

# One Religion's Loss Isn't a Win for the Others

By Norman "Nourollah" Gabay

English Translation by Payman Akhlaghi

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**Humiliate a man to raise yourself, and someday  
He'll turn into a tiny stinging thorn on your way.**

In the gory market of religions today, a loss for one religion or group won't be a win for the others; rather, **it's the philosophy of religion as a whole that will fail.** The one-sided views of many religious people will make humanity understand that should religion fail to keep in step with the marvels of scientific progress and the growth of human understanding, **then religion won't work as a solution for every human problem.** If so, humankind will go on falling from one pothole to another, **from some extremist religious practice to an even worse void of religion.** Religion is not the only issue facing our world today. The major problem is that some inciting writings are being exploited by the forces of sedition. Nowadays some opportunists have got hold of the time, place and agents of hatred to establish numerous bases in forsaken places around the world. They've set out to practice some old and empty promises by drawing upon the vast resources of modern science and technology, even as they rely on their supposedly undisputable reasons! How beautifully wrote **Iqbal** in his book, *The Message of the East*,

**The philosopher and the politician,  
Don't measure them both with the same cup.  
One's eye is akin to a blind sun,  
While the latter sees with careless eyes.  
The first will be a feeble proof for the word of God,  
While the latter is solid proof for the wrong thoughts.**

Those who seek incitement follow a mistaken perception, a shameful invention of religions and sects that goes back to thousands of years, which says, "humiliate others to raise and endear yourself." The Jewish religion was the first victim of this misguided mindset, which thereafter spread to other religious groups, until finally it grabbed the very preachers of this theory by the throat.

**This is the very spark** that set aflame the shortsighted religious and sectarian minds. The fire has advanced so far that sudden mindless conflicts have emerged around the world, and even street fights in civilized countries such as Israel are no more far from expectation.

All governments and families should join forces to fight this plague or it will persist. Day after day it becomes clearer that many well-meant unilateral acts were miscalculated. For example, consider the granting of independence to several countries at the fall of the Ottoman Empire, or the later elimination of the dictators who had mastered the control of conflicting masses in hostile areas, while their people were still unprepared or undeserving of the ensuing

vacuum. For one, it was not well understood that years of poisonous religious or inherited promulgation and psychological conditioning had attached such people to their various inherited sects with zeal far stronger than they could care for homeland, independence, culture or the law. The world should have known better that,

**Brawn won't grow blossoms on a willow;  
A dark skin won't turn white in the tub.  
Tie no hopes to the one with a poor essence:  
The color of the skin can't be washed away.**

The fault is not entirely theirs. As the Czechoslovakian philosopher and president **Vaclav Havel** put it, and I paraphrase, "Where bigotry arrests thinking, evil will happen and reason will be enslaved."

One of the better articles of the past 30 years, originally in German, read in part, "The dictators of various countries were the cleverest of people, for they managed to present their peoples to the world other than they truly were." A living proof of this claim is what their peoples did *after* those dictators were brought down, or even after the colonialists were forced to end the occupation. Libya is an obvious case in point.

The French thinker **Buffon** said, and I paraphrase, "A strong will can command all human powers, as long as it's combined with reason and not emotions." Otherwise, **the man of raw thoughts isn't worth much to be heard.**

Prejudiced people put emotion before reason; and emotions have little to do with logic, as they may burn the branch with the dry twig, the friend with the foe. **Take a look around.** In a culture of prejudice, the stronger an agent of hatred disagrees with alternative thinkers the more religious he's thought to be. Such people by majority vote deem the most extremist of all worthy of their leadership, nay, of the world. For their minds grew in a tiny cocoon and can't imagine a world any larger.

The West would do well to hear the silent rational minority who are against unrest, for they know their environments well. They're like the broken-bone man who appreciated the proverbial mummy, and thence, they can be good guides on the road to peace.

**I know the torment of Jacob's broken heart,  
For a heart hurt knows the pain of another.**

A prejudiced person follows the catastrophe of arbitrary exceptions that has faulted many a religious command, and thus, he or she agrees with reason as long as it agrees with his wants and beliefs! **But a seal of holiness can't make the paradoxical culture of "if, but, unless" any more worthy or practical,** even though such people deem religion to be just that!

**We all carry our blames; therefore  
Let's not ridicule the faults of others.  
To mock a man's unpleasant face**

**Won't make us any more handsome.  
Better look intently at yourself;  
Rather speak first of your faults.**

Western governments wish to establish peace and pave the way for normal relations in the future by bringing democracy to countries whose people have no knowledge of it, nor are they prepared for it. Whereas, **this author believes** that “though the home’s dangerous and the aim’s far,” once the current conflicts are over, the wealthy governments rather establish cultural education programs in poor countries, similar to the insurance system, welfare and many other social benefit programs in their own countries that have helped maintain peace and security. Especially today’s “global village” calls for such a proper approach to keep our world safe and calm. **Everyone will live in comfort when every one has achieved a minimum of comfort and an understanding of democracy.** Following the tragic events of 9/11, **the West endured trillions of dollars in expenses**, thousands of cherished lives were lost on every side, and millions of homeless refugees were left behind in conditions sometimes worse than death; **but a successful step toward democracy in hostile countries has yet to be taken.** Because they wished to build an edifice without the foundation, to milk the proverbial ox, unaware that occupation would not mean that the minds and beliefs of the conquered people were captured too or could be changed. Examine the outcome of past mistakes. Thus happened for they didn’t know any better.

**The dry cloud cannot rain,  
Nor could a lifeless essence bestow life.**

The West should have distinguished between those who believed in such ideologies as Communism, Nazism or Fascism, and the religious or sectarian extremists. For whereas the non-theist ideologues shared in a book and a leader, the latter case, besides common ideological threats, **involves many inaccessible Gods** accompanied by their countless representatives. Sadly, the West has remained largely oblivious to this matter.

To uproot Malaria, they don’t run after every mosquito; instead, they spread insecticides on the swamps where the anopheles grow. To get rid of the extremist plague, we need to disinfect our written sources, as well as the schools and seminaries where religious hatred is preached. Happily, it’s a task that requires no massacres, nor the multitude of innocent refugees.

The textbooks taught at regressive schools are the seeds of hatred. How sad that their teachers sow such deadly seeds; and **pity the students**, these blank slates on whom such nonsense is impressed which is bound to waste their entire lives. **Tomorrow** demands our caring attention more than **today**, for that’ll be when the little students of these zealot preachers will have grown up into responsible adults. We neglected yesterday, and look what happened. Let’s come to now, or tomorrow may turn out worse than today. Only if humankind would realize that religion, which was meant to be the proverbial yogurt for our bread, has become a fatal poison.

Dark smoke is rising from the bloody pages of the history of religions, particularly that of Judaism. Why? Because,

**Once religion had conquered the world,  
It grew corrupt over time.  
Though it was based on reason,  
Hearsay took over and made changes to it.  
Some did it for business,  
Some out of hypocrisy.  
Every error became a heavenly word, and  
Religion was confined to elegiac sermons.  
The ironstone “cured” the invalid, while  
The wooden palm made a thousand “miracles”!  
For, religion devoid of knowledge,  
It won’t be safe from superstition.**

Sweet old memories. My home of childhood had no signs of discrimination or superstition. None of my parents or grandparents believed in superstitions, even in that most common nonsense known as “the good or evil eye”. A *tanoor*, a clay oven, had been built in our house. Every week or every other week, Mama Nanva “the Baker” would visit us, and as we awaited the Deezy Soup or the Tanoori Beets to get ready, we watched the scorpions march by the warmth of the tanoor. We had a room full of chickens and roosters, and every morning, we woke up to their sweet crowing. On some days, their calls were joined by the ring of camel-bells that brought the cargo to the Sheibani and Javid families. We bought chicken, walnuts and charcoal from the Sarbans, i.e. the heads of the caravans, as we spoke with the Muslim Sarbans (Gouyānoush-Ābādi) in the particular dialect of Jews of Kashan. Neither of us knew of the roots of this shared thread. Today, however, research has shed some light on the question.

The local dialects of the Jews of Kashan, Hamedan, Isfahan, Shiraz, and some of the other millennia-old Jewish cities of Iran, had their roots in the original Persian-Zoroastrian language before the Arab Conquest. This suggests that at the time of the Arab attacks on Iran about 1400 years ago, those Jews who didn’t convert to Islam preserved the language of the Iranian people of the time. To date, even the Muslims of Jewish origin in some Iranian cities, including the city of Abyaneh and several villages around Kashan, speak this common Zoroastrian-Jewish language without being aware of its origins.

**Language is like trees; it would wither should it cease to grow.** The local dialect of the Kashani Jews will be forgotten too, as did many other local languages. Therefore, in the recent while, as a native speaker of this language who’s studied about it, I joined hands with Mr. Haroon Soroudi to record and preserve this cultural heritage by preparing **the complete glossary** of this language with **English and Persian translations and a pronunciation guide**. This volume will be made available soon for the public on [BabaNouri.com](http://BabaNouri.com) and [7Dorim.com](http://7Dorim.com) in

memory of the late **Nourollah Kharrazi**. Thus, those interested in the mother tongue of the Kashani Jews, perhaps even future scholars, will be able to print this volume for their own study.

But I digressed. I spoke of the Sarbans, the chickens and the roosters. Naneh Nanva used to sit with us at the table like a member of the family. She came late at night to prepare the dough and returned early next morning to bake the bread. What a nice world we had. We didn't live in a village, but we had brought the refreshing peace of the village to our home. Our friends belonged to every religion. Our neighbors across the street, the respected Yousefian family, were Bahais; our next door neighbors, the late Arbab Kei-khosrow and his family, were Zoroastrians; and the rest were Jews or Muslims. We played with the Muslim kids; together, we even went to the elegiac sermons known as *rowzeh khāni*; and in the innocence of childhood, we wept alongside the crowd! My parents too were close friends with the Muslims. But to date, I can't fathom why the moment the outskirts of religion were touched, the faces of these angelic Muslims turned into some archenemies. Was that indeed the philosophy of religion? My father used to sing aloud in a sad tone,

**We're among the pure-hearted who harbor no contempt;  
Yet, we have a city full of critics and not a single friend.  
We're a branch, full of the fruit of monotheism;  
We won't fear the passerby who throws a stone at us.**

Most Kashani Jewish men sang as much as the morning prayers and religious songs called for; and some of them had beautiful voices. Ms. Zobaydeh, a.k.a. Naneh Nanva sang as well, while she welcomed and served the Sarbans. The moment we pushed the newly purchased chickens into their cages, our chickens and the roosters, even the little ones, "welcomed" the new-comers by pecking them on the head! Naneh Nanva would laugh and say, "Just like people! They claim to own the place, while their place is the pile of rice!" She sang aloud,

**The true owner (of the cage) is the Almighty God.  
The means were entrusted to us to make a living.**

Some people in our global cage continue to peck one another on the head (!), each in the name of some religion, deluded by thoughts of exclusive ownership of their unique God, without asking the simple question, "if God is one, then what's this difference between your God and mine?!" **The Rumi** said,

**When it starts to rain, don't ask whose house it is! For,  
The roofs of the mosque, castle, and tavern are the same.  
Rain! You come to us from God! Tell everyone,  
That the mad man and the sane are one and the same!  
The ignorant bunch think themselves as Gods; here,  
The evidence, the tale, and the myth are the same.  
If you understand things, you'll see God for yourself.  
If not, then Kaaba and the House of Idols would be the same.**

**Conclusion:** No doubt, precious fruits grow from healthy seeds and kind climates; and good people are the products of wise parents and suitable environments. America is an outstanding case in point, a country which has managed to create a free environment in whose shade it has offered amazing inventions, discoveries and innovations to the world.

Today, security, hygiene and economy have been globalized, and distances have been shortened. In the meantime, with help from trouble-making governments, the inciters have built bases of violence for themselves in places where local governments have been too weak to rein in their lands. As they say, a chain is as strong as its weakest link. The power of the civilized countries and the United Nations has come to depend on the strength of the weakest country in the world.

For example, when the central government of Somalia is weakened, as it happens with many other masterless countries, the entire land descends to chaos and turns into a lair of corruption. It's as true as it's incredible that presently at the beginning of the twenty-first century, groups of sea pirates, infected by religious hatred, like birds hitting plane engines, are hijacking giant ships owned by the world's major and minor powers. These pirates take the stolen vessels to the piers under their control (sic!), ask for large ransoms to free them, or otherwise kill the passengers. Such a crisis can't be solved by atom bombs, nor by politics.

That's also why the civilized countries will be forced to **save the neighbor's house from fire to save theirs**; and to do this by providing the necessary means, i.e. by offering better cultures to replace the old ones. Otherwise, as long as there are **environments that favor** the growth of the germs of hatred and insecurity, the stupid religious, governmental, and sectarian hostilities will persist.

As **Einstein** said, **“Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the universe.”**

*Norman “Nourollah” Gabay  
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