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Role of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Promoting Human Values in the Strife-Torn World

Israr Ahmad Khan*

Abstract: The modern era may be deemed as that of scientific and technological development but peace and harmony among the people remain elusive. The two world wars, Palestinian problem, bombing of world twin towers, invasion of Muslim countries by Americans and allied forces, and the continuous blood shedding of humanity in one form or another in different parts of the world, all these horrifying phenomena prove lack of political will on the part of United Nations. Had religions in the strife-torn regions played their crucial role, there would never have occurred bloodshed of the humanity. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam account for the big majority in the world today and have so many things in common, especially essential human values guided by two universal principles, unity of God and unity of man. The Ten Commandments in the Torah, confirmation of the Mosaic Law in the Bible, and reconfirmation of the Mosaic and Biblical instructions in the Qur'an still hold the significance for creating peace and harmony among people of the three creeds.

Keywords: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, The Ten Commandments, Human Values

Abstrak: Era moden merupakan era perkembangan saintifik dan teknologi, namun keamanan dan keharmonian masyarakat sejagat masih sukar dikecapi sepenuhnya. Perang dunia seperti isu Palestin, pengeboman menara berkembar World Trade Centre di New York, pencerobohan negara-negara Islam oleh tentera Amerika dan sekutunya, dan pertumpahan darah di pelbagai pelusuk dunia, membuktikan kepincangan kuasa politik di pihak Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu (PBB). Sekiranya agama-agama di wilayah yang dilanda konflik

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memainkan peranan dalam isu ini, pertumpahan darah berkemungkinan dapat dielakkan. Agama-agama seperti Yahudi, Kristian, dan Islam yang merupakan agama penganut majoriti terbesar dunia, memiliki banyak persamaan terutamanya dari segi nilai-nilai kemanusiaan yang dipandu oleh dua prinsip sejagat; keEsaan Tuhan dan penyatuan umat manusia. Sepuluh Rukun di dalam Taurat, pengesahan Taurat Musa dalam Alkitab (Bible), dan penegasan isi utama Taurat dan Alkitab dalam al-Quran memaparkan erti kepentingan mencapai kedamaian dan keharmonian sejagat yang jelas tertera dalam ajaran ketiga kepercayaan tersebut.

Kata kunci: Agama Yahudi, Kristian, Islam, Sepuluh Rukun Taurat, nilai kemanusiaan.

Introduction

In the modern world one can see the fast pace of development in science, technology, education, and quality of life. Yet, peace and harmony are missing from the world. The bloodshed, extremism, and violence seem to have engulfed humanity. United Nations has miserably failed to control the strife and create an environment of tranquility. The reason for this is very simple. The five permanent members of UN Security Council, either few or all of them are interested in maintaining their oligarchy that may not be ensured in a world free from chaos. This situation warrants effective role of religions particularly Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Scriptures of the three religions, the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an have several things in common especially human values, which if aggressively propogated and inculcated in minds, humanity may begin breathing a sigh of relief. This paper is aimed to discuss the common human values available in the worlds largest relegions.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Monotheistic Religions

The Greek word "theos" for God is very much akin to Vedantic word "Deo", which also means supreme being. In 1678, the Greek word "theos" was first used as "theism". This anglicized word stands for belief in God in singular or gods in plural. The opposite of theism is atheism, rejection of the existence of any creative power who created the entire universe, including man. English opted for two more words denoting belief in supernatural being: polytheism (belief in multiples gods or deities) and monotheism (belief in only one God). The discussion of this paper will be centered around monotheism.

The Encyclopedia of World Religions defined monotheism as “Belief in one GOD. It may be contrasted with Polytheism, or belief in many gods, and with monism, usually taken to mean that everything is really part of one impersonal absolute, (like the Brahman of Advaita Vedanta Hinduism). The three great Western religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, see themselves as traditionally monotheistic. They all stem ultimately from the faith of Abraham and from the religion of ancient Israel” (Ellwood, 2007, p.299).

“Monotheism, belief in the existence of one god, or in the oneness of God. As such, monotheism is distinguished from Polytheism, the belief in the existence of many gods, and from atheism, or the belief that there is no god. Monotheism characterizes the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the three great monotheistic religions, the essence and character of God are believed to be unique and fundamentally different from those of gods found in other religions. God is viewed as the creator of the world and of humanity. Moreover, he has not abandoned his creation but continues to lead it through his power and wisdom. God has created not only the natural world but also the ethical order to which humanity ought to conform. God is holy and is the source of the highest good. Such a monotheistic belief system results in the rejection of all other belief systems as false religions” (Eliade et al., 2006, p.747).

It may not be an uphill task to identify monotheistic religions in the world today. It may rightly be claimed that only three religions-Judaism, Christianity, and Islam-subscribe to the belief in one and the only God, the Ceator, the Sustainer, the Provider, and the Controller of the entire universe. The Judaism stresses oneness of God: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one” (Deutronomy. 6:4). Christianity advocates that the God is the one who created the heavens and the earth and whatever there is in-between. Some may claim that the concept of trinity in Christianity controverts the idea of unity of God. The Christians believe that the Lord as the father, Jesus as the son of God, and the Holy Spirit constitute one single entity, the God. According to Christian faith, it was God Himself who appeared in the form of Holy Spirit and again in the form of Jesus the son. Interestingly, Trinity is not presented anywhere in the New Testament. What is emphasized in the Bible is the Unity of God (Exodus., xx, 2-17 and Deutronomy., v, 6-21). St

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)¹ categorically says in one of his writings under the head “Why we should adore one God?”: “Thou shall not have strange gods before Me (God’s own words). As we have already said, the First Commandment forbids us to worship other than the one God” (St. Thomas Aquinas). Muslim communities all over the world have absolute consensus over the fact as reiterated in the Qur’an that Allah is the only God in the universe, with no parallel to Him either in the entirety or in attributes (The Qur’an-4:171). Some Muslim scholars are of the view that besides Islam, Judaism and Christianity also fall under the list of monotheistic religions (Al-Şehrstânî, 1992, p.4).

Human Values in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: An Overview

The Judaic Torah, The Christian Bible, and the Islamic Qur’an share wonderfully several things, including the concept of unity of God, that of Apostleship, that of the Day of Judgment. Undoubtedly, there are quite a number of differences in the three sacred sources. But one great dimension which brings Judaism, Christianity, and Islam closer to each other is basic human values. If these human values as enshrined in the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur’an are sincerely and seriously looked at, and propogated the Balkans might demonstrate the concept of unity of man, leading to nowhere but peace, tolerance and coexistence.

The most important and extraordinarily treasured human value is the dignity and sanctity of man, irrespective of who he/she is—male or female, young or old, adult or minor, king or subject, rich or poor, shopkeeper or customer, student or teacher etc. The Judaic Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a) declares in unequivocal terms: “Anyone who destroys human life is considered as if he had destroyed an entire world, and anyone who preserves human life is considered to have preserved an entire world” (Loewenthal, T., n.d.). This is unusually thrilling that the Qur’an has quoted this Judaic human value verbatim: “For this reason did We prescribe for the children of Israel that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though

¹Thomas Aquinas was an Italian philosopher, Catholic priest, and Doctor of the Church. He is still regarded as theologian, and jurist in the tradition of scholasticism. He left behind him quite a large number of books and papers. The most famous work of Aquinas is “SUMMA THEOLOGICA”. For more detail please, see: G. K. Chesterton, ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, Dover Publications, 2012 (ASIN: B00A0B1546).

he slew entire mankind; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive entire mankind...” (The Qur’an-5: 32) Jesus the Messiah is quoted to have said: “You shall not commit murder” (Mathew 19:18). The sanctity accorded to human life in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is the focal point of human values. It then flows from here that the three monotheistic religions honor human life from all angles, the blood, the dignity, and the property.

Another significant human value emphasized by the three monotheistic religions is justice. The Old Testament quotes the word of God: “Justice, justice you shall pursue” (Deutronomy 16:20). In the New Testament Jesus’ exhortation to his people on justice is noteworthy: “But seek first the kingdom and its justice and all these things will be added to you” (Mathew 6:33). The Qur’an exhorts its followers quite a number of times to uphold justice (i.e. 4:58; 4:135; 5:8; 5:41-42; 6:152; 7:29-30; 7:181; 16:76; 16:90; 16:126 etc.). To quote 4:135 “O believers! Be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah’s sake, though it may be against your own selves or parents or near relatives, whether rich or poor: Allah is nearer to them both in compassion hence do not follow low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do”.

Generosity occupies a very central place in the scheme of life outlined in the the three sacred sources. The Torah says: (1) “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:16); (2) “The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor” (Proverbs 22:9). The New Testament at a number of places quotes the utterances of Jesus Christ, which inspires generosity in the heart of the people. For example, Jesus praises Good Samaritan because he is: “One who gave time, resources and skill to meet the need of a man who had been left for dead at the side of the road” (Luke 10:25-37). The Qur’an institutes Zakah system to be followed by its adherents. The instructions related to charity in the Qur’an are many. One such verse which exhorts believers to be generous is recited in Friday sermon all over the Muslim world: “Surely, Allah enjoins the doing of justice and generosity, and the giving to the kindred...” (16:90).

In the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious societies what is most needed to be in place is tolerance. The world populations

are generally Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Their relationship needs to be governed by the principle of tolerance. It is undoubtedly intolerance of each other which led on and off to conflicts and wars. Tolerance certainly does not mean submission to each other in terms of respective faiths and practices. Tolerance literally signifies acceptance; and technically it means: "Willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them" ("tolerance," n.d.). Jews, Christians, and Muslims have all the right to differ from each other from the angles of faiths and practices. But these differences should not lead to abhorrence of and conflict with each other. It is simply because the three sacred sources, the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an command their respective followers to be lenient to others. Although the word tolerance does not occur in the entire Bible at all, but the biblical statements on peace and mercy may be considered in one way or another injunction on tolerance or religious tolerance. Two quotations may suffice to bring the idea home.

1. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken it..." (Micah 4:3-5).
2. Jesus' disciples had rejected a healer who was exorcising demons in Jesus' name, yet was not one of Jesus' direct followers. Jesus criticized his disciples and accepted the healer, saying: "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark 9:38-40).

The Qur'an is replete with the teachings of tolerance. Some verses are quoted here below to stress the Islamic stand on tolerance:

1. "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah hears and knoweth all things" (2:256).
2. "The Messenger believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord and (so do) believers. Each one believes in

Allah and His angels and His Scriptures and His Messengers—we make no distinction between any of His Messengers—and they say: We hear, and we obey. Our Lord! Grant us Your forgiveness; to You we are destined to return” (2:285).

3. “Say: O disbelievers! I do not worship those whom you worship. Nor are you worshipers of Him whom I worship. Nor am I a worshiper of those whom you have worshiped. Nor are you worshipers of Him Whom I worship. For you is your religion and for me is mine” (109:1-6).

The first verse (2:256) is a spectacular example of religious tolerance. According to this principle, the people are free to think, choose, and practice their way of believing. The second verse (2:285) declares that Muslims are duty-bound to believe in all the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, be they Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Issac, Ishmael, Moses, Jesus, or Muhammad (Peace be Upon All of Them), without creating any distinction between this and that. The third quotation of verses (109:1-6) advocates tolerance among the followers of the religions.

Richard C. Crandall does not agree with the idea that Islam teaches tolerance to its followers: “Those who claim that Islam has been hijacked by extremists are either being deceitful or they are ignorant, liars, or stupid. In fact, these same individuals would have to claim that Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, was an extremist who hijacked his own religion. Those who hope that “moderates” will take over the religion or who hope for some type of reformation is naïve. When the basis of the religion and the behavior and teaching of its prophet are to convert, kill, or subjugate non-Muslim, there is no moderate path to follow. The intolerant and violent basis of the religion can also be seen in Islam’s bloody, intolerant, and violent fourteen hundred-year histories.” (Crandall, 2008, p.12)

But many others such as John J. O’Neil agrees to the fact that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance: “Again and again we are told how the Muslim conquerors of Syria, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain permitted both Christians and Jews to practice their own faiths without hindrance; and that, subject to the payment of a special tax, Christians and Jews enjoyed almost the same rights as Muslims. This Muslims tolerance is contrasted with the gross intolerance of Christians, who had earlier severely persecuted non-Christians and even heretical Christians,

destroying their places of worship and imposing heavy financial penalties for non-compliance. Islam arrived in Europe as a breath of fresh air; an enlightened and civilized force from the Near East, which breathed new life into the arts and sciences of a benighted and barbarous Europe, and laid the foundations for Europe's own Renaissance in the fifteenth century." (O'Neill, 2009, p.124)

Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Ten Commandments

Ethical principles and moral values are without the least doubt constituents of human behavior in each and every walk of life, private, public, personal, collective, familial, social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, educational, and spiritual. There exists controversy among western philosophers and thinkers over the history of origin of moral philosophy. As per the claim laid in the Encyclopedia Britannica, moral philosophy may be considered to have originated in Greek several centuries before Christ. It may be born here in mind that moral philosophy or ethics might have been studied systematically in Greek first, but moral values have always been intrinsic parts of human behavior right from the time the first man stepped onto the earth. The Qur'an makes it unequivocally clear that Adam (PBUH) the first man was fully equipped with the behavioral principles he needed to live and carry out his responsibilities on the earth (2:30-38). The last verse (2:38) contains the divine promise of sending down the information plus guidance on what to do and how to do. It may be noted here that moral philosophy mainly focus on the question: why to do what?

Moral principles guide, and regulate human actions and reactions everywhere and everytime. In the absence or ignorance of these values man's position is similar to one who gropes in the pitched dark to find a way out. Here there is a question: can man guide himself/herself on his/her own? Looking at multitudes of ideas, views and philosophies concerning moral values, one can with certainty claim that man alone is incapable to guide himself to what is right and what is wrong. What is indeed true about morality vis-à-vis man is that man has in his psyche moral sense but his mind is totally empty of moral values; his moral sense works when shown to him the set of moral or immoral practices.

There is no religion in the world which teaches against the established behavioural values. The three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam invariably seek to guide to certain

specific set of behavioural rules. The Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an are full of essential moral values. What is exceptionally amusing here is that the three sacred sources have absolute consensus on something known as "The Ten Commandments". In Hebrew it is called as "*aseret ha-d'varim*" (God spoke these words); and many Christian philosophers name these commands as *Decalogue*, which is originally Greek (*deka*: ten and *logos*: word).

The origin of the Ten Commandments may be understood from the story told in the Old Testament: "The Lord said to Moses, come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction. Then Moses set out with Joshua with his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them. When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day, the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites, the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24: 12-18). And: "Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets" (Exodus 32: 15-16).

As it appears, these ten commandments are originally for Jews, the followers of Moses. The nature of these ten laws speaks volumes of its universal value. In the Jewish traditions these ten rules occupied central place. Its validity continued in Christian traditions. Jesus Christ himself reaffirmed the significance of Mosaic law consisting of among other things the Ten Commandments: "Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17).

Christianity has so many different denominations, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Evangelical, to name a few. Most of these persuasions honor the Ten Commandments as the source of moral legislation. Evangelical Christians doubt the universal and contemporary

sanctity of the Ten Commandments (Cline, A., n.d.). They tend to forget that Jesus Christ himself exhorted his followers to follow the Ten Commandments: “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:18-20).

Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria (1923-2012) says: “It is sufficient to show the importance of the Ten Commandments, that God spoke to them in his mouth, also, God himself wrote it with his finger, on the tablets, and delivered them to Moses. When Moses received them from the mouth of God, he wrote them and sacrificed and burnt to God, as well as took from the blood and sprinkled on the people” (Shenouda, 2102, p.6). St Thomas Aquinas’ (1225-1274), a great Christian ideologue, commentary of the Ten commandments is the evidence of the validity of the Ten Commandments in human life (n.d.).

Muslims believe that the Qur’an was revealed to the Last Prophet (PBUH) to reconfirm most of the teachings in the Torah and the Bible. The Qur’an says: “He has revealed to you the Book with Truth, verifying that before it, and He revealed the Torah and the the Injil” (3:3). One can see that the Qur’an contains the similar rules to those in the Ten Commandments. Such Qur’anic verses will be quoted later. Right now attention will be drawn to the most valuable Ten Commandments as revealed to Moses in the Torah.

The Ten Commandments (Exodus., xx. 2-17; Deutronomy., v. 6-21) are as follows:

1. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shall not have strange gods before Me. Thou shall not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shall not adore them, nor serve them. I am

the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

2. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shall not kill.
6. Thou shall not commit adultery.
7. Thou shall not steal.
8. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shall not covet thy neighbour's wife.
10. Thou shall not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his field, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

St Thomas Aquinas's Commentary of the Ten Commandments

St Thomas Aquinas (n.d.) explains all these ten Commandments one by one. According to him, the first Commandment forbids man from worshipping other than the One God. He gives five reasons for this divine rule. First, God's Dignity does not allow men to corrupt their reverence to God. Second, God's Bounty unto man is limitless and infinite hence it does not behove man to be grateful to any other than God. Third, man promised to God that he would not worship any but Him. Fourth, escaping from the Devil requires man to seek refuge with God alone. Fifth, greatness of the reward God promised to those who worship God alone must prevent man from turning away from the only Lord.

The second Commandment reads: "Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain". St Thomas Aquinas explains the meaning of "in vain". He says that Lord's name should not be used to confirm any false thing, that is, man should not swear falsely or take oath in the name of God wrongly. He also suggests that God's name should be taken justly for six purposes: to confirm the truth, to sanctify His name on occasions like baptism, to expel evil forces, to confess the sin, to defend oneself from sin, and to complete the task properly.

The third Commandment on keeping holy the Sabbath day has five reasons: to put aside errors, to strengthen faith in the Redeemer, to fulfill

the promise concerning rest, to increase the spirit of love, and to show kindness to the subordinate.

The fourth Commandment concerns with honoring parents. St Thomas Aquinas suggests that parents deserve their children's honor due to their contribution to their life. He is of the view that serving the parents leads to rewards such as long life, and glory.

The fifth Commandment "thou shall not kill" is to save humanity from chaos. He says that criminals must be killed; but neither suicide nor killing others without just reason is allowed. He identifies wrath as the reason for such crime. That is why he suggests to control one's emotions.

The sixth Commandment "thou shall not commit adultery" is according to St Thomas Aquinas great sin as it is an act of beast, not of human hence it brings shame and dishonor to man.

The seventh Commandment "thou shall not steal" is to save humanity from committing something irreparable. St Thomas Aquinas considers theft a sin similar to murder. He says that bread to a poor man is his life; so stealing it away is to take his life away. He is of the view that adulterer, killer, and sinner of other kinds may repent, but repentance after theft is almost impossible as it involves action not merely in words but also in practice because the thief must return what he has stolen first before he kneels down before God to beg for His mercy.

The eighth Commandment "thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor" is to uphold the honor of neighbor. Witnessing against neighbor wrongly is to inflict injury to him, which is forbidden by Lord. St Thomas Aquinas considers it similar to speaking lies which brings disrepute to the liar, and corrupts his soul.

The ninth Commandment "thou shall not covet thy neighbor's goods" to protect man's own honor, innerself, and wealth. To St Thomas Aquinas, targeting neighbor's property is due to the man's greed which spoils the self, the society. He raises a very interesting point that coveting other's wealth renders the wealth of the greedy worthless. He emphasizes that greediness leads to all kinds of wickedness in the society.

The tenth Commandment “thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s wife” is to restore the dignity of social justice. St. Thomas Aquinas suggests how to keep at bay from this covetousness. First, one should not try to be close to her. Second, one should not think in a lustful manner. Third, one should fast to control one’s carnal desire. Fourth, one should keep himself busy in doing something wholesome.

Jesus Christ’s Moral Teachings

Jesus the son of Mary made it time and again clear to his followers, as quoted from the Gospel earlier, that he was not to destroy the law of Moses and the Commandments Moses was given by the Lord. He over and over again exhorted his disciples to hold fast to the moral values in general. Some such quotations from Jesus’ teachings are given here below.

1. The New Testament says: “Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”(Matthew: 4:10-11)
2. The New Testament says: “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.” (John 5:21)
3. The New Testament says: “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ But I tell you, do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matthew 6:9).
4. The New Testament says: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother”--which is the first commandment with a promise-- that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” (Ephesians 6: 1-3)
5. The New Testament says: “The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever another commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Roman 13: 9-10)

6. The New Testament Says: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5: 27-28).
7. The New Testament says: “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Ephesians 4: 28).
8. The New Testament says: “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (Ephesians 4: 25).

Jesus’s teachings are not confined to only these eight advices as quoted above. New Testament is full of his sermons, exhortations, commands, suggestions, and wisdoms on how to ensure the good life on the earth so as to win the pleasure of the Lord in the hereafter. What appears from the above quotations from New Testament that Jesus came to reconfirm the teachings of Moses and what was revealed to him.

Some Christian denominations feel that they are not bound to accept the ten commandments of the Old Testament on the following grounds:

1. “Having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Colossians 2:14-15).

Christians understand from the above verses that Jesus Christ has abolished the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament and they also believe that Old Testament is meant only for the Children of Israel and not for the followers of Jesus Christ.

2. “Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18 -20).

3. Christians may have rejected Moses' Ten Commandments due to the death penalty for the violator of any of the ten commandments: "While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, and they kept him in custody because it was not clear what should be done to him. Then the Lord said to Moses, the man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp. So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the Lord commanded Moses" (Numbers 15:32 – 36).
4. They claim that Jesus Christ did not teach nor consider Moses Ten commandments but rather brought similar to his people which can be found in the New Testament (Sayers, 2006).

Individual Thinkers' Rejection of The Ten Commandments: A Critique

Every human individual is rightly invested with the right to think, differ, accept, and choose. This freedom is consequent upon man's position as an intellectual being. Should this freedom be absolute? Of course not, it is very harmful for the integrity of human life. Man whenever granted total freedom of thought destroyed himself, and society. History stands witness to this. Human thoughts may be classified into two major categories: (1) conformative, and (2) repudiatory. It is to be agreed upon that the ideas floated on any issues whatsoever must be logical. But it generally appears that repudiatory ideas are more often based on wish and whims. Those who reject the validity of the Ten commandments to Christians do so not because their criticism is supported by any viable arguments; it is rather reflective of their own wishful thinking. They find the moral values as inculcated by the Ten Commandments horrifying for their absolutely free life. Their so-called argument that Jesus did not teach the Ten Commandments makes no sense because Jesus made it obvious on several occasions that his ministry was not to abrogate or destroy the laws of Moses. Jesus was the Messenger of God. He received instructions from God. If he confirmed the Laws of Moses. It was indeed confirmation from God. No human being has any right to ignore the divine precepts. This is against the logic that ordinary humans protest against the revealed law of God. It is to be remembered that revelation from God is to guide man in his life; it is not man who

can modify revelation or repudiate it. Man invariably aims at happiness, which can be achieved by acceptance and implementation of moral values as enshrined in divine instructions. By rejecting moral values man inflicts injury to his own self. Momentary pleasure is not the real pleasure man should be interested in; it is rather the pleasure destined for him in the life after death. The argument that what was revealed for Jews should be only for Jews is rationally fallacious. A revealed rule remains effective until another revelation to supercede it comes down. No divine law can ever be altered merely by human desire. Those who criticize the Ten Commandments speak undoubtedly out of their own desire that can never be deemed alternative to revelation. A quote from the Bible will suffice to render the rejectionist approach invalid:

“Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” (17) “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only one who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments. Which ones? the man inquired. Jesus replied, do not murder, do not commit adultery, Do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 19:16-19).

The Qur’anic Confirmation of the Ten Commandments

The Last and Final Revelation to the Last and the Final Prophet (PBUH) is the Qur’an which (1) corrects errors inserted by humans in the previous revelations, the Torah, and the Gospel, and (2) reconfirms the eternal moral laws revealed in the previous Scriptures. The first task of the Qur’an is not the jurisdiction of this paper. As for the second contribution of the Qur’an, few examples are given here below.

1. “Say: “Come, I will rehearse What Allah hath (really) Prohibited you from”: join not Anything with Him: Be good to your parents; kill not your children On a plea of want; -We Provide sustenance for you and for them; -come not Nigh to indecent deeds, whether open or secret; take not life, which Allah Hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: Thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom. And come not nigh to the orphan’s property, except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength; give measure and weight with (full) justice; No burden do We place on any soul, but that which

it can bear; - Whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfill the Covenant of Allah: Thus doth He command you, that ye may remember” (The Qur’an, 6: 151-152).

2. “Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain Old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them but address them, in terms of honor. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up when I was little. Your Lord knows best what is in your minds; if you are good, then He is surely forgiving to those who turn to Him frequently. And give the near of kin his due and to the needy and to the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. Surely the squanderers are fellows of Satanic forces, and Satan is ever ingrate to his Lord. And if you turn away from then to seek the mercy of your Lord, which you hope for, speak to them a gentle word. And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost stretching forth, lest you should sit down blamed, destitute. Certainly your Lord makes plentiful the provision of whomsoever He wills. He well-aware and fully observant of all that relates to His servants. And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We give them sustenance and yourselves. Surely to kill them is a great sin. And do not nigh to fornication; surely it is an indecency and an evil way. And do not kill anyone whome Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause, and whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him not exceed the just limits in slaying, surely he is aided. And draw not near to the property of the orphan except in a goodly way till he attains his maturity and fulfill the promise. Surely promise will be questioned about. And give full measure when you measure out, and weigh with a correct balance; this is fair and better in the end. And follow not that of which you have no knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about. And do not go about in the land exultingly, for you cannot cut through the earth nor reach the mountains in hight. All this-the evil of it-is hateful in the sight of your Lord. This is what your Lord has revealed to you of wisdom, and do not associate any other god

with Allah lest you should be thrown into hell, condemned, cast away” (The Qur’an, 17: 23-39).

3. “As to the thief, Male or female, cut off his or her hands: A retribution for their deed and exemplary punishment from Allah, And Allah is exalted in Power, full of Wisdom” (The Qur’an, 5:38).
4. “Nor strain thine eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendor of the life of this world, through which We test them: But the provision of thy Lord is better and more enduring” (The Qur’an 20: 131).

One might wonder whether the Qur’an exhorted mankind to observe certain moral rules as mentioned in the above-quoted verses. The entire Qur’an represents the moral rules and laws for human life so as to obtain bliss. The Last Prophet (PBUH) to whom the Qur’an came down time and again reiterated the Qur’anic injunctions to his people. In his pilgrimage which he performed few months before his demise he delivered a sermon which is considered the gist of his entire mission.

Farewell Sermon of the Last Prophet (PBUH)

It is reported that shortly before his departure to his heavenly abode the Last Prophet (PBUH) performed *hajj* along with thousands of his followers, where he delivered a very short sermon which represents the gist of his entire mission. He reminded the audience of around nine principles of Islamic life: (1) it is obligatory to always thank and praise Allah, the source of guidance and also misguidance; (2) every human being’s life, property, and dignity are inviolable; (3) usury-based finance system is totally forbidden; (4) blood-revenge is prohibited for ever; (5) intercalation practice has been done away with; (6) husband-wife relationship needs to mutually prosper; (7) believers are brethren hence no wrong doing to each other; (8) Satan is disappointed that none would ever worship him in the sacred land but he might endeavor to mislead people in different way; and (9) the people will never go astray as long they hold fast to the Qur’an and traditions of the Prophet (Ibn Hisham, 1990).

This sermon of the Last Prophet (PBUH) speaks for the Prophet’s mission-in-brief. For one who wants to understand Islam at its crux, he/she is advised to see the farewell sermon of the Final Prophet (PBUH).

Simply by looking at what the Prophet (PBUH) said therein one can understand the essential nature of Islam.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Similarity in Human Values

Moses (peace be upon him) received the Torah from the Heaven, Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) was inspired the Injil by the Lord of the universe, and the Last Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was revealed the Qur'an from on high. These great Prophets were appointed by Allah the Almighty. Moses' Torah was to put on record the essential rules for successful life; Jesus' Injil was a reminder of what the humanity had almost pushed to oblivion; and the Last heavenly Scripture the Qur'an was given to humanity to learn and understand the genuine teachings of Allah given previously through the Torah and the Injil. Due to interpolations, and corruptions in the Torah and the Injil, humanity needed the light of the Qur'an. Despite changes, and self contradictions available in the Jewish and Christian Books, there are still the messages that can serve as common grounds for the three monotheistic religions to play their role in creating and maintaining peace and harmony among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The three religions' core teachings may be summarized as: Unity of God and Unity of Man.

Mechanism of Promoting Human Values in the World

What has been talked about above is all theoretical. The teachings of the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an have been available for thousands of years. The right thinking Jews, Christians, and Muslims need to rise to the occasion. Jewish Rabbis, Christian saints, and Muslim "Ulamā" have to think and rethink on how to create harmony among the people. Only genuine concern for peace can lead to practical steps to achieve the target. The governments in the today's world must be pro-active. The authorities must pay attention to the development of all kinds of prejudices. Modern world history has witnessed that ethnic and racial animosity brought such development cannot be ensured by inciting people's ethnic, national, racial, and cultural chaos and destruction on the surface of the earth. Peace among people is the only solution to see the development in the entire world. In order to let the people experience peace the common grounds of their values are to be inculcated day in day out through print, electronic, and social media. In the educational curricula of the world universities, colleges and schools the common human values as emphasized in the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an

are to be introduced. Programs are to be organized to highlight the common teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Wherever there is a will there is a way. If the people cutting across ethnic, racial, and religious boundaries are willing to achieve harmony among themselves, no external forces can ever hamper the way forward.

Conclusion

Allah, the Lord, the God, the Creator and the Controller of the entire universe is the fountainhead of absolute wisdom. The similar moral principles enshrined in the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an substantiate the notion that all these descended from one and the same source, Allah. The Ten Commandments in the Torah, the similar exhortations in the Bible, and reconfirmation of the human values in the Qur'an represent the highest wisdom of Allah, the Lord, the God, the all-knowing, the all-wise. Socio-Political will is needed to be in place in the world body. Sincerity of commitment to the Creator, and consciousness of the inviolability of human life, property, and dignity as taught by the three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam can surely create an environment of peace and harmony which ultimately will ensure development of all kinds, material, human, spiritual, and moral.

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