

Islamophobia & Antisemitism

Roots & Remedy

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Islamophobia and Antisemitism are facts of life in this country and elsewhere. They are actually a small part of a much larger, universal problem found in all human communities. Human groups, from the largest mass societies to the smallest school groups and often even family units, tend to identify a community (or family) member and use him or her (or them) as a scapegoat.

The Scapegoat: Leviticus 16:5-10



The term “scapegoat” comes from an ancient ceremony described in the Hebrew Bible, in which the High Priest symbolically transfers all the sins of the community onto a goat and then sends it deep into the desert. The purpose of the act was to remove the sin and guilt of the community by placing it on the head of the goat – and then get rid of the guilt by destroying the goat. This ritual of placing evil onto a goat and driving in into the wilderness is very old. It was found in the 24th century BCE cuneiform Ebla texts in today’s Syria.¹



It was also part of ancient Greek society. But there it was not a goat but rather a cripple, or beggar or criminal who was beaten and then caste out of the community.

This is not only an ancient problem, but a modern one as well.



All communities seem to have their designated scapegoats. Antisemitism and Islamophobia are only certain kinds of scapegoating. They don’t represent some evil or a disease that can be eradicated, but rather a human tendency that will remain with us in some form or another forever. We cannot eliminate what appears to be a natural and virtually universal human social phenomenon. But we can learn how to control it and remove its poison. In today’s presentation we will learn something about the origins of Antisemitism and Islamophobia. More important than its origins, however, is to understand why they have persisted for such a long

¹ Zatelli, Ida (April, 1998), “The Origin of the Biblical Scapegoat Ritual: The Evidence of Two Eblaite Texts.” *Vetus Testamentum* 48 (2): 254-263.

time in our cultures and societies.



Anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic prejudice saturates both traditional and modern media. Negative portrayals of Jews and Muslims are found repeatedly in folklore, literature, art, music, poetry and even fairy tales and children's stories. In this country we live in what Jews and Muslims would mostly agree is a Christian country (though some Christians would not agree!). While Islamophobia and Antisemitism are deeply embedded in Western society, they are not the problem only of Christians.



They are also the problem of Muslims and Jews.

The Muslim and Jewish communities here and elsewhere need to face the truth that members of our own faith communities have become active in promoting hatred of one another.



I will try to show you how this is not simply due to the conflict in Israel/Palestine. I will show you how prejudice is embedded not only in secular society, but also in our religions, perhaps the most important pillar of the societies in which we live.



The world has always been made up of hundreds and thousands of faith communities.

But faith communities have always been in competition with one another over membership.



Religions want to help people, to bring them to religious enlightenment, to provide a moral-ethical and spiritual life for all humanity, to help people achieve salvation. I argue that while God provides revelation and prophets to many peoples, God and religion are separate entities. God communicates through revelation but God does not organize religious institutions. In our attempt to understand the reality of our religions experience, we respond to God's call in various ways.



God did not speak only once and then remain forever silent. Divine guidance has been conveyed in many ways over the centuries and millennia, and God continues to provide guidance. But that guidance is understood differently by different individuals and different communities. For example, God never told humans to organize themselves specifically around leaders called imams, or priests, or ministers, rabbis, caliphs or popes. Each of these types of religious leadership has formed differently, as different communities have

responded to the divine disclosure in different places and at different times.



Religions reach out to people because they truly wish to help humanity. All religions stress love and respect for God's creatures. But religions are not God. Religions are human responses to God. Religions form in response to revelation and the traditions of the ancients, along with the efforts of many smart and inspired people who were neither prophets nor companions of prophets. Despite all good intentions, those who practice religion, including religious leaders, can feel competition, resentment and jealousy toward those who preach a different message.



God gives revelation whenever God decides the time is right. But whenever a new revelation is given it challenges those who already live within a religion based on an earlier wisdom or revelation. Let's think about this from multiple points of view. From the standpoint of an established religion, and especially a religion with a divine scripture, any claims of a new revelation are, to put it mildly challenging. Why would God give a new revelation if the old one were adequate?



New Scriptural revelations can only occur after the older, established revelations are collected and *canonized*. What does canonization mean? All scriptural religions determine at some point in their development that revelation has ceased. It's over. The records of revelation are then gathered and made official. Scripture is the "inscribed" or "scripted" result of putting revelation into writing. And when it is written down it is as if it were inscribed in stone. Anything that is suspected of not being a part of the divine revelation is eliminated. So all possible divine utterances are carefully examined, checked and determined by a body of experts either to be authentic or inauthentic. What is determined to be authentic remains *in* – all else is *out*. All that is out is destroyed and all efforts are then made to preserve the authentic text of scripture – the written record of divine revelation. After a religion has canonized its scripture it can never accept any fresh claims for a new revelation.

#1 Rule of Religion

Established religions cannot accept
claims of a new divine revelation from
any individual or community

11. So here is rule #1 of religious relationship: “Established religions do not accept the claims of a new divine revelation from any individual or community.”

Newer religions can look back at previous revelation and give them a great deal of respect. But they can never accept them fully. If they gave full credit to prior revelation, then there would be little reason for a new revelation! So Christians can give *some* credit to the Old Testament, but it is meaningless without its fulfillment in the *New* Testament. And Muslims can respect the NT and HB to a limited extent, but they see these prior revelations as flawed, distorted and corrupted. If they were not, there would be no reason for God to provide a new revelation in the Qur’an.



12. Another inevitable event in the formation of new religions is “the test.” Members of established religions inevitably question the leaders of new religious movements to see whether they are authentic – whether they are who they say they are. So we have stories in the NT about Jews “testing” Jesus, and references in the Qur’an and Hadith to Jews and Christians “testing” Muhammad. In the first picture, the Jewish High Priest Caiaphas is testing Jesus as depicted in the Gospel of Matthew (ch.26). On the bottom, the Christian priest Bahira is testing Muhammad as depicted in *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya* the sacred biography of the Prophet. Buddha is shown in the other panel as he was tested and questioned by Hindu Brahmins. Here is an interesting observation about these test sequences. The same stories are often found in the religious literatures of both the established religions and the new religions – but with very different outcomes. In Christian writings, the Jews who tested Jesus are confounded by his divine wisdom; but in Jewish versions of the same stories Jesus is proven not to fulfill the Christian claims. So too with the stories associated with Muhammad. The Christian monk Bahira proves Muhammad’s authenticity in the Islamic versions, but the same story is found in both Jewish and Christian literatures – and with the opposite results. The very same stories are used by each side to “prove” the truth of its claims. Few people know this because people rarely read the sacred literatures of other religions.

Numbers 22: Balaam tries to curse Israel



We find a similar testing sequence in the Torah as well. This picture depicts the Moabite King Balak in the Book of Numbers, who calls upon the Moabite holy man Bilaam to curse the Israelites. Try as he would, the Moabite prophet is unable to curse them. Every time he tries, his curse becomes a blessing. This proves in the Torah that the Israelites are bound to the true God, tested and proven authentic by a foreign prophet. We unfortunately don't have the Moabite version of the story, which must have depicted the curse as taking effect. The Moabites had their own established religion before the Israelites came along and threatened it with their new revelation.

New religious movements are never accepted by established religions.

What do we call new religious movements in our own lingo? Cults. Cult, sect, religion. Most new religious movements die out... But some succeed and grow into respected religions.

Joke: What's the difference between a cult and a religion? 100 years!

Cult or Religion?



"Help us reach our goal!"



Inevitably, when new religious movements become larger and more successful, they become threatening to established religions. Established religions always try to prove that the new movements are false. They do this in a variety of ways. But because the revelation of established religions has ceased by the time a new religion emerges into history, established religions can never attack new religions through scripture. It doesn't say anywhere *explicitly* in the HB, for example, that the New Testament is not a true divine revelation – but it also doesn't say anywhere that it isn't! Same with the NT in relation to the Qur'an. New religions usually claim that the old revelations contain some message confirming their new revelations, but it can only be argued – never proven. Members of established religions nevertheless try to prevent new religions from succeeding. Remember that all new religions begin as something like "cults," at least from the perspective of establishment religions. It is not that the established religion is being "evil." From the perspective of the establishment, the new religion is – by definition – not authentic.



Think of it this way: no true believer wants his/her children to abandon them and follow another religion. So believers in established religions always try to show that new religions are false. Now let's try to see both sides of the coin. From the standpoint of the established religion, the leaders of new religions make false claims of prophethood or messiah-ship. But from the perspective of believers in the new religion, those who oppose them are committing a terrible sin by trying to prevent God's true word from being spread in the world.

In the inevitable struggle between established religions and new religions, the established religions have the initial advantage because they are well-established. They have material resources that they can use to attack the new religion, and they inevitably use them. Most new religions fail and die out for many reasons, including the opposition of established religions. But when the new religion survives those attacks, it then has an awesome advantage – and the unfortunate legacy – of its position being articulated in the inerrant medium of the divine word.

Mark 12 (Pharisees & Herodians – Jews)

- ¹⁴Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to tempt him to speak from the temple. ¹⁵"They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity, who aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are, but you teach the law of God in accordance with the truth, so is it right to pay the tax imposed on us to Caesar or not?" Because we pay, or shouldn't we?"
- ¹⁶But they knew that Jesus replied, "Why are you trying to trap me?" He asked, "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." ¹⁷They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"
- ¹⁸"Caesar's," they replied.
- ¹⁹"Then Jesus said to them, 'Show me a denarius and let me look at it.' ²⁰They brought the coin, and he asked them, 'Whose image is this? And whose inscription?'"
- ²¹They Jesus said to them, "Show me a denarius and let me look at it." ²²They brought the coin, and he asked them, 'Whose image is this? And whose inscription?'"
- ²³And they were amazed at him.

Matthew 23 (scribes & Pharisees – Jews)

- ¹³Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of Heaven in people's faces; you do not enter yourselves, and when others try to enter, you stop them. ¹⁴"You acknowledge that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets. ¹⁵Go on then, finish off what your fathers began! ¹⁶Snakes! Vipers' brood! How can you escape being condemned to hell?"

17. You can see how these Jewish Pharisees and Herodians are depicted as nasty hypocrites. *Ask someone to read.* Take a look at the next citation.

Matthew 23: *New reader:*

¹³'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of Heaven in people's faces; you do not enter yourselves, and when others try to enter, you stop them... ³¹So you acknowledge that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets. ³²Go on then, finish off what your fathers began! ³³Snakes! Vipers' brood! How can you escape being condemned to hell?

These verses refer to some Jews who tested Jesus and tried to ridicule him – they were trying to prove that he was not what he claimed to be. That was 2000 years ago, and the reference to those scribes and Pharisees does not refer to all Jews. But these words were used later as a “proof” that all Jews are evil, are hypocrites, and are condemned to hell. And the source of this unfortunate viewpoint is derived from scripture itself, so for billions of Christians through the ages it served to prove that all Jews are bad –

by definition - evil.

What is not portrayed here, however, are positive references to Jews or Judaism in the NT. For example:

Romans 3

¹What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? ²Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. ³What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴Not at all ...

New reader: ¹What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? ²Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God.

³What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴Not at all! ...

There are a variety of ways to read and understand the message of scriptural verses.

Sura 2 (The Cow) سورة البقرة

Many of the people of the Book would like to return you to unbelievers after your having believed, because of envy on their part after the truth has become clear to them. But forgive and be indulgent until God gives His command, for God is the Power over everything.

New reader:

Sura 2 (The Cow) ¹⁰⁹“Many of the people of the Book would like to return you to unbelievers after your having believed, because of envy on their part after the truth has become clear to them. But forgive and be indulgent until God gives His command, for God is the Power over everything.”

The Qur'an acknowledges that Jews and Christians (People of the Book) tried to prevent the success of the new religious community led by Prophet Muhammad. This is a natural sequence in the tension between established religions and new religious movements.

Sura 3 (Family of Imram) سورة آل عمران

There are some among them [People of the Book] who distort the Book with their tongues and you would think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book. But they say, "It is from God." But it is not from God. They lie against God and know it!

New reader:

Sura 3 (Family of Imram)

⁷⁸There are some among them [People of the Book] who distort the Book with their tongues and you would think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book. But they say, "It is from God." But it is not from God. They lie against God and know it!

Now with our understanding about the tension between new religions and established religions, can you imagine why this accusation might be found here? And think of the next citation.

Sura 5 (The Set Table) سورة المائدة

O Believers, do not take Jews and Christians as friends. They are friends [only] of one another. Whoever makes friends with them is one of them. God does not guide an unjust people!

New reader:

⁵¹O Believers, do not take Jews and Christians as friends [or patrons]. They are friends [only] of one another. Whoever makes friends with them is one of them. God does not guide an unjust people!

The Torah also notes the tension between new and established religions, but the Torah version is extremely harsh – much more so

New Reader

When the Lord your God brings you to the land that you are about to enter and possess, and He dislodges many nations before you -- the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites... Lord your God delivers them to you and you defeat them, you must doom them to total destruction: grant them no terms and give them no quarter. ³ You shall not intermarry with them: do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. ⁴ For they will turn your children away from Me to worship other gods, and the Lord's anger will blaze forth against you and He will promptly wipe you out.

Perhaps surprising, given the bad press that surrounds Islam these days, the qur'anic critique of representatives of established religions is less harsh overall than that of the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament. And like other scriptures, the Qur'an also has good things to say about those communities that opposed the religious movement it represents.

Sura 2 (The Cow) سورة البقرة

“O you Believers, Jews, and Christians and Sabaeans: whoever believes in God and the Last Day and who has acted rightly has their reward with their Lord. They shall not fear nor grieve.”

Sura 2 (The Cow)

⁶²O you Believers, Jews, and Christians and Sabaeans: whoever believes in God and the Last Day and who has acted rightly has their reward with their Lord. They shall not fear nor grieve.

The purpose of this exercise is not to “compare” religions and then make value judgments about which is “better.” That is a completely subjective program and leads nowhere. The truth of the matter is that you can find positive and negative references to Jews and Christians in the Qur’an, and you can find positive and negative references to Jews in the New Testament. None of the negative references represent blatant Antisemitism or hatred of Christians. They represent, rather, the anger and frustration and resentment of new religions that are tested and criticized by established religions. But what began as expressions of anger and frustration have over the years, become fodder for the development of extreme and savage hatred through scapegoating.



We just examined some aspects of the academic study of religion and religious competition. Some scholars relate the competition between religions to the competition between businesses in a free market. This analogy isn’t exactly fitting for a number of reasons, but I want to use some of the language because it makes a very good point. This is how it is sometimes explained.

Religions exist in what can be called a “religious economy.” Like business, religions have a “product” to “sell.” Those who promote the new religion claim that it provides satisfaction that is similar but better than the satisfaction available through the current religions. Before buying a new car you will want to know if it is safe, comfortable, and does what the ads say it can do. Before buying a washing machine you will want to know that it will fulfill its advertised promises of making your clothes clean and comfortable. So too, before you join a new religion or religious movement, you will want to know that it will provide you with the advantages that it promises. You will be happy to know that the believers in that religion are happy.



And the truth is that millions of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus and others *are* happy. There are always some, however, who are unsatisfied with their religious or spiritual life and may be open to something new.



When a new religion comes onto the religious market, it needs to demonstrate that it can provide the same kinds of happiness and compensation that established religions do – and more. If it succeeds, it then gains a large enough market-share of consumers (that, is new believers) who join the religious community. With enough joiners (consumers), the new religion attains a critical mass of economic, social and spiritual support. Numbers are necessary to ensure the ongoing success of the religion. Without a significant market share, new religions collapse into oblivion.



Established religions do not like competing products in the market, so they try to demonstrate that the new religions cannot really offer what they promise: no truth in scripture, no true prophecy, no true salvation. No real happiness. New religions need to show that their believers are happy. The new religions, meanwhile, also critique the establishment religions as being out of touch, irrelevant, in need of replacement.



This is not simply an issue of business competition. The stakes are much higher than a monetary bottom line. Salvation is, to put it bluntly, worth dying for. So the religious gloves often come off when religions engage in negative advertising. And that is where the embeddedness of prejudice comes in.

Now let's consider what this means in real history. While some Jews accepted Jesus as messiah and even as the son of God, the Jewish community as a whole did not. Christianity was a universal religion and truly expected the entire world to accept Jesus as Lord.

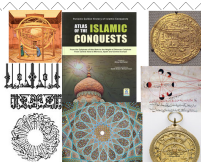


But the Jews as a religious community never did. Jews and Christians competed against one another for some 200 years at the same time that both were persecuted as minority religions by the pagan Roman Empire. They were competing, it turns out, for the greatest prize possible – the Roman Empire itself. The Christians won when the empire Christianized in the 4th century. From that moment onward, the Christian religious establishment implemented a policy of containment and eventually, degradation of Jews. Most

Christians logically and honestly believed that the conversion of the Roman Empire to a Christian empire now called the Byzantine Empire was an act of God – divine proof of the truth of Christ and the irrelevance of Judaism. According to this perspective, history proved theology, and that proof became institutionalized in the degradation of a hateful minority that stubbornly would not accept Christ. Yet the Jews remained Jewish. Even under immense pressure and without armies or protection, Judaism survived and even thrived. It was the consistent pressure of anti-Jewish legislation, theological speculation and general social degradation that, over the centuries, became deeply embedded in Christian society. We'll see how that played out shortly.



Christians were enormously successful as a religious community and religious civilization. But while Christianity succeeded in becoming a world religion, it never succeeded in becoming the religion of the entire world. In fact, the very conviction that history proves the truth of theology was soon turned entirely on its head from a Christian perspective when Islam so quickly became a very successful competing world religion.



If history was thought to prove the truth of theology, then the very argument that was used against Judaism could be used against Christianity, for it became very clear in a very short time that Muslims were enormously successful as a religious community and a religious civilization.



This confounded many thinkers in the Church. Some concluded that the success of Islam was an accident. Others argued that Muhammad was duped by the devil who gave him a false scripture and that the transcendent moments described by his followers when he received a divine revelation were either moments of satanic possession or moments of epileptic seizures. These comments began emerging in the Christian world in the early Middle Ages and have been repeated to this day.



The controversy over recent irresponsible caricatures of Muhammad has made it seem like negative portrayals are a new development. In fact, however, art has always been a medium for argument and for ridicule, and not only against Islam but against competitors of all types. It is important to understand that negative portrayals of opponents and adversaries are found everywhere. In the West it is

culturally acceptable to delegitimize adversaries through art and caricature, and it has been a custom for millennia, since even before the emergence of Christianity. It is important for Muslims to understand that while the visual propaganda against Islam is despicable and unacceptable, it is not directed only against Islam. We shall see how in the West it was more commonly directed against Jews. It was directed even against competing Christian communities. Sometimes the negativity is obvious, but sometimes it is subtle. In this set we see Muhammad portrayed as a fish in a 12th century Qur'an translation. He is portrayed as an effeminate warrior in the picture on a Latin biography of the prophet. And in the middle he is portrayed in hell. We will see more of this theme later in our exploration.



It is the cultural embeddedness of prejudicial religious stereotypes which perpetuates and legitimates majority persecution of religious minorities.



Put simply, if prejudice is allowed to remain active in a society for a significant length of time, it becomes embedded in culture. When that happens, negative stereotypes are perpetuated in all the avenues through which culture is passed on from generation to generation: in literature, the plastic arts, folklore and folk stories, even music and poetry – and today through the new media of cinema and the blogosphere.



The negative literature ranges from theological treatises (religious polemics) to high literary tradition such as Shakespeare and Chaucer, to folktales. Although the fear and hostility may have originated in religious competition, religious hatred infiltrates the common culture and becomes “secularized” – the abhorrence and revulsion of the other become, then, simply a “fact” of life.

What follow are some famous examples that come out of the Christian majority culture of Europe.



Here is the famous Shylock, the ruthless and heartless Jewish money-lender in Shakespeare's “Merchant of Venice.” Shylock of course symbolized the role of the Jew as cruel moneylender. He demands a pound of flesh from a man who was unable to repay a loan from him. "A pound of flesh" is a figurative way of referring to a harsh demand or spiteful penalty—the consequences of defaulting

on a desperate bargain. But the evil Shylock demands a literal pound of flesh as security when the merchant Antonio comes to borrow money for a friend. This sensational bargain fascinated its first audience as it fascinates us. When the play was first published, its title page advertised "The most excellent History of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreme cruelty of *Shylock* the Jew towards the said merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh. . . ." Shylock was foiled from carrying out his evil desire and forced to convert to Christianity. Shakespeare's play was written at the very end of the 16th century and reinforced nasty stereotypes about Jews in England – despite the fact that Jews were forcibly expelled from England in 1290. Jews had not lived in England for 3 centuries, yet the prejudicial stereotype nevertheless persisted. That's because it was so deeply embedded in English culture.

Royal Doulton Shylock bowl available today
online for only \$500



You can buy a "Shylock bowl" on the internet today and add it to your china collection!

In medieval France, the *chansons de geste* was one of the earliest forms of French literature.



the Song of Roland

These are epic poems about heroic deeds of ancient French warriors such as Charlemagne. One series of *chansons de geste* is called *the Song of Roland*.



Mort de Roland

It tells the story of Muslim raiders who viciously attacked the weak stragglers led by Charlemagne's nephew Roland. Although he puts up a defense against impossible odds, Roland is savagely dispatched.

Never mind that the people who *actually* did attack the rear-guard were Basque Christians – not Muslim at all! Nevertheless, the gallant song depicts the raiders as cowardly, barbarous Muslims, a stereotypic image that became embedded generally in French and European culture.

Both the disgusting Shylock and the despicable Muslims were duly punished, according to the legends, and that punishment included forced conversion to Christianity.

Geoffrey Chaucer (d.1400)



Geoffrey Chaucer (d.1400) is known as the father of English literature. He was an author, philosopher, alchemist and astronomer.



In his *Canterbury Tales*, he tells “The Prioress’s Tale.” about a little Christian boy who lived in the Jewish quarter of the town. The Jewish quarter was [quote] “...maintained by a lord of that country for foul usury and shameful profit, hateful to Christ and His followers.” For some reason, the little Christian boy lived among the Jews.



He so loved singing a kind of hymn in honor of the Virgin Mary, called *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. The little boy would sing the hymns wherever he walked, including in the Jewish quarter.



As the story goes, [quote] “From this point on the Jews conspired to drive this innocent one out of the world. To this purpose they hired a murderer who took up a secret place in an alley, and as the child went by, this cursed Jew seized and held him tight, and then cut his throat and cast him into a pit.



“I must say that they threw him into an outhouse, where these Jews purged their bowels. O cursed race of modern Herods, what good is your evil intent? Murder will be revealed, truly it will not fail, and chiefly where it touches the honor of God. Blood cries out on your cursed deed.”



But Mary mother of Christ saw this and brought the child to life to continue to sing the beautiful *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, meaning “loving mother of our savior.”

Most people in medieval Europe could not read, so messages were often conveyed in church sculptures, reliefs, wood-cuts, and especially beautiful stained-glass windows.



Die Judensau

Here is a series found in churches throughout Europe to this day depicting Jews suckling milk from a pig, the so-called *Judensau* – “Jewish pig.” Never mind that pigs are abhorrent to Jews. Perhaps that was why the two were associated in these images.



Noch eine Judensau

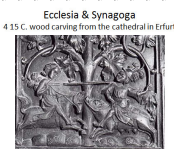
In any case, the *Judensau* – “Jewish pig” associates Jews with disgusting practices that makes them virtually into animals themselves, to be treated like animals.



Ecclesia & Synagoga
Notre Dame de Paris

Another interesting common church image is the famous representation of the Church vs. the Synagogue, which symbolized the new covenant of Christianity superseding the old and irrelevant covenant of the Jews. This motif is found in medieval churches

throughout Europe.



The synagogue is always represented by a forlorn and broken woman, blinded by ignorance and stubborn refusal to see the truth of Christ, standing in relation to the proud woman of the Church. There is much symbolism in all these portrayals, some of which has been lost to us today.

However, some details in the wood-carving from the cathedral of the German town of Erfurt are particularly clear. Here we see the two figures of Church and Synagogue in motion. The image works like a TV western with its black hats and white hats. The hat worn by the figure of Synagogue is the helmet-shaped badge of shame prescribed for Jews in medieval Germany, and Synagogue herself is carved in much deeper, more realistic relief than Church. Church has a bland generic face and rides a beautiful horse, but Synagogue's face under her helmet is a grimace out of remembered nightmare, and her mount is... yes, you saw correctly: the *Judensau*, reserved in German folk art specifically for Jews.



Now we will see some images depicting the infamous Blood libel directed against the Jews. Here you see Jews murdering a Christian child in order to drink his blood and use it for ritual purposes. It looks like the poor child is still living as they drain his blood.

In the top panel you see Gandolfino d' Asti (15th c.) on the martyrdom of *Simonino di Trento* - Simon of Trent. In the late 15th century, an itinerant Franciscan preacher names Bernardine of Feltre came to Trente, a town in Italy, and delivered a series of sermons in which he vilified the local Jewish community. Shortly afterwards a little boy named Simon went missing. His father decided that he must have been kidnapped and murdered by Jews. According to his story, the Jews had drained poor Simon of his blood, supposedly for use in baking their Passover Matzot and for occult rituals. Some Jewish men were interrogated. That meant tortured until they “confessed” of the crime. They were executed. The entire Jewish community (both men and women) were then arrested and forced to confess under torture. Fifteen were sentenced to death and burned at the stake.

The case at Trent inspired accusations of ritual murder against Jews throughout the surrounding regions. Meanwhile, Simon became the focus of veneration for the local Catholic Church. He eventually was sainted and considered a martyr and a patron of kidnap and torture

victims. For years his entry was read in liturgical readings of martyrology. Each time this horrific story was told, it reinforced the evil of the Jews. Note the yellow circles on Jews' cloaks. The bottom image is an anonymous 15th c. Italian engraving. There are many more such images. The martyrdom of Simon of Trent was a popular story.

Burning of Jews following blood libel
Hartmann Schedel's Nuremberg Chronicle (1493)



In this panel you can see the intended lesson to be drawn. The Jews are evil. Burn them.

Host Desecration by Jews



In this panel you see a rendering of the “Host Desecration libel.” This is different than the blood libel. You can see how in a massive synagogue or perhaps the Temple in Jerusalem, Jews are stabbing little round disks. These disks are actually consecrated wafers, the transubstantiated “Host” that is consumed by Christians at the altar in churches. Because the Host is the actual consecrated body of Christ, if Jews managed to get their hands on them, they would subject them to horrible torture, which was, essentially a re-enactment of the Jewish murder of Christ. According to the legend, the Jews were not satisfied with killing Christ only once, but wished to continue to do so forever.

Piero Uccello's Miracle of the Profaned Host from the
Urbino Confraternity of Corpus Domini Predella



This panel is from Uccello's *Miracle of the Profaned Host* from the Urbino Confraternity of Corpus Domini Predella. Here, a Jewish moneylender cooks up the body of Christ in the form of the Host wafer, but in its agony it bleeds into the street. The Jew's pregnant wife and children look on in horror as they cannot stop the blood from pouring into the street in rivers, which alerts the soldiers who then break through the door and will punish the evil Jews.

German woodcut 15th c.



In this image you see a full narrative telling of the desecration of the Host of the Eucharist, supposedly, by the Jews of Passau in southern Germany in 1477. Beginning in the upper left corner, sanctified hosts are stolen by a poor Christian woman who is in debt to Jews and cannot get out of their plan to steal the Host from a church. The Jews then torture it in a Jewish ritual, but the host screams in pain. Angels hear the screams of the poor wafer and report to local gendarmes who catch the treacherous Jews in the act. They are duly punished by torture, paraded through town, some are beheaded and others are burned for torturing Christ and re-enacting their perfidious act of killing God. The survivors are expelled from the

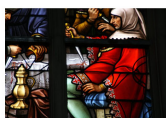
town after their feet are bound and held to the fire. Finally, at the end, the good Christians pray. Just in case you are illiterate, you see the complete illustrated story.



"Sacrament du Miracle"
Brussels Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula

The legend of the Miraculous Sacrament is presented in many works of art in the Brussels Cathedral from tapestries to sculptures. This is from a large series of stained glass windows from about 1436 till 1870. They depict the following legend.

In autumn 1369 a prominent Jew from Enghien bribed a Jewish convert to Christianity to steal communion wafers, in order to desecrate them. Shortly afterwards he was murdered (windows 1-3). His widow passed the hosts to the Jews in Brussels, who stabbed them with daggers in their synagogue on Good Friday 1370.



The sacred hosts began to bleed (windows 4 and 5). A Jewess who had converted to Christianity was bribed to conceal the hosts among the Jews of Cologne. But she repented and confessed the whole story and gave up the miraculous hosts (windows 6-7). Based on the testimony of the Jewess (window 8) and after being judged by the Duke of Brabant the Jews were publicly burnt at the stake. The remaining Jews were expelled by the Duke from the Duchy of Brabant and their property confiscated (window 9). The miraculous sacrament was subsequently transferred in procession to the chapter church of St. Gudula (window 10). The local devotion to the Miraculous Sacrament however survived up to the Second World War.

Let's now move to Islam. People have studied the cultural rootedness of antisemitism in Europe for some time now, but little has been said about the cultural embeddedness of Islamophobia in European culture.



Durante degli Alighieri, c. 1265-1321

Whereas the European stereotype for Jews and Judaism is directed against "the Jews," the European stereotype against Muslims and Islam is directed almost entirely against Muhammad. Why the difference? "The Jews" are guilty as a community in rejecting Christ. But Muhammad is guilty of being a false prophet and of bringing a false scripture. He is therefore punished by God with eternal damnation. Accordingly, one of the most common medieval images of Muhammad in the West depicts him suffering in Hell. The Florentine, Dante Alighieri made the image of Muhammad's

damnation famous in his Divine Comedy, written in the early 1300s.



That Muhammad suffers in hell “proves” that he is not a true prophet nor is his religion a true religion. Dante demonstrates this in the record of his imaginary visit to heaven and hell. We see here an image of Muhammed (in the middle) showing his entrails to Dante and Virgil (on the left), from one of the earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts of the *Inferno*, dating from the third quarter of the fourteenth century (1350-1375). It is currently held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England. The artist is unknown.



This image depicts the same scene in a close-up of a much larger picture by Giovanni da Modena d.1456.

The Divine Comedy: Inferno, Canto 28

Whither eagerly I then from my gaze
he sent me, with his hands behind
his eyes, and cried, "How much
have I to show to thee, as
Muhammad, brought before me
wailed all weeping from the city
of the Caliph to the forest, and
said, "O Dante, do not be so
bold, who thou, and therefore
that are not. A final scene
before, who with his sword
as thou, crying, crying again
of his name, when we have

The actual canto describes the affliction of Muhammad so there is no doubt that he is condemned to eternal damnation.



But the Inferno is not really about Muhammad. It is about *all* the bad people of Dante's generation: political opponents, Christian heretics, schismatics, theologians with the wrong ideas, and so forth. But Muhammad's appearance placed him in a company of evil, and while most other people identified in the Divine Comedy have been lost to history, the repeated negative portrayals of Muhammad ensured that his role as heretic became canonized in European civilization.

Gustave Doré's 1885 version of Muhammad in hell



Here is the depiction of the famous 19th century biblical illustrator Gustav Doré.

1911 Italian silent film L'Inferno: vi
drammatization of Divine Comedy



Here is the same scene in the 1911 Italian silent film L'Inferno. It looks like the Italian director took the scene directly from Doré. You can see how the repeated images have become deeply fixed in European media, so fixed that Muhammad in hell has become something like a “trope” in European art and culture.

Muhammad burned in killing of Sargis
Gustave Doré 1885



Another repeated image is one that cannot imagine why Islam forbids the consumption of alcohol. If you remember, I mentioned the Islamic story about the Christian monk that confirms the future prophetic role of Muhammad. And I also mentioned that Jewish and Christian versions of the story have a different message. This scene

depicts the story of Prophet Mohammed and the Christian monk, who is called Sergius in many Christian versions. Mohammed, when in company with his Christian friend Sergius, drank too much wine and fell into a drunken stupor. While he was passed out, a soldier killed the monk and placed the sword in Mohammed's hand. When Muhammad awoke, the soldier and his companions told him that while drunk he had slain the monk. That is the reason, then, that Mohammed forbade the drinking of wine by his followers.

Here are two more images associating a drunken and dimwitted Muhammad with wine.



Muhammad leading a massacre of Christians

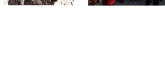


In this scene Muhammad and Islam are associated with violence, in contradistinction to Jesus and Christianity that are associated with Love.

Muhammad with Qur'an trampled by angels



In this image found in a Flemish part of Belgium situated between Antwerp and Gent, Muhammad and the Qur'an are trampled by angels.



The enculturation of prejudice against Muslims in Europe was not merely static, conveyed silently through images. There were also festivals in which Muslims and Islam are denigrated. Some of these festivals continue to take place to this day. The Moros y Christianos festivals in Spain have been held for centuries and continue to be held to celebrate the success of the Reconquista. The climax of the festival is the burning of Muhammad in effigy.



La Giostra del Saracino today



There also remains to this day in Arezzo and other Italian towns "La Giostra del Saracino," the "Saracen Joust." This is a kind of "Whack-a-mole" in which knights on horseback strike a wooden image of a swarthy dark "Saracen" with their lances.

Notice in the left image here that the festival is used to attract tourism to the region.

La Giostra del Saracino

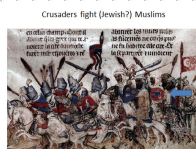


Here you can barely see how the valiant knight must take care because the "Saracen" can turn and hit him back. There's a big wooden stick on a chain tied to his right arm that swings back when the lance hits his shield. It's all fun and games, except that the very "fun" of the event continues to perpetuate hatred and a racist

stereotype.



Another “othering” festival activity that was quite common in Europe was the Eastertide stoning of the Jews. Jewish houses were stoned during Easter Week and Jews stayed indoors for their own protection. The ‘Ordinary’ or mass of St. Vincent of Châlon-sur-Saone records that on Palm Sunday, “The Jews were stoned by the clergy and people, because they stoned Jesus.”² This custom was apparently brought to Europe through the influence of Byzantine practice.

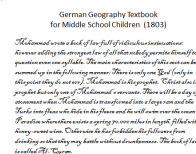


Medieval European perceptions of Jews were actually closely associated with Muslims. Jews were often thought of as “fifth-columnists” ready to betray Christian Europe to the Muslim enemy because of their virulent hatred of Christ and all things Christian. Here is an interesting image that might conflate (not clear whether this is so) Jewish and Islamic religious symbols. Do you see the “Jewish star” at the point of the blue arrow?



Modernity did not end the prejudice, but it thoroughly secularized it. In fact, the notion of the nation-state has typically included a definition of “the nation” in relation to the “other,” that often being “Muslim” or “Ottoman” in the European context. And because Jews were defined in Europe as thoroughly other, it was a big hurdle to include them within the liberal nation-state.

But the modern period just has so much material that it is impossible even to survey it here. We could venture into many areas, but I will survey only a few. The first is school textbook descriptions of Muslims in the 19th and 20th centuries.



This is from a Catholic German textbook published in 1803 & used in Catholic schools

Reader:

Mohammad wrote a book of law full of ridiculous insinuations; however adding the strongest law of all that nobody permits himself to question even one syllable. The main characteristics of this sect can be summed up in the following manner: There is only one God (only in this point they do not err). Mohammad is his prophet. Christ also is a prophet but only one of Mohammad’s servants. There will be a day of atonement when Mohammad is transformed into a large ram and the Turks into fleas who hide in his fleece and he will swim

² Cited by Cecil Roth, “The Eastertide Stoning of the Jews and Its Liturgical Echoes,” JQR, 1945.

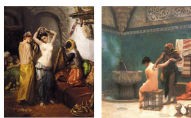
over the ocean to Paradise where there exists a spring 70,000 miles in length, filled with honey-sweet wine. Otherwise he has forbidden his followers from drinking so that they may battle without drunkenness. The book of law is called Al-Quran.³



I will end this show of images with just a few of the many modern examples from the modern repertoire. The first is the Orientalist perspective.



Modernity did not end our ancient culturalized prejudices. In fact, it has continued the tradition of perpetuating prejudice to this very day. But the modern period just has so much material that it is impossible even to survey it here. The Orientalist perspective was first brought to our attention by Edward Said. Here are some Orientalist images that sexualize and objectify the Arab or Muslim into stereotypical types.



Note the nudity and heavy sexual suggestions that was so much a part of the Orientalist imagination.



In this collage of orientalist impressionist images, you have a list of the greatest and most beloved painters. These are all part of a genre called by the name of a female harem slave in Ottoman times: *odalik*, known in European languages as *Odalisque*. Clockwise from upper left: Renoir, Paul Desiré Trouillebert (1874), Henri Matisse (1928), Ferdinand Roybet (1840–1920), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1839).



Keep in mind that “othering” is a part of human nature and found in most cultures. Europeans did not objectify and sexualize only Arabs or Muslims. They had a similar attitude toward virtually all non-Europeans. The great impressionist painter, Paul Gauguin, for example, is known for his nudes of Tahitian women. But in the case of portrayals of Islam, the Orientalist tradition fits into a long history of stereotypes and prejudice that has become fully implanted in Western consciousness.

³ Anself Desing. *Kurze Anleitung der Universalhistorie,, nach der Geographie der Landeskarte. Für die studierende Jugend herausgegeben.* Augsburg, 1803. Cited in Gerdiern Jonker, *Imagining Islam: European Encounters with the Muslim World through the Lens of German Textbooks,* in Yilmaz & Aykac, *Perceptions of Islam in Europe.* Tauris, 2012, 132.



Here is a famous image that is found on the cover of the paperback version of Said's book, *Orientalism*.



The modern Orientalist perspective was not only sex. It also perpetuated the older stereotypes of Muslims as violent, even if romantic, adventurous characters. This painting, by Eugène Delacroix, is entitled "Arabs Skirmishing in the Mountains" c. 1863.



Here we move to some of the Antisemitic Nazi propaganda. It was very powerful and played on older European Christian stereotypes extremely effectively.



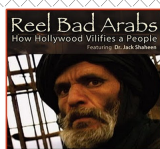
The caption to this cartoon is "Every little Jewish baby grows up to be a Jew."



Sadly, some of the worst images from Nazi propaganda have been re-used in the Arab media in relation to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Take a look at this, from the Egyptian quasi-governmental newspaper, al-Ahram, in 2001.



Some of the same savage European stereotypes to de-humanize Jews have become deeply embedded in the Muslim world in the 20th century, as we can see from two images from Arabic language newspapers. The same process has come to implant violently hateful stereotypical images in Islamic culture and society as well. Finally, we will end our journey with an examination of one of the most effective and interesting – and dangerously effective – sources for perpetuating negative stereotypes: **the movies!**



This book cover makes a point that is vividly articulated by its author Jack Shaheen (Pub.2001), about how Arabs or Muslims are portrayed in Hollywood (these two identities are generally equated in film). The contents and perspective of the book was subsequently made into a documentary film by Satvinder "Sut" Jhally, professor of communication and cultural studies at U. Mass Amherst (2007).



Not a lot needs to be said about these images. You have seen them yourselves. The movies further many stereotypes. In fact, we can re-examine the visual stereotypes we looked at just a while ago and probably remember how the movies reinforce these from your own experience.



One can argue that all ethnic groups suffer from being victims of negative stereotypes. That is true, but there is a difference in the depth and negativity of stereotyped groups in every culture and society. When a group is singled out negatively for many generations, it is less likely to “recover” from the negative prejudice directed against it. The Irish were severely stereotyped in America for a period of time, but the negative perspective has largely recovered. Negative stereotypes of the Irish are not deeply embedded in American culture. Negative stereotypes directed against Africans, however, and especially African Americans, have been a part of American culture virtually since its inception. I argue that it is impossible to remove these negative images. Same with Antisemitic and Anti-Islamic stereotypes. We need to think about what we can do in light of this fact.

Popeye the Sailor meets Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves 1937

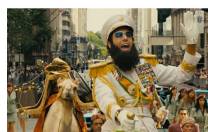


I grew up with Popeye the Sailor-man. Innocently, I absorbed negative images of people who don’t look like Northern European “types.” Note this obvious Arab “bad guy.”



Now consider the “eternal bad guy” of the series, “Bluto.” What does he look like? South European? Italian? Arab? “other.” And the creepy un-identifiable types in the non-European grass skirts? I doubt whether the writers were trying to be mean and denigrate others on purpose. They were simply appealing to already-established stereotypes in order to entertain – and in doing so they further the stereotypes and embed them ever deeper into our consciousness and our culture. I watched Popeye growing up, but my kids watch contemporary movies.

Like this one!



Another, very recent image that works on stereotypes is the new comic book, “Foreskinman.” Note the color and complexion of the hero and the evil type who would make blood sacrifices of babies, like the medieval libels, to placate an evil God. Some believe that these kinds of horrific slanders were over once we left the Middle Ages. But it simply isn’t true.



Here is a variation on the theme that “Islamizes” the physical threat of circumcision that had always been associated strictly with Jews in Western culture.



I have been concentrating on the problem of Antisemitic and Islamophobic stereotypes in Western culture and society. I could conduct the same exercise to treat intolerable Antisemitic and Anti-Christian stereotypes in Arab and Islamic cultures and societies, and unacceptable anti-Arab and anti-Christian stereotypes in Israeli and Jewish culture and society.



I have shown European images here. I could do the same for Japanese or Thai or Zimbabwean or Chinese cultures and societies. It is a human problem, and I have no intent to single out Christian cultures and societies as the source of the problem. But we live in the West, and we need to begin to resolve our problems at home.



Religions all include trajectories of thought and action that are violent.



Religions also include trajectories of thought and action that strive for peace and reconciliation. Our job as religious people is to make sure that we motivate the activist trajectories in our own religious and cultural traditions that strive for peace and reconciliation, and to stand up against those who strive for violence as a way of resolving issues.

We also need to learn how to recognize negative stereotyping in our own culture and tradition, and work toward teaching respect for all creation – and all religion. But, enough from me. Now is a good time to have an open discussion on these issues.

Thank you!



Homeland is an American television series developed by [Howard Gordon](#) and [Alex Gansa](#). The series stars [Claire Danes](#) as [Carrie Mathison](#), a [Central Intelligence Agency](#) officer, and [Damian Lewis](#) as [Nicholas Brody](#), a [U.S. Marine](#). Mathison has come to believe that Brody, who was held captive by [al-Qaeda](#) as a [prisoner of war](#), was "turned" by the enemy and now threatens the United States.

The series is broadcast in the U.S. on the cable channel [Showtime](#), and is produced by [Fox 21](#). It premiered on October 2, 2011. Showtime's highest-rated drama premiere in eight years. The series has received critical acclaim, as well as several industry awards, including winning the 2012 [Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Drama Series](#), the 2011 and 2012 [Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series – Drama](#), and the [Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series](#) and [Lead Actress in a Drama Series](#) for Damian Lewis and Claire Danes respectively.

“Homeland.” Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody returns home eight years after going missing in Iraq. Carrie Mathison, a driven CIA officer, suspects he might be plotting an attack on America.

44:43 for Sequence.

See also

The Siege (pre 9/11) (Denzel Washington)

Argo, about Iranian Revolution (Ben Affleck)

True Lies (Arnold Schwarzenegger)

Back to the Future (1) “The Libyans, the Libyans!”

Syriana (Matt Damon)