

The Philosophy of Self and Other in the Thought of the Divine Religions

Iliyes Lahri¹, Akram Belkhiri²

¹²Mohamed El Bachir El Ibrahimi University, Bordj Bou Arreridj. Algeria

Email : iliyes.lahri@univ-bba.dz; <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8455-3179>

Email : akram.belkhiri_1@univ-bba.dz; <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1562-7963>

Received : 24/09/2025

Accepted : 20/11/2025

Published : 20/02/2026

Abstract:

An attentive reading of the contemporary global context, particularly the situation of the Muslim community, reveals that conflict is no longer limited to the economic and political domains shaped by globalization, but has also taken on a distinctly religious dimension. This is manifested both within individual societies, through sectarian divisions, and in the interactions among followers of the three Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Such a reality can largely be explained by the growing detachment of many adherents from the true essence of their religious teachings, coupled with the rising dominance of certain religious discourses that have gradually supplanted the foundational message of religion. As a result, the discourse of some religious authorities—priests, rabbis, and jurists—has, at times, come to overshadow the original religious message grounded in spiritual and humanistic values.

Nevertheless, this assessment should not be indiscriminately applied to all religious figures, as many have remained committed to the spirit of dialogue and coexistence that lies at the heart of the divine revelations. Yet, certain movements and sectarian trends within the three religions have contributed to reshaping religious discourse, shifting it from a framework based on tolerance and dialogue to one marked by ideological confrontation and conflict, thereby distancing it from the fundamental purpose of religion, which is to foster shared human values.

In light of this, it becomes essential to return to the authentic religious discourses within Islam, Christianity, and Judaism—discourses that have historically sought to mitigate religious conflict and to oppose all forms of extremism. From this standpoint, the article seeks to examine the religious heritage of these three traditions with the aim of reviving the common human values that unite followers of different faiths, values rooted in the recognition of difference as a legitimate form of diversity rather than a cause of discord. The discussion will therefore be confined to presenting three illustrative models drawn from Jewish, Christian, and Islamic heritage that exemplify these principles of coexistence.

Keywords : Philosophie- Self- Religions divines

Introduction:

An examination of the current state of the world in general, and of the Islamic Ummah in particular readily notices that, in addition to the conflicts generated by globalization between East and West in the economic and political domains, there is also a specifically religious conflict, This conflict manifests itself both within a single society as is the case in many Muslim societies between Sunnis and Shi'as and between societies at the global level among the three religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This is primarily due to the fact that adherents of these religions have distanced themselves from the authentic teachings of their faiths, this distancing has been accompanied by the dominance of religious authorities over the religion itself, Consequently, the discourse of priests, rabbis, and jurists has come to substitute for the foundational discourse, This is not to claim that all religious scholars have abandoned the original dialogical and co-existential thrust of their respective traditions. However, certain schools within the three religions have transformed a religious discourse grounded in dialogue and coexistence into an ideologized discourse based on conflict, there by deviating from the fundamental mission of religion.

On this basis, there is a need to return to those Jewish, Christian, and Islamic discourses that have sought, and continue to seek, to mitigate the intensity of conflict among the three religions, and to resist all forms of religious extremism, Therefore in this study we aim to explore the religious heritage of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in order to revive those shared religious human values, that can unite people of different faiths, these values are grounded in difference rather than conflict. the discussion will be confined to three illustrative examples drawn from the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic heritage.

I. Values of coexistence in Judaism:

Investigating Judaism's stance toward the non-Jewish Other requires, from an epistemological perspective, a return to the Torah and Talmud as the foundational texts that most faithfully and objectively express authentic Judaism, just as the Quran and the Sunna must be consulted when examining the essence of Islam.

The Old Testament is regarded as the primary source of legislation for the various Jewish sects and communities. It is a collection of books compiled by Jewish religious leaders after the Babylonian war (444 BCE), foremost among them « Ezra ». The different Jewish denominations disagree regarding the exact status of these writings: some regard them as sacred scripture, while others see them as jurisprudential elaborations on the original Torah. The term "Torah" is also extended to refer to the explanations and commentaries developed over the ages by the rabbis around the written Torah; these are designated as the "Oral Torah" in order to distinguish them from the written torah." ¹

¹ Ahmed Shalaby, *Judaism*, Egyptian Renaissance Library, Cairo, 1988, p. 204

Regardless of what these texts represent for Jews doctrinally, they function in practice as legislative sources for all Jewish groups, and they contain numerous statements about the status of the Other in Judaism. The idea of divine election of the Children of Israel introduces a distinction between the people of Israel and other nations in terms of both worldly and eschatological standing.

As stated in the book of Deuteronomy as follows: For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession, it was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you for you were the fewest of all peoples, it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.²

And as mentioned in Isaiah chapter 49: "with their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet"³, but as stated at the outset of this study, such verses should not be interpreted through the lens of religious authorities whose interpretations have distorted and redirected the foundational religious text from its original meaning toward an ideological one, largely grounded in the rejection of the Other, the reference to "Israel" in this context is to be understood as addressing the prophet of God who was sent to the Children of Israel, that is, the community to whom the Prophet Moses was sent. The holiness referred to in this Torah passage the focus is not on the ethnic group as such, but on the holiness of the prophet who was sent among them, as is indicated by the subsequent mention of prophetic attributes in the same text, such as divine election, the formation of a righteous community after him, and his devotion and faith in God. The Lord's love for this people is therefore not grounded in their mere descent from the Children of Israel, but in their faith in authentic Judaism during the time of the Prophet Moses, peace be upon him. Hence, the discourse here is not ethnic in nature, but religious and doctrinal. This is further supported by other Torah passages that clearly contradict a purely literal reading of the verses previously cited. Thus, in the Ten Commandments, it is stated: "Whatever you hate to be done to you, be sure not to do it to others."⁴

It is further stated that: "Wash yourselves and purify yourselves; remove the evil of your thoughts, cease from wrongdoing, practice benevolence, and seek justice."⁵

In addition to all of the above, the hostile interpretations of these texts were largely propagated by Orthodox Jews and the strict Rabbinical authorities, whose

² The Holy Bible, *Deuteronomy* (8–86), Dar al-Kana'is fi al-Sharq al-Awsat, 1st ed., 1992

³ Ibid., *Isaiah*, (10–60)

⁴ Ruqayyah, Al-Alwani et al., *The Concept of the Other in Judaism and Christianity*, Dar Al-Fikr, 2008, p(51)

⁵ Ibid, p (11)

readings were often shaped more by ideological and ethnic loyalty than by genuine religious adherence to Judaism. However, this adversarial interpretation of the Other did not persist beyond the emergence of the Enlightenment, which influenced all religions, including Judaism. Reform movements subsequently arose, fundamentally rejecting the idea of "the chosen people of god" in its racial and ethnic sense. Indeed, the core of their call was cultural assimilation and integration with the peoples among whom they lived, aiming to eliminate any nationalist traits that might distinguish them from others.⁶

These reform efforts were part of a broader process of cultural globalization that imposed on all religions, and their adherents the concepts of the universal human being and a human civilization encompassing all races and religions.

But the non reformist Jews particularly non Orthodox circles have often gone further by rejecting the doctrine of election as a theological dogma, "even if they affirm that the Jewish people possess a distinctive historical experience. For them, the "Lord of Israel" is the God of all humanity, who wills good for every human being⁷", however it is necessary to examine the concept of the other and judaism's stance toward the non jew whether they follow another religion or have apostasized from judaism.

1. Judaism and the concept of Apostasy :

The term "apostasy" (Ridda) is commonly associated with Islam i, historically aslinked with the defection of certain Arab tribes from Islam after the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him. However, in Judaism, there exist several terms that convey a meaning analogous to the concept of apostasy as understood in Islam, namely abandoning one's religion and adopting another.

In this context, Judaism employs multiple terms to express apostasy: "(numar) which means one who changes their religion; (*pashe' Israe*) refers to a rebel against Israel; (*meshummad*) means the doomed or destroyed; (*min*), denoting a heretic; and (*kofer*) is a denier or unbeliever.⁸

In islamic jurisprudence, there are certain sanctions associated with changing one's religion (apostasy) ,likewise judaism contains laws and regulations that prohibit leaving the faith after having embraced it, notable these rulings exhibits similarities with those found in islamic jurisprudence, such that in the foundational Jewish texts, the punishment for apostasy is presented as entirely eschatological, like what is affirmed in the Quran, By contrast, the sanctions developed within Jewish religious thought resemble those found in the jurisprudential writings of certain Muslim scholars concerning the punishment of the apostate, and we find that the Jewish religious thought prescribes several penalties imposed on any Jew who dares to abandon Judaism, "such as exclusion from the community. This form of punishment falls under the authority of a specific Jewish community and it is applied

⁶ Ibid, p(53)

⁷ Ruqayyah, Al-Alwani et al., The Concept of the Other in Judaism and Christianity, Ibid., p(54)

⁸ Ziyad Wasilah, Al-Mi'yar Journal, no 42, june 2017, p(279).

locally against individuals accused of apostasy or heresy⁹; but it does not necessarily extend to other Jewish communities, As has been noted, the penalties for apostasy are man made sanctions with no basis in the sacred texts, as evidenced by their variation from one community to another depending on those who claim authority to speak in the name of religion.

The concept of apostasy varies from one sect and school of thought to another, depending on differing degrees of moderation and strictness. In response to this diversity, Moses Maimonides sought to establish unified criteria upon which all Jewish denominations could agree, These criteria take the form of the fundamental pillars of faith, and any violation of one of these principles is considered an act of apostasy, and thus a departure from the religion. Maimonides articulated these principles in thirteen articles of faith: "belief in the existence of the Creator and His oneness, the denial of corporeality, God's eternity, the affirmation that He alone is worthy of worship and veneration, belief in prophecy, belief in the prophecy of Moses peace be upon him, the belief that the Torah is a divine revelation from heaven, the belief that the Torah is immutable and not subject to abrogation, the belief that God has knowledge of human actions and does not neglect them, belief that God rewards those who obey the commandments of the Torah and punishes those who violate its prohibitions, belief in the coming of the Messiah, and belief in the resurrection Maimonides, express the Moses summarized byas These principles,¹⁰" core of Jewish monotheistic doctrine. However, the punishment imposed on those who violate these principles varies from one Jewish denomination to another. It also differs within Jewish texts themselves, particularly when comparing the covenant between God and the Prophet Abraham with the covenant between God and the Prophet Moses.

According to the covenant established by God with Abraham, "Jewish belonging to the Israelite community is considered permanent and cannot be nullified by any act contrary to the teachings of Judaism. From this perspective, apostates are regarded as disobedient Jews, yet adherents of this view maintain that no action can completely remove a Jew from the Jewish community, and those who have left Judaism and embraced another religion do not require special rituals to return to Judaism; repentance alone is considered sufficient for their reintegration this¹¹" closely resembles the theory of the "noble lineage" among our Shiite brethren, who regard the Ahl al-Bayt as distinct from other humans, not only in terms of their spiritual status but also to the extent of considering them infallible. Their infallibility is a doctrinal matter that admits no dispute, and no punishment can ever be imposed on those who belong to the Ahl al-Bayt. A parallel can be drawn in Judaism with the lineage of Abraham, known as the Israelites.

⁹ Jacob neusmer and other, the concyclopedia of juifisme, konuklike, brill NV, leodom the Netherlands, vol 1, p (368)

¹⁰ Moses Maimonides, book of Ha-Sanhedrin, vol. 10, p(20)

¹¹ Ziyad Wasilah, Al-Mi'yar Journal, Ibid., p(287).

By contrast, the Sinaitic covenant emphasizes conditional membership: belonging to the people of Israel is contingent upon fidelity to the commandments, and serious breaches can entail expulsion from the covenant community. In this ¹² framework, repentance alone may not suffice; the apostate is required to undergo specific rites associated with conversion or re-entry, such as immersion in the sacred water and sacrificial offerings.

As previously noted, the foundational Jewish texts do not differ greatly from the Islamic foundational texts. However, at the level of application, there exists a significant divergence between the legal rulings in the two religions, as well as between the Torah's legislative texts and their implementation within Jewish social reality. This disparity can be attributed to the intervention of political and social factors in the application of Jewish law.

The Jewish rulings on apostasy can be grouped roughly into three levels. At one end of the spectrum, some opinions hold that "the apostate instantly loses his or her Jewish status, Based on Talmudic descriptions that characterize the Ten Lost Tribes as gentiles. Proponents of this view maintain that a Jew's apostasy and complete assimilation into a gentile environment sever his legitimate religious bond with Judaism".¹³ This view entails far-reaching social consequences, including dissolution of marriage without the apostate's consent and exclusion from communal life, and represents one of the most rigid attitudes toward both apostates and non-Jews.

The second approach, which predominates in Jewish communities, maintains that "apostasy does not annul a person's Jewish identity., According to this view ¹⁴ the apostate continues to live in peace within the Jewish community, as this perspective distinguishes between ethnicity and religion, and between social and religious life. In this study, our aim is not to trace the loopholes in Jewish law, but rather to bring the three religions closer together and to revive values of coexistence within them, so that human beings may attain a sense of sanctity that transcends any ideological affiliation.

Returning to the sacred texts, the Jewish researcher Noster mentions that "rabbinic writings from the ancient period indicate that the punishment for apostasy and heresy pertains primarily to the individual's relationship with God, and to what awaits the Jew on the Day of Resurrection, In other words, it is primarily characterized by an eschatological form of punishment".¹⁵ Consequently, Judaism sets religious differences aside and maintains its human relations with followers of other religions, whether they are apostates from Judaism or individuals who are not Jews by origin.

But this contradicts the text of the Torah that contains several texts that stipulate punishment for apostasy, whether verbal or physical, the punishment for

¹² Ziyad Wasilah, Al-Mi'yar Journal, Ibid., p(288).

¹³ Ibid, p (288)

¹⁴ Ziyad Wasilah, "Apostasy and Freedom of Belief in Judaism", Al-Mi'yar Journal, Ibid., p(288).

¹⁵ Jacob neusmer and other, the concyclopedia of juifisme, p 368.

apostasy was death, as attested to in the book of Leviticus: "whoever curses his God shall bear the consequence of his sin, and whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death; the entire community shall execute him, whether he is a foreigner or a native¹⁶."

It is also stated in the Book of Kings as follow: "and They seated two worthless men before him, and the worthless men testified against him, saying you have cursed God and the king, Then they took him out and stoned him to death.¹⁷"

The Book of Leviticus likewise states the following : " And the lord spoke to moses, saying: Say to the children of Israel: any Israelite or any foreigner dwelling in Israel who gives any of his offspring to the idol Molech shall surely be put to death, the people shall stone him with stones, And I will set my face against him and cut him off from among his people, because he has given of his offspring to Molech, thereby defiling My sanctuary and profaning My holy name.

And if the people overlook him and do not put him to death, then I will set My face against that man, against his family, and against all who follow him in his depravity by worshiping Molech, and I will cut them off from among their people"¹⁸

Based on the foundational texts drawn from the Torah that we have examined, it becomes evident that what is often promoted by adherents of Judaism namely, that their religion calls for peace and recognizes the other was just a distortion of the true nature of Judaism. According to the texts cited, Judaism not only rejects the Other, but also repudiates the Jew himself at the very moment he abandons his faith. Consequently, the punishments for apostasy ranged from stoning to banishment, and even extended to execution by the sword, as recorded in the second book of Kings in the story of the commander Jehu. There, capital punishment was inflicted upon certain Israelites who had apostasized from Judaism: "They struck them with the edge of the sword and drove them out, then they entered the temple of Baal, brought out the images and burned them, shattered the pillar of Baal, demolished the house of Baal, and turned it into a latrine to this day. Thus Jehu eradicated the worship of Baal from Israel."¹⁹

However, today we must regard these texts not as binding legislation but as historical or literary documents. This applies to all religions that contain texts inciting violence or the rejection of the Other, Even in our own Islamic tradition, there exist passages as will be demonstrated later that ought to be removed from the realm of legal enforcement and preserved solely as heritage texts.

¹⁶ The Holy Bible, Leviticus, 24,verse (5–6).

¹⁷ The Holy Bible, first Kings, (21-16)

¹⁸ The Holy Bible, first Kings, (13-21)

¹⁹ The Holy Bible, second Kings, 10,verse (25-28)

2. Judaism and Its Stance toward Other Religions:

Judaism differs from other religions such as Christianity and Islam, whose adherents seek to propagate their faiths, in that it is a non-missionary religion largely inward looking in nature. It relies primarily on ethnic criteria in defining religious belonging, and traditionally rejects the notion that individuals outside the Israelite lineage descended from Abraham and Moses can be considered fully Jewish in the same sense as born Jews. Consequently, Judaism does not engage in the dissemination of its faith nor does it actively seek to attract non-Israelites. Nevertheless, its stance toward other religions, particularly within the societies in which Jewish communities lived, is clearly articulated in the sacred Jewish texts, and as it stated in the Book of Deuteronomy: "When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations mightier and more numerous than you and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them, Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy, do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly, but this is how you must deal with them, break down their altars, smash their pillars, cut down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire, you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession."²⁰

This text exemplifies that Judaism calls for the rejection of the Other, a call to demolish his sacred places, and the isolation from peoples who do not adhere to Judaism indeed, even for fighting them and severing all relations with them, What further confirms the content of the sacred text in its various books is the existence of legal rulings (responsa) issued by certain Jewish rabbis that explicitly endorse such positions. Among these are rulings entitled "Destroy the places of worship of the Gentiles." The command referred to in the paragraph cited above constitutes one of the 613 commandments, as listed in the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* by Rambam (Moses Maimonides), which comprises 185 chapters and is regarded as applicable today just as it was in the past. According to the commentary on the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, "this commandment has been interpreted as applying to both males and females, in all places and at all times".²¹

These rulings suggest that certain rabbinic authorities regard the prescriptions found in the biblical texts as still valid and applicable in the present, extending to both

²⁰ The Holy Bible, Deuteronomy, 7, verse(1–8)

²¹ Mansour, Abdel Wahab *Fatwas of the Rabbis*, Egyptian General Book Organization, p(129)

men and women who adhere to religions other than Judaism, and framing the destruction of their places of worship as a religious obligation.

From this perspective, the actions undertaken out by Israeli authorities against the Palestinians may not understood solely in political terms, but can also linked to religious references drawn from the Torah and with interpretations proposed by some rabbinic authorities regarding opposition to religions viewed as incompatible with Judaism.

II. Values of coexistence in Christianity :

Just as this study has relied on foundational Jewish texts in our discussion of coexistence within Judaism, it will similarly draw on the Bible and the Old Testament in our examination of Christianity, Such a methodological approach ensures greater objectivity in the academic study of religions, insofar as a religious tradition is primarily defined by its foundational scriptures, not by subsequent exegetical or theological writings produced about it, The same principle applies to Islam, where it would be methodologically inappropriate to evaluate the religion n its entirety based solely on the interpretations of certain jurists.

The ecclesiastical understanding of the non-Christian Other is fundamentally unified, as it derives from a single authoritative source, namely the Gospel or the Holy Scripture. Within Christianity, the question of the Other is primarily a doctrinal issue grounded in two principal scriptural corpora: the Old Testament which includes (the books of the Torah, the historical books, the prophetic writings, the Psalms, and the wisdom literature) and the New Testament, comprising (the four canonical Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the epistles attributed to Saint Paul and other apostles, as well as the Book of Revelation)²². Consequently, any attempt to examine the Christian position toward non-Christians necessitates an analysis of the relevant passages in the four Gospels, alongside the Old Testament texts that address the treatment of those who do not adhere to the Christian faith.

in the Old Testament, one of the earliest and most fundamental issues addressed is that of creation, "The primary foundation of the biblical perspective on the Other is the principle of creation, everything that exists does not possess existence, but rather is created by God ²³".

²This value does not privilege one group over another; rather, all human beings and creatures are equal within the order of creation and in their dependence on God, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or gender. The Old Testament affirms the sacredness of the human being, " granting humanity a unique place within creation, because God created the human being in his image and likeness, endowed with freedom and called to respond freely to the divine call ²⁴". and her we find that Freedom is a fundamental

²² Ruqayyah, Al-Alwani et al., The Concept of the Other in Judaism and Christianity, Dar Al-Fikr, 2008, p(71)

²³ Ibid., p (73)

²⁴ Ruqayyah, Al-Alwani et al., The Concept of the Other in Judaism and Christianity, Ibid., p(72)

principle recognized within Christianity, whereby religious choice is intrinsically linked to human freedom. Consequently, Christianity's stance toward the Other is essentially a peaceful one, as expressed in the words of Nazarene: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, and who ever strikes you on your right cheek,offer him the left as well"²⁵ .

Christianity thus affirms rights of the religiously different Other, while simultaneously rejecting the principle of responding to violence with violence. This stance is made explicit in the Gospel of Matthew, which states: "All who take the sword will perish by the sword"²⁶. Within Christian theology, the presence of evil in the world particularly in forms of hostility toward those who are different is interpreted as a consequence of humanity's attempt to assume the role of God on earth, thereby rejecting divine authority, which is grounded in respect for the Other , " Such an attitude results in a fundamental disruption of the order of creation and leads directly to a breakdown in human relationships, especially in relations between human beings and their fellow humans."²⁷

As for the texts of the New Testament, which Christianity holds to have been authored by Jesus Christ himself, the value of the Other is clearly manifested through the moral conduct of Christ, as well as through his teachings, counsels, and commandments to his followers regarding how relations with others ought to be conducted, regardless of their religious affiliation or their acceptance of Christianity. One of the earliest and most fundamental principles proclaimed by Christ is the call for each individual to transcend self-centeredness and to place oneself in the position of the Other,This is expressed in his statement: "do to others what you would have them do to you,this is the Law and the Prophets"²⁸.

Here, the value of justice within Christian law becomes evident, as it establishes the principle of equality in treatment between Christians and non-Christians alike. The Other is to be treated only in the manner in which one would wish to be treated in return,Christianity does not accept responding to hostility with hostility, nor repaying evil with evil. This ethical stance is articulated explicitly in the Gospel of Matthew, which sets normative guidelines for social relations and places clear limits on revenge as Jesus states: "You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer, If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also, You have heard that it was said You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you

²⁵ The Holy Bible, Gospel of Luke, 7 verse (27-29)

²⁶ The Holy Bible, Gospel of Matthew, 6 verse (52)

²⁷ The Holy Bible, Book of Genesis, verse (03)

²⁸ The Holy Bible, Gospel of Matthew, verse (7-12)

doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect²⁹".

The identification of the other in this sacred text does not arise from a self centered love, nor from the selfhood of the other insofar as he is different from us. Rather when love is present, the other does not appear to us through his own self, but through your own self which sanctifies the love of God and the love of humanity, by recognizing the other as created in the image and likeness of God.

Moreover, the life of Jesus Christ shows that he lived within a Jewish milieu and consistently sought to break down the barriers that separated Jews and Christians. In this regard, Saint Paul affirms in his Epistle to the Ephesians that, "in the person of Christ, the deepest barrier between human beings namely hostility itself were dismantled³⁰".

The commandments contained in the Bible that call for respect for the Other did not endure unchanged throughout history. When Christianity became entangled with political power, many of its ethical values were transformed into instruments serving warfare and, in some cases, were even employed to justify expansionist movements, most notably the so-called Crusades. What occurred in Christian history bears a strong resemblance to developments in Islamic history, where certain jurists emerged who rendered religion subservient to political authority. Thus arose the notion of "holy wars" during the Middle Ages. One of the earliest manifestations of this development can be traced to the sermon delivered by Pope Urban II in 1099 before large gatherings of clergy, knights, and common people in southern France, in which he called for the launch of a crusading campaign, citing the suffering of Christians in the Middle East, the central significance of Jerusalem for Christianity, and the alleged mistreatment of Christian pilgrims by Muslim Turks. However, H. ³¹ these wars and the discourses that accompanied them do not reflect the true essence of Christianity, as previously argued. The core of Christianity like that of any other religion must be understood primarily through its foundational texts. Doctrinal differences among the Abrahamic religions do not preclude their convergence in ethical principles, legal norms governing relations with the Other, and the possibility of coexistence among them. Rather, it is the instrumentalization of religion that has produced divisions among followers of different faiths and ignited religious conflicts that persist to this day.

III. Values of coexistence in Islam

Following the same method adopted for Judaism and Christianity, this section examines the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna in order to uncover Islamic conceptions of religious coexistence and the culture of difference.

1. Islam and the culture of difference :

²⁹ The Holy Bible, Gospel of Matthew, 5 verse (38–48)

³⁰ Ruqayyah, Al-Alwani et al., *The Concept of the Other in Judaism and Christianity*, Ibid., p(87)

³¹ Muhammad Suhayl Taqush, *History of the Crusades*, Dar al-Niqash, 1st ed., 2011, p (13)

Peaceful coexistence among religions must begin with the acceptance of difference. The culture of difference entails recognition of the Other, along with his rights and the obligations owed to him. The Qur'an acknowledges the Other from the very beginning in its discourse on creation, avoiding language that singles out a specific community and instead addressing humanity as a whole. For example as stated in the Qur'an: "O mankind, Be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created from it its spouse and dispersed from both many men and women" (Qur'an, Surah al-Nisa verse 1), and: "O mankind, We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another" (Qur'an, Surah al-Hujurat, verse 13). These verses situate humanity as a whole within a unified order of creation, in contrast to the doctrine of divine election in Judaism, which is founded on an ethnic basis. All human beings are equal before God in terms of creation; hence, the Qur'an employs the term "mankind" in addressing humanity as a whole, regardless of religious or ethnic differences. In the second verse, difference is not presented as a source of conflict or exclusion, but rather as a means of mutual recognition, dialogue, and diversity within the framework of unity, as expressed in the statement: "We made you nations and tribes that you may know one another." In other verses, God further defines the true value of the human being as residing in piety (taqwā), according to the Qur'an: "Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you. Surely, God is all-knowing, all-aware." Thus, the most honorable is not the one who belongs to a particular ethnicity or nation, but rather the one who is committed to piety. Islam presents diversity as a sign (āyah) of God, to be contemplated and reflected upon, as stated in the Qur'an text: "Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors. Indeed, in that are signs for all the worlds" (Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rūm, verse 22) and: "If your Lord had willed, He could have made mankind one nation? but they will not cease to differ except those upon whom your Lord has mercy. And He created them that way" (Qur'an, Surah Hūd, verse 118–119)

These two verses affirm that the purpose of humanity's creation is diversity, which scholars of Islam describe as a blessing, whereas uniformity without choice would be a deprivation. The aim of creation is thus difference whether between Muslims and non-Muslims, or among the various Islamic sects and schools of thought. Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida interpreted the verse as follows: "If your Lord had willed, O Prophet concerned for the faith of your people and distressed by their neglect of His call, He could have made mankind one nation upon a single religion, by instinct, without any choice of their own. Yet, since they are of this human species, He created them so that in social life they would differ like bees and ants, and in spiritual life like angels, and they would continue to differ in all matters, including religion."³²

³² Muhammad Rashid Rida, Tafsir al-Manar, vol. 12, p (193)

2. Islam and the presevervation of human dignity:

When the Qur'an speaks of the human being, it does so in terms of dignity and exalted status, bearing a "breath" from the divine Spirit uniquely, this heavenly genealogy is what qualified the human being to be as God's vicegerent on earth, and it is what led the angels and indeed other categories of created beings to pray for him and to acknowledge his distinctive status and superiority. This dignity is not limited³³ to Muslims; it extends to all descendants of Adam: "We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them greatly over many of those We created" (Qur'an, Surah Israa, verse 70).

In this verse, God does not specify a particular religion or a specific group of people, rather, He employs the term "Children of Adam", thereby affirming human dignity and humanity's distinction over the rest of creation.

In addressing the principle of justice, God makes no exception for any community or religious group, as expressed in Surah al-Maidah: "O you who believe, stand firmly for God as witnesses in justice, and let not the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just, that is closer to piety. And fear God, indeed, God is fully aware of what you do" (Qur'an, Surah al-Maidah, verse 8)

This verse establishes the principle of justice as an absolute ethical obligation that transcends religious and ethnic boundaries. God commands believers to uphold justice with all human beings without exception. In safeguarding human dignity, the Qur'an regards the unjust killing of any human soul regardless of religious affiliation as one of the gravest major sins. It makes no distinction between the life of a Muslim and that of a follower of another faith, as stated in Surat al-Maidah, God declares: "For this reason we decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption in the land it is as if he had slain all of humanity" (Qur'an, Surah al-Maidah, verse 32)

Building on these foundations of diversity and dignity, the Qur'an articulates a shared human common ground aimed at mutual recognition, cooperation, and complementarity among all people, thereby repudiating doctrines of racial superiority and ethnic election believed by Jews³⁴.

³³ Muḥammad al-Ghazali, *Human Rights between Islamic Teachings and the United Nations Declaration*, Dar al-Nahda, Cairo, Egypt, 4th ed, 2005, p(11)

³⁴ Muḥammad Rafiq, "The Qur'anic Method in Building the Shared Human Ground," *Islamiyyat al-Ma'rifah Journal*, no (66), 2011, p (121)

3. Islam and freedom of belief:

Islam safeguards freedom of belief through Qur'anic and Prophetic texts. Moreover, it explicitly rejects blind imitation in matters of faith, grounding religiosity in individual freedom and personal conviction. Accordingly, the mission of the Prophet, and by extension that of Muslims is confined to conveying the message, without imposing Islam upon anyone, as affirmed by the Qur'anic verse: "There is no compulsion in religion, truth stands out clear from error" (Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, verse 256). This verse encapsulates two key ideas: freedom of religious choice and the centrality of rational evidence and persuasion. Religious commitment is framed as an act of free conviction rather than coerced submission.

Islam is also founded upon two fundamental principles: the freedom of choice and the use of reason. Accordingly, the Qur'anic text acknowledges human rational capacities and the ability to discern the straight path from the crooked path, as stated: "And we have guided him to the two ways" (Qur'an, Al-Balad, verse 10). This recognition opens the religious sphere to the existence of multiple sects, schools of thought, and religions, reflecting the diversity of human choice.

In Islam, there is no worldly punishment for those who follow a religion other than Islam. All penalties mentioned in the Qur'an are of a spiritual or eschatological nature. God does not obligate any Muslim to compel or punish those who reject Islam. As stated in the Qur'an: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers" (Qur'an, Al-Imran, verse 85). The verse contains no authorization for Muslims to impose worldly punishments on such individuals. The Prophet's role is explicitly limited to conveying the message as stated: "The Messenger's duty is only to convey the message, and God knows what you reveal and what you conceal" (Qur'an, Al-Maidah, verse 99); and in Surah Ash-Shura: "If they turn away, We have not sent you as a guardian over them; upon you is only the conveyance" (Qur'an, Ash-Shūrā, verse 47)

In addition, Islam goes beyond merely affirming freedom of belief by explicitly prohibiting Muslims from insulting or denigrating the religions of those who differ from them in faith. This prohibition is grounded in the Qur'anic injunction: "Do not insult those they invoke besides God, lest they insult God out of hostility and ignorance. Thus, We have made appealing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them of what they used to do" (Qur'an, Al-Anam, verse 108). It is also reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) "concluded a covenant with the Christian delegation of Najrān, who were received in the Prophet's Mosque, and that he granted them permission to perform their Easter prayers within it"³⁵

³⁵ Muhammad Ḥamidullah Abadi, Collection of Political Documents from the Prophetic Era and the Rightly Guided Caliphate, Dar al-Niqash, Beirut, Lebanon, p (18)

Likewise, accounts of the military expeditions undertaken by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) indicate that they were conducted solely in self-defense and in defense of honor. Such actions do not contradict the principle of peaceful coexistence among religions. The Prophet's expeditions were not aimed at imposing Islam by force, but rather at restoring and safeguarding human dignity, a value explicitly affirmed in the Qur'anic discourse, as previously discussed. Islam does not prohibit self-defense; rather, it categorically forbids aggression against others regardless of their religious affiliation, considering such aggression a grave moral violation against the dignity of the other. This position is further substantiated by the Qur'anic injunction: "Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress, indeed, God does not love the transgressors" (Qur'an, al-Baqarah, verse 190). This verse commands fighting exclusively against those who engaged in hostilities against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers. As for those who adhered to peaceful conduct, the Qur'anic text explicitly prohibits the Prophet and the Muslims from fighting them, considering such an act a form of unjust aggression against non-Muslim.

At this juncture, I deliberately refrain from citing reports or sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) insofar as they conflict with the Qur'anic text or stand in contradiction to fundamental human moral conscience. Among the frequently cited traditions is the saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no deity but God and that I am the Messenger of God, establish prayer, and give alms. If they do so, their lives and property are protected from me, except by the right of Islam, and their account is with God"³⁶. Therefore, we adopt the same methodological approach that we employed in our discussion of Judaism and Christianity, relying on what followers of these religions consider to be divine revelation to their prophets namely, the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an.

Beyond the evident inconsistencies between this and other comparable prophetic traditions with the Qur'an, these reports also stand in tension with the broader historical record of the Prophet's life. The *sīrah* portrays Muhammad (peace be upon him) not as predisposed to military engagement, but as a proponent of peaceful coexistence, emphasizing dialogue, and the ethical treatment of others, as stated: "But if they incline towards peace, then incline towards it as well, and put your trust in God; indeed, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing" (Qur'an, al-Anfāl, verse 61), because fighting is inherently abhorrent to human nature and contrary to the fundamental message of Islam. This is further reinforced by the logical structure of the Qur'anic verse, which states: "But if they incline towards peace...", meaning that if those who initiated hostilities desist from aggression, Muslims are commanded to respond likewise with peace, this verse underscores that the Prophet Muhammad

³⁶ Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman), Hadith no (34)

(peace be upon him) did not initiate hostilities, reflecting the Islamic principle that all forms of violence are fundamentally unwelcome. The Qur'an states: "Fighting has been enjoined upon you, though it is hateful to you" (Qur'an ,al-Baqarah,verse 216), what is remarkable about the narrations that describe the Prophet (peace be upon him) as being sent to fight anyone who opposed him in religion is that there are other hadiths that indicate exactly the opposite. It is reported that on the day of the Conquest of Mecca, "Saad ibn Ubadah passed by Abu Sufyan and exclaimed: "Today is the day of battle; today the sacred sanctities are made lawful; today God has humiliated the Quraysh." The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "Today is a day of mercy, in which God has honored the Quraysh"³⁷.

In conclusion, it can be stated that adherents of the three Abrahamic religions are morally and ethically obliged to uphold to the values of tolerance and coexistence as articulated in their foundational texts. Ultimately, the primary and enduring victim of religious and ideological conflicts is the human being, regardless of religious affiliation.

Moreover, the responsibility today falls particularly upon Muslims, insofar as they constitute the largest demographic group among the adherents of the Abrahamic religions. Contemporary reality also demonstrates that the majority of religious conflicts are often attributed to Islam, and that various terrorist organizations have adopted Islam as a façade for their actions. It is indeed true that political factors have played a significant role in the emergence of these terrorist groups operating in the name of Islam. However, it cannot be denied that such groups have found justificatory grounds for their actions within certain strands of Islamic juristic heritage. This legacy should neither be disavowed nor should responsibility toward it be evaded. Consequently, there is an urgent need to critically re-examine aspects of Islamic jurisprudential heritage that are replete with legal opinions calling for the rejection of the Other, the use of violence, and the violation of the lives and property of non-muslims. Likewise, Christians and Jews are also called upon to reassess the rulings of certain clerics and rabbis who instrumentalize religion in the service of political agendas and narrow ideological objectives. Ultimately, the human being remains more sacred than any affiliation and far too noble to be confined within rigid ideological boundaries.

Reference :

Ahmed Shalaby, *Judaism*, Egyptian Renaissance Library, Cairo, 1988

The Holy Bible, *Deuteronomy* (8–86), Dar al-Kana'is fi al-Sharq al-Awsat, 1st ed., 1992

Ruqayyah, Al-Alwani et al., *The Concept of the Other in Judaism and Christianity*, Dar Al-Fikr, 2008,

Ziyad Wasilah, *Al-Mi'yar Journal*, no 42, June 2017, p(279).

³⁷ Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book of Military Expeditions (Kitāb al-Maghāzī), Hadīth no(3944)

Jacob neusmer and other, the concyclopedia of juifisme, konuklike, brill NV, leodom the Netherlands, vol

Moses Maimonides, book of Ha-Sanhedrin, vol. 10,

Mansour, Abdel Wahab *Fatwas of the Rabbis*, Egyptian General Book Organization
Ruqayyah, Al-Alwani et al., *The Concept of the Other in Judaism and Christianity*, Dar Al-Fikr, 2008,

Muhammad Suhayl Taqush, *History of the Crusades*, Dar al-Niqash, 1st ed., 2011

Muhammad Rashid Riḍa, *Tafsir al-Manar*, vol. 12

Muḥammad al-Ghazali, *Human Rights between Islamic Teachings and the United Nations Declaration*, Dar al-Nahda, Cairo, Egypt, 4th ed, 2005

Muḥammad Rafiq, "The Qur'anic Method in Building the Shared Human Ground," *Islamiyyat al-Ma'rifah Journal*, no (66), 2011

1Muhammad Ḥamidullah Abadi, *Collection of Political Documents from the Prophetic Era and the Rightly Guided Caliphate*, Dar al-Niqash, Beirut, Lebanon,

Sahih Muslim, *Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman)*, Hadith no (34)

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari, *Book of Military Expeditions (Kitab al-Maghazi)*, Hadith no(3944)