

History and Conduct of Jews in the Light of Quran

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Abstract

Besides Islam, Judaism and Christianity are considered main Semitic religions of the world. Followers of Judaism, present at the time of revelation of Quran, claims to be the true followers of the former prophets of God, such as Ibrahim and Musa (peace be on him) etc. So the Quran, in this context, had special statements about their history and conduct. It has discussed their creeds, their notions and their behavior towards the prophets and other people. The vague notions about Prophethood, Heavenly Scriptures, Angels, the After-life, Divine Law and so on many other aspects have been elaborated by Quran. In this article main features of Jews, depicted by Quran has been discussed.

Discussion & Argumentation

In order to grasp the subtlety, of this remark two things should be borne in mind. First, that in comparison to Islam, the primordial religion, both Judaism and Christianity are later products. The name Judaism, as well as the characteristic features and elaborate body of laws and regulations associated with it emerged during the third or fourth century, B.C. As for Christianity in the sense of the body of dogmas and theological doctrines which characterize it, it came into existence long after Jesus (peace be on him).

Quran has described various features of Jews in detail. It has stated many chapters from their undesirable history. Quran has specifically stated their vague notions, false claims, their cruel, blasphemous, rude and cruel behavior towards the prophets of Allah, and a number of other variations from the right path. Here are some glimpses from the pages of Quran in this regard.

Vague Notions of Jews

According to Quran Jews had some vague notions about Prophethood, Heavenly Scriptures, Angels, the After-life, Divine Law and so on. Although they have already followed Prophets and Divine Scriptures. But on the arrival of the last Prophet they flatly declined to embrace Islam. This negative reply was exploited by the hypocrites and other enemies of Islam as an argument for creating doubts about the truth of Islam.

If Muhammad was the true Prophet, they argued, how was it conceivable that the Jewish scholars and divines would deliberately turn away from him since, if he was a true Prophet, such a behaviour would be tantamount to ruining their After-life?

Undesirable Historical Record of the Jews

From a number of Quranic verses the simple-hearted Muslims of the time of the Prophet learn of the **Historical record of the Jews**, a record which is charged with perversion and corruption. This was designed to make them realize that they ought not to expect too much of a people with so dark a past, for if they were not realistic in their expectations about them they would be utterly disappointed when their call failed to penetrate their hardened and stony hearts. Their chronic decadence had a history of several centuries. For a long time they had treated those verses of the Scriptures which made sincere believers tremble in awe as objects of jest and play. They had tailored religion to suit their base desires and it was around such a perverted view of religion that all their hopes of salvation were centred. It was futile to hope that such people would flock to the call of Truth the moment it was proclaimed.

Quran says:

مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لَيًّا بِالسِّتَةِ وَطَعْنًا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاسْمَعْ وَانْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَقْوَمٌ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا¹

(Among those who are Jews, there are some who displace words from (their) right places and say: "We hear your word (O Muhammad !) and disobey," and "Hear and let you (O Muhammad) hear nothing." And Ra'ina with a twist of their tongues and as a mockery of the religion (Islam). And if only they had said: "We hear and obey", and "Do make us understand," it would have been better for them, and more proper, but Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not except a few.)

It is to be noted that this expression means 'they became Jews', rather than 'they were Jews'. For, originally, they were nothing but Muslims, just as the followers of every Prophet are Muslims. Only later on did they become merely "Jews".

This signifies three things. Firstly, When the ordinances of God are announced to them, they loudly proclaim: 'Yes, we have heard', (sami'na), but then they whisper: 'And we disobeyed' ('asayna). Or else they pronounce ata'na ('we obey') with such a twist of the tongue that it becomes indistinguishable from 'asayna .

Whenever they wanted to say something to the Prophet (peace be on him) they would say, 'isma" (listen), but added to this the expression, 'ghayr musma" which had several meanings. It could either be a polite expression, meaning that he was worthy of such deep respect that one should say nothing to his dislike or it could have a malicious implication,

¹ . Al-Baqarah 2: 46

meaning that he did not deserve to be addressed by anybody. It also meant the imprecation: 'May God turn you deaf'.²

Tampering with the Scriptures

Quran indicates that they tampered with the text of the scripture, **they misinterpreted the Scripture and thereby distorted the meanings of the verses of the Book**. A party of them' refers to the scholars and religious doctors of the Jewish community denotes the attempt to twist a text in such a manner as to make it signify something different from its real meaning, and may also denote tampering with the text of the Scriptures. The Israelite scholars had subjected the Scriptures to distortions of both kinds.

They also came and stayed in the company of the Prophet (peace be on him) and his Companions and listened to the conversations which took place there, then went among other people and misreported what they had heard. They did this with the malicious intent of bringing the Muslims into disrepute and thereby **preventing people from embracing Islam**. See the following verse:

أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ³

(Do you (faithful believers) covet that they will believe in your religion in spite of the fact that a party of them (Jewish rabbis) used to hear the Word of Allah (Torah), then they used to change it knowingly after they understood it.)

Breaking the Covenants

They broke their covenants on a number of occasions:

فَبِمَا نَقُضُهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكَفَرَهُمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بَغْيًا حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ ۚ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا⁴

(Because of their breaking the covenant, and of their rejecting the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, and of their killing the Prophets unjustly, and of their saying: "Our hearts are wrapped (with coverings, i.e. we do not understand what the Messengers say)" - nay, Allah has set a seal upon their hearts because of their disbelief, so they believe not but a little.)

Opposition to the Path of Prophets and Deviations from Obligations of Shariah

² For an explanation of this! see: Mawdu'di', Sayyid Abul a'la: Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, p108, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, UK. 1988

³ . Al-Baqarah2: 75

⁴ . An-Nisa4: 155

Quran says that the Prophet Moses was given the Scripture (Torah), to guide the nation about the true path but unfortunately they opposed the given path.

وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ⁵

(And (remember) when We gave Musa (Moses) the Scripture [the Taurat (Torah)] and the criterion (of right and wrong) so that you may be guided aright.)

Sayyid Maududi says:

“‘Criterion’ here means that understanding of religion which differentiates truth from falsehood, making each stand out distinctly.”⁶

Another verse shows that the prayer (Salah), and the Alms giving (Zakah) were also obligatory in their shariah.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهََ بِأَلْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ⁷

(And (remember) when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying): Worship none but Allah (Alone) and be dutiful and good to parents, and to kindred, and to orphans and Al-Masakin (the poor), and speak good to people [i.e. enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, and say the truth about Muhammad Peace be upon him], and perform As-Salat, and give Zakat. Then you slid back, except a few of you ,while you are backsliders.)

Their history shows that they flatly deviated from these obligations.

Showing the Discontentment about the Prophet:

According to Quran, Jews often show their discontentment about the Prophet, and the cause of their disconcertment with the Prophet (peace be on him) was not that they were earnest seekers after the Truth which the Prophet had failed to make clear to them. The real cause of their unhappiness was that he had not resorted to hypocrisy and trickery, in regard to religious matters, that unlike them he did not pursue self-interest and self-indulgence under the facade of godliness and piety, that he did not twist religious principles and injunctions without scruple, as the Jews were wont to do in order to make them suit their desires and fancies, that he did not resort to the chicanery and duplicity which characterized the religious life of the Jews. As a result, it was no use trying to appease them. For unless the Muslims were prepared to assume the attitude and orientation of the Jews and to follow all their errors

⁵ . Al-Baqarah2: 53

⁶ . Mawdu'di', Sayyid Abul a'la: Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I,p.72, The Islamic Foundation,Leicester, UK. 1988

⁷ . Al-Baqarah 2: 83

in belief and practice, there was no question of their being able to bring about any reconciliation with them.

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ ۚ وَلَئِنَّ اتَّبَعْتُمْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۚ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ⁸

(Never will the Jews nor the Christians be pleased with you (O Muhammad Peace be upon him) till you follow their religion. Say: "Verily, the Guidance of Allah (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) that is the (only) Guidance. And if you (O Muhammad Peace be upon him) were to follow their (Jews and Christians) desires after what you have received of Knowledge (i.e. the Qur'an) , then you would have against Allah neither any Wali (protector or guardian) nor any helper.)

وَدَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يُضِلُّوكُمْ ۚ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ⁹

(A party of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) wish to lead you astray. But they shall not lead astray anyone except themselves, and they perceive not.)

Antagonism and Hostility to the Last Prophet and the Gabriel:

The Jews not only reviled the Prophet (peace be on him) and his followers but also God's chosen angel, Gabriel, denouncing him as their enemy, and branding him as the angel of curse rather than of blessing.

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَيَّ قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ¹⁰

(Say (O Muhammad Peace be upon him) : "Whoever is an enemy to Jibrael (Gabriel) (let him die in his fury) , for indeed he has brought it (this Qur'an) down to your heart by Allah's Permission, confirming what came before it [i.e. the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] and guidance and glad tidings for the believers.)

They abused Gabriel because he had brought the Qur'an from God and since the Qur'an on the whole confirms the Torah this too became a co-sharer in those abuses .

Hostilities of Jews and Christians between themselves:

It is mentioned in the following verse:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۚ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۚ وَهُمْ يَتَّبِعُونَ الْكِتَابَ ۚ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۚ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ¹¹

⁸ . Al-Baqarah 2: 120

⁹ . Aal-e-Imran 3: 69

¹⁰ . Al-Baqarah 2: 97

¹¹ . Al-Baqarah 2: 113

(The Jews said that the Christians follow nothing (i.e. are not on the right religion); and the Christians said that the Jews follow nothing (i.e. are not on the right religion); though they both recite the Scripture. Like unto their word, said (the pagans) who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they have been differing.)

False Claims of the Jews:

Their claim that they are the real followers of Ibrahim was declared false by the Quran.

وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ¹²

(And who turns away from the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) except him who befools himself? Truly, We chose him in this world and verily, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous.)

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ¹³

(And they say, "Be Jews or Christians, then you will be guided." Say (to them, O Muhammad Peace be upon him) , "Nay, (We follow) only the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) , Hanifa [Islamic Monotheism, i.e. to worship none but Allah (Alone)], and he was not of Al-Mushrikin (those who worshipped others along with Allah))

The question that naturally arises is that, if man's guidance depends on following Judaism or Christianity, how can Abraham and other Prophets and righteous people who are accepted as having been rightly-guided even by the Jews and Christians be considered so when they were born several centuries before the birth of Judaism and Christianity? If they were rightly-guided from whom did they receive their guidance? Obviously their source of guidance and inspiration was neither Judaism nor Christianity since, in their times, these did not exist. So man's rectitude does not depend on those characteristics which led to the rise of Jewish and Christian particularisms; it rather depends on adopting that universal way to Truth which has guided and inspired men throughout the ages .

Second the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians attest that Abraham believed that worship, adoration, service and obedience were due to God alone, and that it was his mission to have none associated with God in His attributes and rights. Since polytheistic elements had made inroads into Judaism and Christianity it was obvious that both had strayed from the way of Abraham.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّعُنُونَ ¹⁴

¹² . Al-Baqarah 2: 130

¹³ . Al-Baqarah 2: 135

(Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers.)

False statements of Yhood

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ¹⁵

(And (both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are the children of Allah and His loved ones." Say: "Why then does He punish you for your sins?" Nay, you are but human beings, of those He has created, He forgives whom He wills and He punishes whom He wills. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and to Him is the return (of all).)

Confinement of God's Teaching to a Limited Class:

The biggest failure of the Jews was that they kept the teachings contained in the Book of God confined to a limited class of people, the rabbis and professional theologians, instead of spreading them. They did not allow this knowledge to filter through even to the Jewish masses let alone the non-Jewish peoples of the world. Later, when errors and corruptions spread among them owing to widespread ignorance the Jewish theologians made no serious effort to root them out. Moreover, in order to maintain their hold on the Jewish masses they lent their tacit approval to every corrupting deviation from the true faith that gained currency .

The Muslims are being admonished to refrain from this kind of behaviour. The nation which has been charged with the guidance of the entire world is duty-bound to do its utmost to radiate true guidance, rather than keep it under lock and key as a miser hoards his money.

The Concept of God, what should be?

Quran, very interestingly discussed this issue as it arises a question:

قُلْ أَتَحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ۖ وَلَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ۖ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ¹⁶

(Say (O Muhammad Peace be upon him to the Jews and Christians) , "Dispute you with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord? And we are to be rewarded for our deeds and you for your deeds. And we are sincere to Him in worship and obedience (i.e. we worship Him Alone and none else, and we obey His Orders)."

The one principle that the Prophet and his followers unreservedly stood for was that God alone should be served. Does that call for dispute and quarrel? If anyone, it is the

¹⁴ . Al-Baqarah 2: 159

¹⁵ . Al-Ma'idah 2: 18

¹⁶ . Al-Baqarah 2: 139

Muslims who are entitled to quarrel with the Jews and Christians, for it is they rather than the Muslims who insist that others beside God should also be made objects of service and adoration .

An alternative translation of this portion could be: 'Would you then dispute with us for the sake of Allah?' In this case the meaning of the verse would be that if their dispute was sincere, it was easy to put an end to it by, agreeing to serve none but God .

Moreover they are told that everyone is responsible for his own conduct. If they have earmarked a part of their service and devotion to others than God, let them do so and see for themselves what it leads to. The Muslims did not want to keep them from error by force. As for themselves, they had consecrated their service, obedience and worship to God alone. If the Jews and Christians could bring themselves to recognize the right of the Muslims to do so, the dispute could automatically be brought to an end,

سَلِّ بَنِي إِسْرَآءِيلَ يَلْ كَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ . وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ¹⁷

(Ask the Children of Israel how many clear Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) We gave them. And whoever changes Allah's favour after it had come to him, [e.g. renounces the Religion of Allah (Islam) and accepts Kufr (disbelief) ,] then surely, Allah is Severe in punishment.)

The Israelites were a people who, having been endowed with Scripture and prophethood, were entrusted with the leadership of the world. By falling prey to worldliness, hypocrisy and other errors of belief and conduct they subsequently lost God's favour. A people entrusted with the task of universal leadership could derive no better lesson from another people than this one.

Some Exceptions:

There are also some exceptions regarding their conduct:

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً . مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ¹⁸

(Not all of them are alike: a party of the people of the Scripture stands for the right, they recite the Verses of Allah during the hours of the night, prostrating themselves in prayer.)

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خُشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا . أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ . إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ¹⁹

¹⁷ . Al-Baqarah 2: 211

¹⁸ . Al-Baqarah 2: 113

¹⁹ . Aal-e-Imran 3: 199

(And there are, certainly, among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), those who believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to you, and in that which has been revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allah. They do not sell the Verses of Allah for a little price, for them is a reward with their Lord. Surely, Allah is Swift in account.)

The Prophet's Declarations and the Reaction of Yhood:

The Prophet declares the pure things which they had forbidden as lawful, and the impure things which they had legitimized as unlawful.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُجِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبِيثَاتِ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَإَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ²⁰

(Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad) whom they find written with them in the Taurat (Torah) (Deut, xviii, 15) and the Injeel (Gospel) (John xiv, 16), - he commands them for Al-Ma'roof (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained); and forbids them from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); he allows them as lawful At-Taiyibat [(i.e. all good and lawful) as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.], and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khab'ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah's Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him (Muhammad), honour him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur'an) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful).

Seyyad Maududi has discussed the issue in detail as he writes:

“The preceding verse concludes God's response to Moses' prayer. This was the appropriate moment to invite the Israelites to follow the Message preached by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The upshot of what is being said here is that people can even now attain God's mercy exactly as they could in the past. These conditions require that people should now follow the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), since refusal to follow a Prophet after his advent amounts to gross disobedience to God. Those who do not commit themselves to follow the Prophet (peace be on him) cannot attain the essence of piety, no

²⁰. Al-A'araf 7: 15 7

matter how hard they try to make a pretence of it by observing the minor details of religious rituals generally associated with piety”²¹ .

Likewise, the Israelites had been told that paying Zakah was essential to win God's mercy. However, payment of Zakah is meaningless unless one supports the struggle to establish the hegemony of truth which was being carried on under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be on him). For unless one spends money to exalt the word of God, the very foundation of Zakah are lacking, even if a person spends huge amounts in the way of charity. They were also reminded that they had been told in the past that God's mercy was exclusively for those who believed in His Revelation. Now those who rejected the Revelation received by Muhammad (peace be on him) could never be considered believers in Revelation no matter how zealously they claim to believe in the Torah .

Reference to the Prophet (peace be on him) in this verse as ummi is significant as the Israelites branded all other nations as Gentiles (ummis). Steeped in racial prejudice, they did not consider members of other nations as their equals, let alone accept any person not belonging to them as a Prophet. The Qur'an also states the Jewish belief that they would not be taken to ask for whatever they might do to non-Jews. ²²Employing the same term which they themselves had used, the Qur'an tells them that their destiny was linked with the ummi Prophet. By obeying him they would become deserving of God's mercy. As for disobedience to the Prophet (peace be on him), it would continue to arouse God's wrath which had been afflicted upon them for centuries²³ .

Pointed and repeated reference to the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) is made in the Bible.²⁴

The Israelites had fettered their lives by undue restrictions which had been placed on them by the legal hair-splitting of their jurists, the pietistic exaggerations of their spiritual leaders, the introduction of superstitions and self-contrived laws and regulations by, their masses. The Prophet, by relieving them of every unnecessary burden and releasing them from every unjustified restriction, in fact liberated their shackled lives.

Status of Jews Religious Books:

²¹ . Mawdu'di', Sayyid Abul a'la: Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. 3,p.85, The Islamic Foundation,Leicester, UK. 1988

²² . See Al'Imran 3: 75.

²³ . Mawdu'di', Sayyid Abul a'la: Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. 3,p.85, The Islamic Foundation,Leicester, UK. 1988

²⁴ . See Deuteronomy 8: 15-19; Matthew 21: 33-46; John 1: 19-25; 14: 15-17, 25-30; 15: 25-6; 6: 7-15

Quran has stated significant position of Taurat and Injil, as it states:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا النَّوْرَانَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبِّيُّونَ وَالْأَخْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ ۚ فَلَا تَحْسَبُوا النَّاسَ وَآخِشِينَ وَلَا تَسْتَرْوُوا بِأَيْتِي تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا ۖ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

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(Verily, We did send down the Taurat (Torah) [to Musa (Moses)], therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah's Will, judged the Jews. And the rabbis and the priests [too judged the Jews by the Taurat (Torah) after those Prophets] for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men but fear Me (O Jews) and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the Kafirun (i.e. disbelievers - of a lesser degree as they do not act on Allah's Laws).

Is it true that the Quran says to not take the Jews and Christians for friends?

Quran advises the followers in this regard as saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

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O ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. And whoso among you takes them for friends is indeed one of them. Verily, Allah guides not the unjust people.

The Quran commands Muslims to not befriend Jews and Christians as Jews and Christians usually remain at war with Muslims. If you consider enemies at war with each other, it makes perfect sense to discourage friendships between them because of that situation. Even so, the subsequent verses 58 and 59 clarify the reasons for discouraging friendships with Jews and Christians of that time, who used to make fun of Muslims for adhering to their faith.

(5:58) O ye who believe! take not those for friends who make a jest and sport of your religion from among those who were given the Book before you, and the disbelievers. And fear Allah if you are believers

Interestingly, many topics in the Quran are continued in other places for the purpose of clarification. Consider Chapter 60 verses 8-10, with the suggestion that God may bring about love between the Muslims and their enemies. [60:8]

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوَدَّةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

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²⁵ . Al-Ma'idah 5: 44

²⁶ . Al-Maidah 5: 51

²⁷ . Al-Mumtahin'a 60: 7

It may be that Allah will bring about love between you and those of them with whom you are now at enmity; and Allah is All-Powerful; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful(Almumtahina).

These verses enjoin Muslims to be kind and generous towards others regardless of their religion, and that war is only permissible against hostile tribes who persecute Muslims on account of religious differences. In any case, remember that rather than creating differences, Islam teaches respect and acceptance of all prophets including Jesus and Moses, however it requires from Muslims that they should preach the followers of other creeds to the right path: Islam.

The summary of the article is that in the light of Quran, we see the Jews, a religious group of certain creeds who always opposed to their Prophets and even assassinate some of them. They behaved cruelly with the true followers of the Prophets of God. Their false claims and vague notions are also described. They confined heavenly teachings to a limited class and remain always hostile to the Last Prophet and his followers.