Mary, when he appeared on earth, as “the Son of God” and their Messiah. At least that is what Paul and the primitive Church Fathers had expected of the Jews. But the majority of the Jewish people did not do so, keeping the traditional faith in their Yahweh. As we will see, according to Paul’s interpretation, this Jewish reluctance to accept the new faith in Christ forced God to turn his attention to the Gentiles in search of a new “chosen people.” Not surprisingly, they turned to be the followers of Paul, the Christian believers. At the same time, this prudent Jewish reluctance gave an almost perfect pretext to the organized Catholic and Orthodox Church to treat the Jews terribly for a long time to come, as the “killers of Christ,” the only Son of the one true God and their Savor. Religious fanaticism and intolerance had, thus, begun seriously. Sadly, it is still with us.

To the Gentiles, then, so the story goes, God sent the Apostle of the Nations, Paul or Saul, as he was called in Hebrew. Paul was a Hellenized Jew, that is, a man who could preach and perhaps write in the Hellenistic *koine*, the *lingua franca* of that time. He was

“miraculously” converted to the new faith as a grown up man, we are told, and then devoted the rest of his life evangelizing and fanaticizing the quasi Hellenized Mediterranean world for some time after Jesus’ death. Simply stated Paul’s mission became the selling of “salvation through faith in Jesus Christ,” the Son of God, “raised from the dead;” and through the inspiration either of jubilant hope or of fearful terror in his followers for the life to come after the “Day of Judgment.” While rejecting the former doctrine of Christ’s divinity as Pauline foolishness, Mohammed shrewdly adopted and amplified the latter doctrine of the terrors in Hell as his main means of terrorizing and hypnotizing his followers, “the true believers.” Thus he turned them into tools of terror against innocent nonbelievers, who were persecuted mercilessly. At the end Paul and his created “God-Man,” out of poor Jesus, the son of Virgin Mary, were no match for Mohammed and his Koran, the true “Word of God” which devout Muslims take literally.

For many years Paul and his followers went around the decadent Mediterranean world at that time, preaching to the impoverished and demoralized peoples the “Good News” (*Evangelion* or Gospel) of the “raised dead,” while collecting money from the neophyte Gentiles for the Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem. His message to the Gentiles is fantastic and the expected monetary reward frankly stated, which is indicative of the perversion of the original Hebrew faith in Paul’s inflamed imagination and hungry hands. He has summarized both of these traits, which were to become the trademark of the organized Christian Church, clearly and proudly in his epistles to *Corinthians* and *Romans*. From these the following passages are quoted as samples for our consideration. In the first quotation, Paul tries to play smartly the Jews against the Gentiles, in an attempt to justify his shameful apostasy from traditional pious Judaism, in this manner:

Because they [the Jews] sinned, salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make the Jews jealous of them. The sin of the Jews brought rich blessings to the world, and their spiritual poverty brought rich blessings to the Gentiles...I am speaking now to you Gentiles: as long as I am an apostle to the Gentiles I will take pride in my work. Perhaps I can make the people of my own race jealous, and so be able to save some of them. For when they were rejected, the world was made friends with God. What will it be, then, when they are accepted? It will be life for the dead! (*Romans, 11*)¹

¹ These and the following Biblical passages are taken from *Good News for Modern Man: The New Testament and Psalms in Today’s English Version*, (Thomas Nelson: New York, 1972).

Of course this would not prevent Paul from proceeding to the next point boldly. He asserts his religious contempt of “man’s wisdom” and his fanatical reliance on “God’s power” to achieve his goal, the conversion of the world to the new Christian faith. His dogmatism and fanaticism were surpassed only centuries later by the fanaticism and intolerance of Mohammed, the last Prophet and Apostle of the “one true God.” Consider:

So when I came to you I was weak and trembled all over with fear, and my teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing proof of the power of God’s Spirit. Your faith, then, does not rest on man’s wisdom, but in God’s power. Yet I do speak wisdom to those who are spiritually mature. But it is not the wisdom that belongs to this world, or to the powers that rule this world—powers that are losing their power. The wisdom I speak is God’s secret wisdom, hidden from men, which God had already chosen for our glory even before the world was made. None of the rulers of this world knew this wisdom. If they knew it, they would not have nailed the Lord of glory to the cross.... But it was to us that God made known his secret, by means of the Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God’s purposes.
(1 *Corinthians*, 2)

Like previous prophets and like Prophet Mohammed, who will follow in his steps, Paul claims to have had mystical access to “God’s secrets” and revelations. But Paul’s sophistry reached its apex, when he tried to convince the still skeptical new believers among the Corinthians about the greatest mystery, “the resurrection of the dead.” This he has depicted vividly for posterity in the following unbelievable passages. For Paul the dead can not only be “raised from death,” but also meet and converse with the living:

I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried, and was raised to life on the third day, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter, and then to all twelve apostles. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles. Last of all he appeared to me—even though I am like one who was born in most unusual way.... Now, since our message is that Christ has been raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; and if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe. More than that, we are shown to be lying against God, because he did not raise him, if it is true that the dead are not raised to life. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion and you are still lost in your sins. It would also mean that the believers in Christ who have died are lost. If our hope in Christ is good for this life only, and no more, then we deserve more pity than any one else in the world. But the truth is that Christ has been

raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised...Then the end will come; Christ will overcome all spiritual rulers, authorities, and powers, and hand over the Kingdom to God the Father. For Christ must rule until God defeats all enemies and puts them under his feet. The last enemy to be defeated will be death... (*1 Corinthians, 15*).

The Christian believers would have considered themselves privileged to be on the side of a victorious God, who would defeat all enemies and establish His Kingdom on earth to last forever. But this privileged election had its price in monetary terms. On this point Paul, the Apostate Jew and the Christian Apostle of God, just like the Muslim Merchant and Apostle of Allah, is very frank. His epistle to the Corinthians states clearly:

Now the matter about the money to be raised to help God's people in Judea: you must do what I told the churches in Galatia to do. Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money, in proportion to what he has earned, and save it up, so there will be no need to collect money when I come. After I come I shall send the men you have approved, with letters of introduction, to take your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems worthwhile for me to go, then they will go along with me.... With my own hand I write this: Greeting from Paul. Whoever does not love the Lord—a curse on him! *Marana tha!* (*1 Corinthians, 16*).

He is equally frank on this crucial matter of money and faith in his Epistle to the Romans. As Paul sees it, the case seems like a fair deal. For their spiritual gifts, which the Christians have received from the Jews, they must pay with hard currency in drachmas:

I would like to see you [the Christians in Rome] on my way to Spain, and be helped by you to go there, after I have enjoyed visiting you for a while. Right now, however, I am going to Jerusalem in the service of God's people there. For the churches in Macedonia and Greece have freely decided to give an offering to help the poor among the God's people in Jerusalem. They themselves decided to do it. But as a matter of fact, they have an obligation to help those poor; the Jews shared their spiritual blessings with the Gentiles, and so the Gentiles ought to serve the Jews with their material blessings. When I have finished the task, and turned over to them the full amount of money that has been raised for them, I shall leave for Spain and visit you on my way there. When I come to you, I know that I shall come with a full measure of the blessing of Christ. (*Romans, 15*).

Clearly, then, Paul was a consummate salesman. He was selling the promise of life after death and “resurrection of the dead” to simple-minded Gentiles, especially to decadent and demoralized Greeks of that time, while collecting their hard-earned

drachmas. Of course, Paul's preaching of resurrection and salvation, cheaply bought, did not fool many decent and intelligent Jews. Faced with Paul's dilemma, "either the dead are raised" or the Apostle of God "is lying to you by preaching their resurrection," most Jews opted for the second choice, quite sensibly. But the "new faith" in the incarnation and resurrection of Christ from the dead was intoxicating. The belief in an imminent second coming of the "Son of God" to judge the living and the "risen dead," to separate the faithful from the nonbelievers, and to bring the Kingdom of God on Earth, proved to be very potent with the simple-minded Gentiles. Especially the impoverished and demoralized Greeks of that time proved to be very vulnerable to Paul's artful selling of salvation. His message about the new faith in the "only begotten Son of God," who had risen from the dead, was so fanatical and foolish that many believers were willing to die for it. And they did die by the thousands persecuted by the Roman authorities for their bigotry and fanatical faith. But at the end the Christian fanatic martyrs won the day.²

However, after they prevailed politically, in the 4th century AD, and were called upon to rule the Christianized Empire, the Christian followers of Paul proved to be very destructive and intolerant indeed. They turned against not only other religions with long civilized traditions in the Mediterranean world, but also against the Olympic Games, which were abolished in 394AD by an edict of the Christian Emperor Theodosius. Paul's followers also turned fanatically against the freedom of thought in Hellenistic schools of philosophy, which were closed down by an edict of the Christian Emperor Justinian in 529AD. But, by that time, Christian intolerance and the demand of strict orthodoxy had eliminated all non-Christian religious practices around the Mediterranean world. Not surprisingly, it had also uprooted other "heretical Christian sects" as deviations from the "true dogma" (Orthodoxy) of the established Christian Church. This was done apparently in the name of the one true Christian God, and the one true faith in Christian Trinity, with the powerful backing of the Byzantine Emperors, who had their political reasons for this.

For these Absolute Despots had found in the "One Despot Christian God," Absolute Ruler of the Universe, the visible and the invisible, a perfect image of their own Monarchic Rule of the New Christian Empire, which had replaced the Roman Empire. Even the memory of Classical Hellenic Freedom and Democracy had faded away. Pauline intolerant Christianity had apparently prevailed totally. The Christian Trinity had triumphed over the Hellenic Gods. But at that critical moment in history a more militant Prophet emerged unexpectedly out of the Arabian sands to challenge Christ's authority more fanatically and even more successfully than Paul's Trinitarian Christianity had challenged both the piety of traditional Judaism and the tolerance of Hellenic Polytheism.

For the next millennium, militant Islam and orthodox Christianity were destined to fight for the souls of "true believers" as well as for world dominion to the bitter end.

² Only Mohammed and his more militant followers, centuries later, were to surpass Paul and his faithful Christians in fiats of blind faith, fanatical intolerance, and bigotry.

With the capture of Constantinople in 1453 Islam had finally triumphed. The Orthodox Christians of Middle East, North Africa, Asia Minor, the Balkans, Greece and Cyprus, became slaves to Caliphs and Sultans, the representatives of Allah on earth, when they were not slaughtered in the name of the true God, Allah, and His Prophet, Mohammed. Only in the twentieth century were some of these Christian peoples liberated. As we will see below, even this liberation of the Christian slaves from Muslim Masters may be proven only ephemeral, in view of recent fanatical terror of the revived militant Islam.

The Militancy of Mohammedan Islam

Let us follow the rise of Islam to political power by means of fanaticism more closely. In the beginning of the seventh century of the Christian Era, and at the moment when Christian Orthodoxy and monotheistic intolerance seemed to have reached their apex, Mohammed received “miraculously” a new revelation, which was more fanatical than Paul’s and, therefore, politically more potent. The new Muslim faith was destined to challenge the Christian claim to a monopoly of God’s truth and the honorable title of “the chosen people.” Out of the old Jewish “one and only” true God, the Church Fathers, with help from the Emperor’s lawyers and Byzantine theologians, had created a strange Trinity: The Father, the Son (in the image of man), and the Spirit (in the image of a bird).

The Prophet of Islam masterfully acknowledged that the Jews and the Christians were blessed in the distant past with some “true revelations,” coming to them from the “one true God” and with many prophets, especially Moses and Jesus. Unfortunately, Christians and Jews had misunderstood the prophets of God and had falsified their true message of salvation to mankind. God, therefore, had raised a new true Prophet, the last one and the most perfect of prophets, to set the religious record straight once and for all.

Prophet Mohammed became God’s true messenger and his message delivered in Arabic and in eloquent poetic verses was intended primarily for the Arab nation, and only secondarily for other true believers. These “true believers” were apparently blessed to see “the truth” of the new revelations incorporated in the Holy Koran. They embraced the new faith of Islam, fanatically and blindly, to be saved from the fires of Hell by Allah. Unlike the nonbelievers, believers were not to fear the fast approaching Day of Judgment. The nonbelievers, whether Christian, Jews, or pagans, had only two choices in this life: to accept the new faith and be saved from the fires of Hell, or to be conquered by the power of the faithful in the name of Allah and serve them as their slaves. Resistance or rebellion by the nonbelievers would justify their merciless elimination by the sword in the name of Allah, the one and only God, and his last and perfect Prophet, Mohammed, the Merciful!

In an exclusive, uncompromising and Manichean manner, mankind was thus divided in the Holy Koran into two hostile camps: The “true believers,” who followed

Mohammed blindly, and everybody else. These were designated as “non-believers” and made the target of aggression, sanctioned by the Prophet in the name of his God, Allah. He declared loudly and clearly that peace is not possible between the “Realm of Islam” and the “Realm of Infidels.” As envisioned by the Prophet and Apostle of God, the ultimate goal of faithful and militant Muslims was one God (Allah), one perfect Prophet (Mohammed), and one true faith (Islam), spread all over the globe by all means, by the *word* preferably, and by the *sword*, if need be. The world had to be united in the name of Allah by force, if necessary, and to be ruled by the Prophet’s legitimate successors in perpetuity, until the Day of Judgment. Then, believers will go to Muslim paradise and nonbelievers to Hell! *War* of the true believers against the non-believers is not only justified in the service of the “true faith,” but also glorified in the name of the “one and only true God,” Allah. In its ecumenical and militant zeal, Islam like Pauline Christianity, and even more so, is clearly not an improvement, but an aberration of traditional Judaism.

Christians and Jews as Targets in the Koran

To make it clear that such was actually the case with Mohammed’s militant Islam, let us consider the evidence from the Holy Koran noting especially the message of monotheistic mania and religious intolerance, which can easily inspire simple souls to terror. In the first set of quotations, Christians and Jews, no less than pagans, are viewed as infidels and made the targets of some of the sharpest attacks in the Koran. Mohammed claims that the coming of his revelation in the Koran has superseded all previous prophecies. In this sense, his claims surpass even those of Paul and the Christian Evangelists in fanaticism:

These [the believers] are rightly guided by their Lord; these shall surely triumph. As for the unbelievers, it is the same whether or not you forewarn them; they will not have faith. God has set a seal upon their hearts and ears; their sight is dimmed and grievous punishment awaits them... (2:1)³

Children of Israel, remember the favor I have bestowed upon you. Keep your covenant, and I will keep mine. Dread my power. Have faith in my revelations, which confirm your Scriptures, and do not be the first to deny them. Do not sell my revelations for a paltry price. Fear me. Do not confound truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the truth... (2:39)

And now that a book [the Koran] confirming their own has come to them by God, they [the Jews and Christians] deny it, although they know it to be the truth and have long prayed for help against the unbelievers. God’s curse be upon the infidels! Evil is that for which they have bartered away their souls. To deny God’s own revelation, grudging that He should reveal His bounty to whom He

³ All Koranic passages are selected from *The Koran: Translated with Notes*, N. J. Dawood, (Penguin Books: London, 1993).

chooses from among His servants! They have incurred God's most inexorable wrath. An ignominious punishment awaits the unbelievers. (2:88)

You will please neither the Jews nor the Christians unless you follow their faith. Say: 'God's guidance is the only guidance.' And if after all the knowledge you have been given you yield to their desires, there shall be none to help or protect you from the wrath of God. Those to whom We have given the Book, and who read it as it ought to be read, truly believe in it; those that deny it will surely be the losers... (2:115)

And just in case that Christians and Jews did not get the message (his message); Mohammed reminded them as well as his followers that, when it comes to true religion, there is not much to choose from. You either follow Mohammed straight to salvation in Paradise, or you follow a different path, any other path, leading to your perdition in Hell. Friendship and reconciliation between the followers of the different religious faiths is not possible, according to the last and best Prophet. He is explicit on this essential point:

He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will surely be among the losers. How will God guide those who lapse into unbelief after embracing the faith and acknowledging the Apostle as true, and after receiving veritable proofs? God does not guide the evildoers. Their reward will be the curse of God.... (3:83)

Believers, if you yield to a group from among those who were given the Book, they will turn you back from faith to unbelief. But how can you disbelieve when God's revelations are recited to you and His own Apostle is in your midst? He that holds fast to God shall be guided to a straight path. Believers, fear God as you rightly should, and when death comes, die true Muslims. Cling one and all to the faith of God and let nothing divide you... (3:97)

Believers, do not make friends with any but your own people. They [Jews and Christians] will spare no pains to corrupt you. They desire nothing but your ruin. Their hatred is evident from what they utter with their mouths, but greater is the hatred which their hearts conceal. We have made plain to you Our revelations. Strive to understand them... (3:118)

Believers, take neither the Jews nor the Christians for your friends. They are friends with one another. Whoever of you seeks their friendship shall become one of their numbers. God does not guide the wrongdoers. (5:51)

Nor would the Apostle and Prophet of Allah leave it unclear as to who are truly unbelievers. They are not just the pagans and the atheists, as innocent souls may think. They explicitly include the "peoples of the Book," Jews and Christians. These especially were expected to embrace the new Prophet of God and his message wholeheartedly:

Unbelievers are those who declare: 'God is the Messiah, the son of Mary.' Say: 'Who could prevent God, if He so willed, from destroying the Messiah, the son of Mary, his mother and all the people of the earth? God has sovereignty over

the heaven and the earth and all that lies between them. He creates what He will and God has power over all things...' (5:15-18)

Unbelievers are those that say: 'God is the Messiah, the son of Mary.' For the Messiah himself said: 'Children of Israel. Serve God, my Lord and your Lord.' He that worships other gods besides God, God will deny him Paradise, and the Fire shall be his home. None shall help the evildoers. Unbelievers are those that say: 'God is one of three.' There is but one God. If they do not desist from so saying, those of them that disbelieve shall be sternly punished. Will they not return to God in repentance and seek forgiveness of Him? God is forgiving and merciful. The Messiah, the son of Mary, was no more than an apostle, other apostles passed away before him. His mother was a saintly woman. They both ate earthly food. See how We make plain to them Our revelations. See how they ignore the truth... (5:70-75)

The Jews say Ezra is the son of God, while the Christians say the Messiah is the son of God. Such are their assertions, by which they imitate the infidels of old. God confound them! How perverse they are! They make of their clerics and their monks, and of the Messiah, the son of Mary, Lords besides God; though they were to serve one God only. There is no God but Him. Exalted be He above those whom they deify besides Him! They would extinguish the light of God with their mouths, but God seeks only to perfect His light, though the infidels abhor it. (9:27-31)

Mohammed takes pleasure in describing vividly the joys of the true believers in Paradise, who can eat and drink, make love to "dark-eyed houris;" while the unbelievers, especially the people of the Book, who would not accept Mohammed's message, are destined to become truly "Satan's confederates." They will burn in Hell for eternity. The Apostle of Allah will be justified, triumphant, and pleased with their torture in Hell:

Their Lord will shield them [the true believers] from the scourge of Hell. He will say: 'Eat and drink to your hearts content. This is the reward of your labors.' They shall recline on couches ranged in rows. To dark-eyed houris We shall wed them.... Fruits We shall give them, and such meats as they desire. They will pass from hand to hand a cup inspiring no idle talk, no sinful urge; and there shall wait on them young boys of their own, as fair as virgin pearls... (52:13)

Garments of fire have been prepared for the unbelievers. Scalding water shall be poured upon their heads, melting their skins and that, which is in their bellies. They shall be lashed with rods of iron. Whenever, in their anguish, they try to escape from Hell, back they shall be dragged, and will be told: "Taste the torment of the Conflagration!" (22:19)

Glorification of War on Unbelievers in the Koran

Mohammed, as we have seen, draws a sharp distinction between the “true believers,” whom he identifies with his followers, and the unbelievers, in whom he includes the Jews and the Christians. In spite of the fact that they had received some valid revelations from Allah before the appearance of the last Prophet on Earth, Christians and Jews are damned if they do not listen to the “new revelations” and prostrate themselves to Allah and His Apostle. War against them is not only justified but ordained by God and His true Prophet:

Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love the aggressors. Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the place from which they drove you. Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed. But do not fight them within the precincts of the Holy Mosque unless they attack you there; if they attack you put them to sword.... Give generously for the cause of God and do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction. (2:190-196)

Those who make war against God and His apostle and spread disorder into the land shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or be banished from the country. They shall be held up to shame in this world and sternly punished in the hereafter.... Believers, have fear of God and seek the right path to Him. Fight valiantly for His cause, so that you may triumph. As for the unbelievers, if they offered all that the earth contains and as much besides to redeem themselves from the torment of the Day of Resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them. Theirs shall be a woeful punishment. They shall strive to get out of the Fire, but get out of it they shall not: theirs shall be a lasting punishment. (5:31-35)

Since holy wars, with God’s help will certainly bring victories to “true believers,” the Prophet of Allah prudently deemed it necessary to make specific arrangements for the distribution of “the spoils of war” among the true believers, with the lion’s share going naturally to Allah and His Apostle. Wars and swords were means of spreading the Faith:

They ask you about the spoils. Say: ‘The spoils belong to God and the Apostle. Therefore have fear of God and end your disputes. Obey God and His Apostle. If you are true believer....’ God revealed His will to the angels, saying: ‘I shall be with you. Give courage to the believers. I shall cast terror into the hearts of the infidels. Strike off their heads, strike off the very tips of their fingers!’ That was because they defied God and His apostle. He that defies God and His apostle shall be sternly punished by God. ... It was not you, but God, who slew them. It was not you who smote them: God smote them so that He might richly reward the faithful. God hears all and knows all. God will surely frustrate the designs of the unbelievers. (8:1-18) The spoils taken from the town-dwellers and assigned by God to His Apostle shall belong to God, to the Apostle and his kinfolk...

Whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it; and whatever he forbids you, forbear from it. Have fear of God; God is stern in retribution. (59:1-7)

Evidently, the holy warriors will have to be satisfied with the little rewards, which they will receive here on Earth, waiting for the greater prizes to come to them after death in Paradise. For the holy faith of Islam demands fights and sacrifices from the believers.

Those that embraced the Faith and fled their homes and fought for the cause of God, and those that have sheltered them and helped them—they are the true believers. They shall receive mercy and a generous provision. Those that have since embraced the Faith and fled their homes and fought with you—they too are your brothers.... (8:73-75) Those that have embraced the Faith, and left their homes, and fought for God's cause with their wealth and with their persons, are held in higher regard by God. It is they who shall triumph. Their Lord has promised them joy and mercy from Himself, and gardens of eternal bliss where they shall dwell forever. God's reward is great indeed. (9:18)

Excuses from the believers, when the call to fight for their faith has gone out are not acceptable. They will be punished here below and there above mercilessly by Allah in the Day of Judgment, which for Mohammed, as well as for Paul, was approaching fast:

Believers, why is it that when you are told: 'March in the cause of God,' you linger slothfully in the land? Are you content with this life in preference to the life to come? Few indeed are the blessing of this life, compared to those of the life to come. If you do not go to war, He will punish you sternly, and replace you by other men. You will in no way harm Him; for God has power over all things... March on and fight for the cause of God, with your wealth and with your persons. This will be best for you, if you but knew it. (9:37-40)

God has purchased from the faithful their lives and worldly goods and in return has promised them the Garden. They will fight for the cause of God, slay and be slain. Such is the true promise, which He has made them in the Torah, the Gospel and the Koran. And who is more true to his pledge than God? Rejoice then in the bargain you have made. This is the supreme triumph. (9:110)

War should be welcomed by the true believers because it will lead to victories and triumphs for them and their "true Faith," for the ultimate glory of Allah, who is always on their side and will do most of the fighting anyway. So nothing is there to fear in battle:

Believers, make war on the infidels who dwell around you. Deal firmly with them. Know that God is with the righteous.... If they [unbelievers] give no heed, say: "God is all-sufficient for me. There is no God but Him. In Him I have put my trust. He is the Lord of the Glorious Throne." (9:121-129)

If anyone thinks that God will not give victory to His apostle in this world and in the world to come, let him tie a rope to the ceiling of his house and hang himself. Then let him ponder if his cunning has done away with that which has

enraged him. We have revealed the Koran in clear verses. God gives guidance to whom He will... (22:14) Fight for the cause of God with the devotion due to Him. He has chosen you, and laid on you no burden in the observance of your faith, the faith of Abraham your father. (22:75-78)

The glorification of war for the cause of God, in service of their true faith, and in obedience to God's warlike Apostle, reaches its apogee in the following two brief verses:

Have faith in God and His apostle, and fight for God's cause with your wealth and your persons. That would be best for you, if you but knew it. (61:9)

Prophet make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and deal sternly with them. Hell shall be their home, evil their fate." (66:7-10)

Dangerous Games in the Name of God

Thus spoke the last and best of the Prophets about God and the "true believers" in the words of the Holy Koran. I quoted them extensively and sequentially, because they are revealing about the nature of the prophetic mind and temperament. In these apocalyptic and dreadful utterances is located precisely the problem with prophetic or maniac men, who have the temerity to proclaim themselves apostles and messengers of God, "the one and only true God," nevertheless. Without shame or fear they give themselves poetic license to utter all sorts of nonsense in the name of God. In His name they can demand from the believers blind faith in their utterances and sacrifice of their wealth as well as their lives; "to slay and be slain" for the cause of God, which usually happens to coincide with the personal enrichment and glorification of the Apostles. The warrior and merchant Mohammed is more frank and explicit on this point than Paul, the timid shrewd salesman. For Mohammed declared boldly: "The spoils of war belong to Allah and His Apostle!"

In the name of God, a prophet or apostle of God can declare "holy wars" against anyone who disagrees with his message and opposes the self-proclaimed messenger of God. In the name of God the messenger and apostle of God can claim that his word is God's word and vice versa. He can demand obedience without any reservation or question by the believers. Such mentality can make even a skeptic philosopher wonder what would a good God really think of these so-called "prophets;" and what may be in store for such dreadful souls in the Day of Judgment, if there were to be one. It is regrettable that more than a billion Muslims all over the world prostrate themselves five times a day repeating as the holiest prayer the unthinking and hypnotic: "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is His Messenger!"

What would Buddha or Socrates think about this kind of prayer? Buddha would in all probability have smiled gently upon hearing such an unwise utterance, while a “true believer” and follower of Mohammed, upon seeing Buddha’s ironic smile, would certainly have rushed to cut off his head to erase such upsetting smile. On the other hand, the Athenian philosopher would have advised us all to pray to “God and all other gods!”

But Muslims and Christians, who take their apocalyptic faith deadly seriously, fanatically believe in its absolute “truth.” They must then be consistently intolerant of any other conceptions of God different from theirs. They are bound to abhor other religious faiths. In this regard, militant Islam has surpassed even the folly of Pauline Christianity in fanatical zeal and monotheistic mania. It is definitely an aberration and dangerous deviation from benign traditional Judaism. Politically viewed, it is even more dangerous than Paul’s version of Christian fanaticism. Such faiths seem destined to collide, forever.

The point is that Muslim and Christian fundamentalists, in their missionary zeal to spread their respectively false faiths in the one “true God,” by all means evangelizing the world, should be concerned with their intolerant faiths and fanatical acts, to which they lead. Without shame they seem to have first appropriated the Jewish God and the pious myth of “a chosen people,” and then turned their hatred against the Jews, their traditional religious practices and holy places. In their fanatical furry, they also eliminated all pre-Christian and pre-Islamic religions of the Mediterranean world, which tended to be polytheistic and more tolerant than these monopolistic religions can ever be. Clearly then the world of the twenty-first century does not really need the fanaticism bred by such archaic and vicious faiths. The light of reason and polytheistic tolerance are preferable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that a comparison between the utterances of the apostles of these two religions, Paul and Mohammed, makes clear their perverted ways of thinking and speaking about the Divine, as it relates to human beings. These prophets appeal to the emotions of the believes, excite their hopes and exploit their fears, by promising impossible rewards and threatening terrible punishments to those who would not obey blindly the apostles or the messengers of God, as they like to call themselves deceptively.

All things considered then, it would seem that the light of philosophy will probably be dim and the voice of scientific reason inaudible, as the clouds of “holy wars” gather and the din of horrific acts of terror multiply in the beginning of third millennium. The main source of this terror will be evidently the awaken militant Islam once again, just as happened in the seventh and the fifteenth centuries before, contributing to the creation of the new era of darkness in the Middle East, in Europe and the connected global world. One Islamic Theocracy is already firmly established in Iran and others may follow in the

near future in Iraq, Pakistan, Algeria, Egypt, and even in “secular” Turkey, in spite of its democratic pretensions and its aspiration for membership in the European Union.

The international community cannot accept in the long run the return to the Dark Ages of the past. It should, therefore, take prudent political actions to prevent the coming into being of such Medieval Theocracies. Thus, it should avoid another tragedy like that of Afghanistan, ruled by the Taliban, harboring the Al Qaeda, and planning evil acts of unimaginable terror, like those of 9/11/01 and 7/7/05.

Especially the only surviving superpower, the United States of America, should act with political restraint and farseeing foresight. If possible, the war against terrorism should not turn into a new “holy war” between Evangelical Christianity and Militant Islam. These have been shown to be two historically fanatical faiths, two dangerously and deceptively vicious aberrations of traditional Judaism and tolerant Hellenic Polytheism.

We can only hope and pray that militant fanatics may learn from painful experiences of the past to let their fanatical God and the Gods of other peoples in peace in heaven, while they try to resolve their mortal differences on earth. Committing atrocities in the name of “the one true” God is the greatest possible folly and blasphemy for human beings to commit. For, even if we assume that there is only one true God, the God of Abraham (as Muslims, Christians, and Jews claim), linguistically and culturally distinct human groups, and each intelligent person, are bound to conceive and express the divine essence differently according to their ability to think and speak.

God’s assumed masks, therefore, tend to be suitable for the mind and ethos of certain men and the masses of human beings influenced by them at any given time. In Paul and Mohammed respectively, the one God of Abraham has apparently assumed its mild and wild masks. It may be time for civilized humanity to leave them behind, and try to revive the faces of the smiling and playful Hellenic Gods, who were silenced long ago by the two most vicious faiths of Abraham, messianic Christianity and militant Islam.

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