

Religion, Violence and Terrorism

By Dr. Peter E. Tarlow

The week of June 21, 2015 was not a good week on the world stage. The week saw the tragic murder of 9 people gunned down in a South Carolina church, then the ISIS attacks in Tunisia, the beheading in France, the murders in Syria and the attack against the Mosque in Kuwait. The last three of these deeds occurred during the Muslim month of Ramadan, when some terrorists believe that there is a higher calling to martyrdom. For example, Yahoo News reported on June 27, 2015 that Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, Islamic State spokesman, stated: “The best acts that bring you closer to God are jihad, so hurry to it and make sure to carry out the invasion this holy month and be exposed to martyrdom in it... These are your weapons and this is Ramadan.”ⁱ

Death seemed to be everywhere. Reading and listening to the media, it would not be difficult to draw a connection between religion and violence. The assumption that religion leads to violence is one that has been around for many years. In the 1950s when I was a young boy people often told me that religion was responsible for most wars and killings. The claim was based on the assumption that religion motivated people to take the lives of their fellow men and women based on religious fanaticism. I heard lectures on the role of the Crusades, Jihadists, and the Inquisition. We read about the Salem witch trials and our teachers showed us pictures of the Ku Klux Klan burning crosses. Even as a young boy I wondered about these statements. Was it possible that the lessons that I was taught about being kind and good to my human beings also drove people to a form of psychotic madness? To add to my confusion I wondered if Stalin religious? How about the communist Chinese? Hitler murdered people because of their religious faith, but was he religious or the antithesis of religion? Although there are clearly religious fanatics who murder, what about religious people who are martyred, or innocent victims, or sacrifice their lives for others in what Durkheim called “altruistic suicide”?ⁱⁱ These were innocent people, who were faith observant but not only not motivated by religion to take the life of a fellow human being, but also were at times willing to give their lives for others. For a long time these questions plagued me. Ironically, the English language forces us to think about violence and religion even in its vocabulary usage. Thus, the word “plagued” becomes problematic as we connect the word with the Biblical Ten Plagues that resulted in the death of all of Egypt’s first born.

This paper is an attempt to address if, and/or to what extent, the question: does religion lead to additional violence and to acts of terrorism? That is to say, does religion lead to a greater propensity to commit acts of terrorism than does secularism? Certainly, religion and terrorism are in the news. Scholars and politicians may argue as to the extent that the

Islamic State represents Islam, but there can be no doubt that the followers of the Islamic State (ISIS) see themselves as representing the true face of Islam. The same is true for Al Qaeda. We cannot separate these people anymore from Islam than we can separate the Inquisitors from medieval Christianity.

In fact, just as the Spanish and Portuguese inquisitors vented much of their anger against so-called Catholic “heretics” in the same way, much of the violence that ISIS creates is aimed at other Muslims who do not meet its “Islamic” standards. Certainly, we cannot blame the average person for being shocked when s/he reads headlines such as: “New low: ISIS reportedly gives away sex slaves as 'prizes' in Koran contest”.ⁱⁱⁱ We cannot be surprised when those who are anti-religious charge that religion leads to fanaticism and fanaticism evolves into violence. No one can deny that these charges exist. The question is: are these charges true and if so, to what extent are they true?

Methodology:

These are not easy questions to answer. The use of statistical data or some form of quantitative analysis although tempting may easily lead to false conclusions. The reasons behind this statement are as follows:

- 1) Without a clear cut definition of terrorism, it is impossible to count acts of terrorism
- 2) There is no clear cut dividing line between acts of violence and acts of terrorism
- 3) As will be seen below, there are no clear definitions of religion

This confusion of terms means that it is impossible to be sure of the data’s validity. It is for this reason, that a qualitative analysis of the question at hand may lead us to a greater understanding of the problem.

To begin to answer them I have based this paper on two basic premises: (1) human beings are moved to act or motivated by ideologies and (2) all religions are a manifestation of an ideology. That is to say that religion is a subset of the concept ideology. Ideologies act as the justifications for arguments over economic resources and power, although we can argue that power is the means by which resources are gained and ideologies work as the justifications for the use or power. We can argue that although all religions are ideologies not all ideologies are religions. As such, religion, along with secular ideologies, act as motivators for both positive and negative human actions.

The Hebrew Bible

Within Western culture, one of the great ideological texts is the Hebrew Bible. Ironically, it is not clear if the Hebrew Bible was ever meant to be an ideological or even a religious text. Historically, however, in the modern world it is impossible to talk about morality and any form of violence without first looking at the Biblical narrative. No matter what one's religious faith is (or is not) the Biblical narrative has set the benchmark for western ethical and moral conceptions and jurisprudence. It is not an exaggeration that this usually mistranslated, and often misunderstood, book forms the basis of much of Western law. As the recent gay-marriage debate in the United States demonstrates, even when secularists reject the Biblical narrative, they still stand over and against that narrative.

The Hebrew Bible, although universally read, is very much a Middle Eastern work. It is a book that reflects the harshness of war and the role of violence in human history. The Hebrew Bible does not attempt to sugarcoat reality. Alongside its ethical and moral teachings, the text also presents us with: pain and death, human suffering and ethical dilemmas. In this one grand historic anthology we read much of humanity's loftiest thoughts and at the same time some of its greatest tragedies.^{iv} Starting with the murder of Abel by Cain, the Hebrew Bible recognizes and seeks to understand that violence is a part of life. The Biblical tale of jealousy and homicide between Cain and Able forces its reader to ask if humans have a proclivity to hurt or destroy one and other? The antidotal complement to the Cain and Abel tale is the Ten Commandments. Are the Ten Commandments' prohibitions against the act of murder a clear indication that people murdered their fellow Homo sapiens to the point that a law was needed to stop the bloodshed? Is the fact that one of the Ten Commandments states: "Lo Tirzach" (Thou Shalt Not Murder) is proof enough that there was a need for such a statute? It is important to recognize that the text does not state "lo taharog" (Thou Shalt not Kill). Rather it distinguishes clearly between acts of killing and acts of murder on a more sophisticated level than that found in most.

Western languages

The student of Genesis cannot help but note that in less than in the first five chapters of the book interpersonal violence goes from the murder of one human being to mass murder (see Lemech: Genesis 4:23-24)) and then in the post-diluvium world to actual wars (see the Abrahamic war tales in Chapter 14 of Genesis). In their book *Battles of the Bible*, Herzog and Gichon note: "Modern scholars have become aware that later editors have partly blurred the initial warlike representation of the patriarchs and especially that of Abraham as the prototype of the Noble Warrior" (Herzog and Gichon, p. 35).

An analysis of Biblical wars, however, from the perspective of war and religion is not easy. Although Judaism and Christianity are based on Biblical authority, it is questionable if the Hebrew Bible is a religious book. Many Jewish and Hebrew scholars argue that the Biblical text is a contract between Israel and its God, a history of Israel, or a constitutional framework. From this perspective, we are forced to ask the question: is the Bible speaking about war as a mere historic fact, an attempt to regulate war, or a justification for war? More importantly, is it necessary to separate the book's intention from the way that later generations chose to use the book? Depending on one's perspective and which verses one chooses, later generations succeeded in finding justifications for their actions in a text that was not meant to justify such actions. Furthermore, it is highly questionable that one of the two "religions" cited above is a religion. Rarely, have knowledgeable Jews classified Judaism as a religion in the Western sense of the word. For example, the Hebrew language has no word for *religion*,^v nor is the concept "religion" found within the pages of Hebrew Scripture. Scholars such as Yoram Hazony note: "Perhaps the greatest obstacle to treading the Hebrew Scriptures is a widespread confusion over the purpose for which these texts were written. That these purposes are so poorly understood is largely a consequence of the fact that the Hebrew Scriptures have for so long been read in light of the writings of Jesus' apostles in the New Testament"^{vi} (Hazony, p. 47)

It is true that non-Jews during certain historical periods have defined Jews as a religion. This imposition of definition is perhaps the ultimate irony of religion as a form of violence. It is ironic that other religious traditions, using a Jewish text, have deprived Jews of the right of self-definition to the point where Jews have come to accept other's views of themselves as their own. Hazony emphasizes this fact when he writes: "The central text of the Hebrew Bible is the history of Israel, the history of Israel presents itself as the composition of an anonymous author...who has gathered together from various sources an account of the history of the Jews" (Hazony pp. 55-56). Reading the text from the perspective of the text, rather than as a tautological or teleological exercise, we note that the Biblical text speaks of wars as historic facts. Because it accepts war as a part of the human condition, we also note that from earliest Biblical times, there have been discussions over if war is a mere free-for-all or if we can regulate war. The Biblical scholar, George Horowitz has noted: "The Hebrew Scripture contains what are the earliest regulations of man's most disorderly and inhumane activity, the conduct of war. The original source, indeed of the rules of war and peace of modern international law is the Torah" (Horowitz: p.146). The Hebrew Bible was aware of war and to some extent, tried to govern war with a set of ethical principles. For example, we find in the *Book of Deuteronomy* the following principle: "When you draw near to a city to fight against it, first proclaim peace to it. If it should make a peaceful response and open its gates, then shall all the people that are found in it be compelled to serve you. If it does not surrender to you, but battles against you, then you are to lay siege to it (the city)" (Deuteronomy 20:10-12). Deuteronomy then goes on to state: "when the Lord your God delivers it (the city) into your hand, you shall put all the males to the sword, You may, however, take as

your booty the women, the children, the livestock, and everything in the town-all its spoil-and enjoy the use of the spoil of your enemy which the Lord your God gives to you” (Deuteronomy 20:13-14).

Modern scholars may argue about the fairness or justice of the Biblical commandments dealing with war, and many of the Biblical injunctions might be considered to be war crimes by today’s standards. Nevertheless, two points become clear: (1) the text attempts to regulate violence and (2) there are rules of war. The Books of: Joshua, Judges I, and Judges II serve as clear demonstrations to the fact that war, just as in our own age, was a part of ancient life.

If we view the concept of conflict as an action not between individuals but rather between groups then it becomes clear that the Biblical viewed war is a part of life. As noted, violence begins almost with creation. Lemech’s mass murders (Genesis 4:23-24) may have tipped the scales in God’s non-proportional decision in the Noah story to wipe life off the face of the earth. Throughout Genesis and Exodus bellicose responses seem to be the norm rather than the exception. Thus, in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 1.8), there can be no doubt that God’s desire to destroy these cities, as symbols of evil, are a use of force and mass murder. The pattern of mass murder on the part of the Deity in the Noah tale is repeated in the Book of Exodus. What are the Ten Plagues if not a non-proportional response to slavery? (Exodus 7 et al). The culmination of this “war” between Pharaoh and God is the destruction by drowning of Egypt’s entire army at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:26-31). In the case of Korach’s rebellion against Moses (Numbers 16), the Earth literally swallows up those who participated in the failed coup d’état.

Taken together the Biblical tales relating to the macro level indicate a series of collective principles. Included in these are:

- There is a major difference between micro level jurisprudence and international law as interpreted on the macro level. All out war does not seem to demand proportional responses, but rather disproportional responses that lead to one side’s claiming victory.
- On the macro level, micro crimes coalesce into collective evil.
- In the face of evil, there can be no proportional response. Instead evil must be confronted and destroyed
- To choose not to destroy evil is in and of itself evil
- Once a war is declared it is a mistake not to fight to win the war. To fight a half war is to perpetuate war and thus to do more damage than good.

The Biblical text also recognizes that in wars there is collateral damage. There is,

however, a major difference between choosing to bring about the destruction of innocent civilians and the accidental death of innocent civilians. While in both cases unjust death does occur, the Biblical text makes it clear that the two forms of mass death through the use of violence should not be confused.

Reading the Biblical text on war, we are left with the dilemma: does the Bible encourage war or is it merely being descriptive indicating that war is a part of life and as such it is better to regulate it then to allow it to be in an unregulated fashion.

War in post-Biblical Jewish literature

Both Judaism and Christianity have Biblically based social systems. Both systems have evolved since the close of the Biblical period and although the Bible acts as the social systems' underpinnings, it would be a mistake to confuse either Judaism or Christianity with the Bible. Judaism for example, might be best defined as the Jewish people's continual dialogue with the text. Neither Christianity nor Judaism is a fixed, frozen in time, social system Rather both are ongoing evolving and living social systems.

From the Jewish perspective starting with the post-Biblical rabbinic literature (halachah) we find attempts to classify and define the concept of war. The rabbinic literature classifies three categories of war: (1) wars of obligation (milchemet mitzvah), wars of free choice (milchemet reshut) and wars of governmental aggrandizement (milchemet malcut). The rabbinic texts defined the first type, a war of obligation, as a war commanded by the Torah (such as the battles against Amalek), they defined the second type of war as a war of defense, and the third as wars of aggrandizement for the purpose of extending national boundaries or the prestige of the king (government). To a great extent these definitions were merely theoretical as Jews lacked national sovereignty between the years 70 to 1948. Despite the theoretical nature of the post Biblical texts, the essential matter is that there is an attempt to regulate and to define both violence and war. Although, Judaism was not pacifist in nature, it did recognize that war had rules and that war had to be fought within the boundaries of these rules.

War in the New Testament and Christian Thought

Looking at the issue of "violence" in the Christian world is much more challenging and does it lead to some form of terrorism is much more difficult. Jews lacked political power, but Christians did not. Furthermore there is a mixing of texts as Christianity sees both the Hebrew Scripture (called by Christians, *Old Testament*, a term which carries a latent sense of verbal violence) and its own scriptures (called by Christians: *New Testament* another word that contains latent violence) as religious texts rather than

national texts. From the Christian perspective these texts are ideological works and express fundamental belief systems. Christianity transforms the Hebrew Scriptures from a national historical and constitutional work into a purely religious text infused with ideological passion. It furthermore unites the various Hebrew Scriptures into one overall scriptural system and then joins that system to a later set of scriptures. Christians view this new hybrid scripture, called the Bible, as a single text and do have a constitutional hierarchy within it. Furthermore, Christianity sees itself as a unique and absolute truth belief system, rather than a national system. The fact that classical Christianity left no room for other belief systems leads to the question: does an all encompassing belief system lead to violence against those who are outside of its ideological boundaries? Reading Christian Scripture that would appear to be the case. For example, the Christian New Testament states in John 14:6: Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." Because Christianity is based on the concept that humans are born in sin, the person who is outside of the Christian realm is by definition a sinner. Paul makes such a position clear in 2 Corinthians 5:21 when he states: "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."

This ideological bent is found throughout Christianity. For example, we read in the Gospel of Matthew 5:38-42 the following: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices— mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law— justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!"

Even if we extract the anti-Semitism found in this passage (the text provides a non-proportional analysis of the Pharisees), two concepts become clear: (1) the text demonstrates a violent streak and (2) it uses an "either –or" perspective: that is to say Group 1 is good and group 2 is bad. It would be a mistake to state that Christianity is purely violent. For example a pacifist side of Christianity is seen in Mathew when we read "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 evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." It would appear that this passage is exhibiting some form of peaceful coexistence, although we cannot overlook the fact that (1) the text misunderstands the Hebrew and (2) it once again presents us with an "either-or" scenario. Is the passage indicating that in the face of evil, the response is nothing? Besides being impossible to realize and not having been practiced by Christians, the text once again exhibits a sort of "I am right and you are wrong attitude"

The exclusive ideology of Christianity forces us to question if there is not a violent streak within Christianity against those who reject its teaching?

The Christian testament makes three things clear:

- 1) Christianity is ideological in a nature
- 2) It is a closed belief system based on a post-this world reward and punishment system
- 3) The rewards of the afterlife belong only to those who subscribe to its belief

Post Biblical Christianity

There are so many forms of Christianity that it is questionable if one can even say Christianity or if it would not be more accurate to state “Christian faiths” or “Christianities”. It is also unfair to judge Christianity (Christianities) by any one period in history and for each historic position we can find a counter-point in history. For example, within Christianity the war like tradition is noted not only in its great religious wars, but also in its art and culture. The tradition of the Christian Knight, of music such as the Battle Hymn of the Republic or such modern music as “More than Conquerors”, “Wages of Sin” and “Victory in Jesus” are counter balanced by the Quaker tradition and Christian sacrifices during the Holocaust. Although most Christians will argue that the Crusades are a thing of the past, the fact that abortion doctors are murdered in the name of Christianity is very much in the present. Some of the many acts of violence in the name of Christianity include: the 17th century catholic gun power plots, Romania’s Iron Guard, the Pogroms of Russia, the Christian attacks against Hindus and the intra-Christian wars of Northern Ireland. On the other side of the ledger are organizations, also based on the principles of Christianity, such as the Churches of God, the Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Pacifist Movements, and actions by Christians to save others despite their religious or political differences. We are then left with a mixed bag in Christianity. Examples of almost any position can be found and if texts are used selectively, we can argue for or against almost any Christian position. Perhaps we can conclude only that Christianity has had, and continues to have a mixture of violence and love, and of pacifism and war.

Islam and Jihad

For many Westerners, Islam is the least known of the Abrahamic religious traditions. Like Judaism, Islam is more Middle Eastern than it is Western. Like Christianity, Islam is a next world-oriented religion. From the perspective of Islam, this life is an entranceway into the rewards of the afterlife. Like Christianity, Islam also provides exclusivity for its believers. In the case of Islam, only the Muslim has the right to enter into heaven and Islam sees itself as the one true word of God. Islam is also similar to Christianity in that it is more a faith than a nation. However, even this principle is placed in doubt, as the Arabic word “um” seems to be closest to the Hebrew word “am”, meaning a national people under the jurisdiction of the Divine. Islam, like Judaism is a

pure monotheistic faith and the watchwords of both Islam and Judaism are more similar than different.

The Koran

As in Hebrew Scripture and the Christian Bible, the Koran exhibits both a peaceful and violent side. Once again, we can find verses that will justify both acts of violence and acts of peace. Islam also has the concept of Jihad. This word/concept is not easy to translate into western parlance. It can mean both a battle against something bad (even overeating) or it can mean a holy war against infidels. Perhaps the best translation of Jihad is “struggle” and is similar to the Hebrew word “ma’avak” (such as in the struggle between Jacob and the “Ish” (man/self/angle) found in the Book of Genesis.

Jihad reflects both the position of the speaker (writer) and the historical context in which it is used. According to some scholars the Koran contains over 100 violent verses. These tend to be against non-believers. As in historic or medieval Christianity there is a tendency to deal harshly with non-believers, thus we read in Quran 3:56: *"As to those who reject faith, I will punish them with terrible agony in this world and in the Hereafter, nor will they have anyone to help."* Quran 5:33 goes onto state: *"The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement"* The Koran also contains verses that counterbalance those stated above. For example: In Quran 16:91 we read: *Indeed, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonished you that you may take heed.* (Al Quran 16:91). Quran 55:61 states that “The reward of goodness is nothing but goodness.” Quran 18:29 provides a very different view on believers and unbelievers when it states: "The truth is from your Lord": it is the free will of any person to believe (in God) or to be an Infidel (Un believer).

Post Quranic Islam

Islam, like Christianity has a mixed history of peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims and within the Muslim world. Set against the context of European medieval intolerance, the Muslim Spanish period was a model for interfaith harmony. It would be a mistake to read “interfaith harmony: through Western Twenty-first century eyes. In this case, harmony means that non-Muslims paid an extra tax and suffered some degradation but were neither expelled nor murdered. We can say the same, or better, for the Ottoman period in Turkey. On the other hand, Islam has had a great deal of hostility not only

toward non-Muslims but also between Muslims. The current period of violence within the Muslim world impacts Muslims as much or to a greater degree than it impacts non-Muslims can be seen as part of the ongoing Sunni –Shiah struggles. It should be noted that, just as in the case of Protestant-Catholic hostilities, these struggles are more geo-economic-political than theological in nature

The following table provides a philosophical and ideological summary of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Although the table seeks to provide overarching principles, exceptions can be found in each faith community for each principle.

Table 1: Summary of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam Basic Principles

Religious tradition	Judaism	Christianity	Islam
World-Oriented	This world	Next world	Next world
Exclusivity of salvation	No	Yes	Yes
Emphasis on	Actions	Belief	Belief
Oriented toward national/peoplehood versus Religious	National	Religious	Mixture
Violent phrases restricted to specific period of history (close ended)	Yes	Yes/No	No
Concept of Messianism	Future date for the arrival of either a person or a Messianic time period.	Jesus arrived as the Messiah, but as the world was not ready, He will return	Non-God Messiah who converts the world to the true faith of Islam

Secularism

Although most people argue that the three Abrahamic traditions form the western world's moral traditions, in reality there is a secular tradition that like Judaism is more philosophical than theological. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore fully the role of violence in the nature of humanity. Because secularism is almost a religion without God, we cannot ignore it. Secularism may be the overriding religion of the 20th and 21st century. Just as in the case of classical, God oriented religions it has its icons, its belief system, and its ideology. Just as in the case of other religious ideals, secularists now have a litany of sins. For example, many secularists do not tolerate those who would question the notion of climate change, or liberalism. Universities today have no greater free speech than did institutions under the Inquisition and although there no longer exists a sacrificial cult; the state has now replaced the church as the center of sacrifice. Any chapter on religion's impact on violence, however, must begin by asking the question are humans violent by nature, and is this inherent violent streak in humans changeable? Do humans need specific rules and guidelines to prevent violence and if so, whose rules? The noble prize winning British author, William Golding best exemplifies this position in his novel *Lord of the Flies*. As Paul Berman has stated: In the 'realist' picture of the world, wars break out because some nation's desire for wealth, power and geography, brushes up against some other nation's equally tangible desire for the same." (Berman, p.9)

The opposing position, one of perfectibility, reflects the notion that we are in process of truly becoming fully "human" and with the proper guidance and/or luck, and/or evolution we can overcome violence. Thus, both classical Jewish and Christian thought have argued in favor of the notion that, at some point in time, the "lamb will lay down with the lion, and that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they study war anymore. (See: Isaiah 11:16 and Isaiah 2:4). The following is a short review of some of the classical major social thinkers in Western society.

Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). His most important book "Leviathan" argues that it is the nature of man to be violent. Hobbes sees the state of nature as a "war of all against all". From Hobbes' perspective, nature is in constant turmoil. Thus, the French social critic Raymond Aron says of Montesquieu's critic of Hobbes: 'man abandoned to his desires finds himself immediately at variance with his fellow creatures, Hobbes found himself logically compelled to justify that political absolutism which alone is capable of imposing peace and affording security to a quarrelsome species" (Aron: p. 56). From Hobbes' perspective any form of organization that intends to eradicate violence is purely utopian. To be human is to be violent and the only questions are: how violent and under what conditions.

Marx and Marxists

The Marxist view of violence may be best understood as a blending between the Hobbesian concept that humans are continually at war with each other and the Messianic viewpoint that at least some human beings are perfectible. Marx never envisioned Isaiah's model of the lamb lying down with the lion. Instead, he saw the lambs (proletariat) lying down with other lambs once the lion is done away with. The Marxist view also accepts this view of perfectibility. In it there are two groups of people: the proletariat, which is by nature good, and the bourgeois, which is by nature evil. Marxists argue that a time will come when there will be proletariat control, a new human prototype will be born, and this new prototype will be fundamentally different from human beings of past ages. Peter Worsley writes the following about the proletariat: "the proletariat was thus to be an agency of general human liberation, not a force setting up yet another form of class society for its own sectional benefit, even if that section might be the majority in society" (Worsley: p. 88)

It is easy to understand how Marxist thought can become an underpinning of terrorism. In the Marxist view of the world, good and evil live side by side, until the good finally defeats evil. Marx does not provide for compromise: the bourgeois is by its very nature evil and either the proletariat does away with it or the proletariat will live in eternal economic slavery. In Marxist thought there is a clear distinction between good and evil. These two opposing forces are in a continual battle and it is the responsibility of the children of light (the proletariat) to destroy the children of darkness (the bourgeois) so that the children of light (proletariat) cannot only survive but also thrive. Thus, Marxist thought is based on the concept that the end, a Messianic state, justifies whatever evil needs to be committed toward this goal and that compromise with others (bourgeois) is in itself evil.

Nietzsche

Perhaps no book has had as much influence on modern western thought regarding our concepts of good and evil as has Friedrich Nietzsche's book: *Beyond Good and Evil*. It is ironic that reading Nietzsche we can see that Nietzsche tried to unmask much of the hypocrisy of Western (read German) social thought. His expression that: "God is dead", however, became part of the fascist model in which in a world without God all was possible. In Part IV of *Beyond Good and Evil*: #76, Nietzsche writes: In peaceful conditions, the warlike man will attack himself. [Unter friedlichen Umständen fällt der kriegerische Mensch über sich selber her.]

Nietzsche's perspective is not that far from that of Hobbes and to some extent reflects the late 19th century French sociologist David Emile Durkheim. In many ways Durkheim's

concepts on morality interweave themselves both with Nietzsche and Marx. Paul Carls, in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, has written about Durkheim that: “Durkheim was keen to distinguish two elements of morality, both equally important to moral behavior. On the one hand, there is the morality of the group, which exists objectively and outside of the individual. On the other hand there is the individual’s way of representing this morality. Indeed, there are moral rules created by society that exert a pressure on the individual, but each individual expresses the morality of their society in their own way. It is impossible for any individual to exactly translate the moral conscience of society, which means that even where moral conformity is the most complete, the individual still retains an individual moral conscience and has a hand in adding elements of their personality to society’s moral codes.”
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/durkheim/>

Air Power, Secularism and Terrorism

The Geneva Convention

In the Twentieth and Twenty-first centuries warfare has moved from battles that took place between kings and armies to battles between nations. The use of air power changed the nature of war in that civilians were no longer. Prior to the use of airpower there were civilian casualties; conquering armies carried off innocent civilians, raped captured women and turned men and women into slaves. These acts were simply part of the “bounty of war”. What distinguishes an air war from a ground war is that (1) buildings and people were destroyed from afar and (2) the opposing soldier neither sees nor knows the victim. Air power is destruction from afar. We can argue that the dropping of the atomic bomb marks the culmination stage of violence. The pilots who dropped the bomb, did so from thousands of feet above the surface of the earth, and within seconds had left the scene. Air power became an antiseptic form of destruction not only of the enemy’s armed forces but also of spreading of terror to the enemy’s home front.

Partially as a reaction to the horrors of World War II some 64 nations met from the beginning in 1947 until 1949 to establish what is now called the Fourth Geneva Convention. Starting in the early 1920’s the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has pushed the idea that war could be regulated, and that the theater of war should be separate from the civilian theater. The document’s basis lay in its assumption that nations can separate war/warriors from non-combatants and local civilian areas, and that there were innocents in war who should not suffer what has come to be known as “collateral damage”. Due to the horrors of World War II these 64 nations under the auspicious of the ICRC established guidelines that touched on:

- The condition of the wounded and sick combatants in the Field;

- The condition of the wounded, sick and shipwrecked combatants at sea;
- The treatment of prisoners of war;
- The protection of civilians and non-combatants in times of war.

By setting guidelines these texts taken together assume that (1) violence is a condition of human life, (2) that violence can be regulated, (3) that war does exist, (4) that there are rules to war, (5) there exists a class of people called combatants and another class that we may call civilians or non-combatants, (6) that both classes “enjoy” specific rights and protections and are to be treated according to these proscribed articles of faith. From this perspective war is not a form of social and political anarchy, but rather a governable condition, more akin to a sporting match than a free-for-all. The assumption that there is such a thing, as international law and therefore nations do not reign supreme means that it is assumed that all nations prescribe to the same set of standards in order to be considered a part of the family of nations. Reading the articles in the Geneva Convention more than 70 years later we can understand how these conventions were a reaction to the horrors of World War II, and that they have been selectively enforced.

Twentieth Century Commentaries on War

On the website of the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) a page is found on the ethics of war. The BBC begins with the question: "Is it immoral to kill civilians in war?... This question has become more important during the last 100 years because a century ago most people killed in wars were professionals””

The statement itself is somewhat problematic as it is highly European-centric and seems to ignore many of the battles that took place both in the Americas and in the Ancient world. As noted above the Biblical text did not view captives, be they male or female, as protected non-combatants. In fact the Biblical text may be more similar to actual combat scenes in much of the world than the BBC’s idealized statements. The BBC notes that

- At the beginning of the twentieth century only 10%-15% of those who died in war were civilians.
- In World War 2 more than 50% of those who died were civilians.
- By the end of the (Twentieth) century over 75% of those killed in war were civilians.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/war/just/whom_1.shtml

Table 2

A Comparison between Biblical Rules of War, the Geneva Convention and Modern

Terrorism

Action	Bible	Geneva Convention	World War II	Terrorism
Killing of Innocent Civilians	Yes, under control circumstances	No	Bombing with collateral deaths	Yes
Use of sick and children as weapons	No	No	Yes-No	Yes
Forcing children to become soldiers	No	No	No	Yes
Prohibition on Collateral damage	No	Yes	No	No

The BBC Code of Ethics, using the Geneva Convention as its guide, notes that: “civilians are not to be subject to attack. This includes direct attacks on civilians and indiscriminate attacks against areas in which civilians are present.” This code has presented modern armies with a number of problems included among these are:

- Who is an innocent non-combatant?
- Who is a combatant?
- What role do military hospitals play?
- What role does a person working in an arms factory play? Is such a person a combatant or a civilian or both?
- Is any form of bombing legitimate?
- How do we deal with armies that place themselves within a civilian population? In such a case is it the opposing army that is at fault or is the defending army the guilty party as it has now turned the local civilian population into human shields?
- How do we define a person who is fighting? Do guerrilla forces act as offensive personnel?
- Does a citizen of a neutral country helping a nation at war take on the role of a combatant?

From a tourism perspective in the case of the outbreak of war, how does a country handle to enemy visitors from the opposing nation? Are these tourists and/or visitors held as ransom or merely permitted to leave and return home?

Those who argue that terrorism is just one other legitimate instrument of war, take the position that all citizens of an enemy are combatants and therefore they are legitimate targets.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

One of the greatest modern moral problems is the issue of mass bombings or use of a weapon of mass destruction. On one side of the equation, there is the argument that mass bombings, or the use of weapons of mass destruction, such as a nuclear bomb are a form or state terrorism. Certainly thousands of people died from allied bombings of German cities or the US decision to use atomic bombs against Japan. On the other side of the equation are two issues: (1) the need to first take care of one's own soldiers and (2) the issue that if these weapons had not been used, then World War II not only would have been prolonged but that many additional people would have died. From this perspective the Biblical Principal of Eyen tachat Eyen, shen tachat shen (eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth) may be helpful. The term is usually mistranslated as "en eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, that is punish the guilty part with the same act. This translation, however, is incorrect. What the original Hebrew text is saying is make the punishment equal to the crime, that is no more or less sever than the crime warrants. From this perspective there is an attempt to use an act of violence to prevent worse violence. Morality is judged on a sliding scale of justice. The use of the term is also meant to eliminate the concept of vengeance and of moral equivalency (see below). Furthermore, the Biblical text takes into account that warfare is not black and white but rather violence comes in shades of gray. The Biblical account would seem to accept what is today commonly called in military circles: "the doctrine of the double effect". This doctrine accepts the principle that an army base (or a terrorism cell) that places itself in the midst of a heavily populated civilian zone must accept or at least share the responsibility for innocent civilian casualties. The placement of the base or cell in such a civilian zone in fact is turning the civilian population into human hostages for purposes of shielding combatants. There is, however, a major philosophic difference between an army that attempts to use precision weapons to stop an aggressor and the aggressive use of weapons of mass destruction in which civilians are hurt or killed.

Although the Bible did not consider issues of mass destruction in the modern sense, there are parallels that may offer guidance. For example in the Book of Exodus we find the use of plagues as a means of ending Egyptian slavery. Yet even here there are differences. In the case of the plagues, the Egyptian government was warned, and the option of permitting Israelite freedom was always available. To some extent the plagues acted under the assumption that all of Egypt had joined in the slave effort and therefore all of

Egypt had to be considered as combatants. Certainly parallels can be made with the war efforts on both sides of World War II. Based, in part on the writings of the Italian General, Giulio Douhet, both sides in World War II took the position that in a total war, there was no difference between any of a nation's citizens: all were at war and all were combatants. With minimal exceptions, during World War II both the axis countries and the allies involved their total populations in their own war effort. The Germans had no problem bombing England in the hope of destroying national moral, and the Allies used their air power to carpet bomb Germany in the hope of bringing the war to its conclusion at a faster rate and in so doing saving not only their own soldiers' lives but also the lives of those being murdered in concentration camps. The assumption was that a nation's cities were its weakest points and therefore, from Douhet's perspective, a nation should attack its enemy's cities from the air, causing the maximum damage at the least cost to the attacking nation.

Conclusions

This paper works under the assumption that ideologies be they religious or secular in nature, motivate human actions. Men and women die both for and due to belief systems. Soldiers and terrorists, people of faith and people of a secular nature all act out of an ideological approach. Religion is one manifestation of ideology. Reflecting the human condition we note that most religious ideologies have caring and violent streaks. The question is not whether religion leads to war, but rather can war be contained without the breaks of a moral and ethical system? Certainly there were many murdered by the crusades or inquisitors, but we can also find many more people murdered by people such as Genghis Kahn, the pogroms, Hitler or Stalin. Furthermore, a review of history makes us wonder how many used religion as an excuse or cover to justify economic or political goals.

Terrorism is not an easy topic to place into a slot within a morality graphic. Terrorism clearly fits into the concept that humanity has a violent streak. Within this article we have determined that:

- 1) There is a major difference between micro level violence on the macro and micro levels. We can legislate what nations on the macro level do, we can also legislate how nations regulate their own citizens, but we cannot regulate how groups choose to hurt others simply for having been born. Both secular laws and religious laws attempt to regulate violence and neither so far has succeeded in wiping out violence.
- 2) Terrorism has a tendency to be racist. It attacks its victims not due to their personal philosophy or political tendency but rather on the base of the victim's religion, race, or nationality. Where ideologies show exclusivity, the "our blood

is redder than the others' blood" then ideologies tend to adapt racist attitudes. This racism may be in the form of religion or out-of-control nationalism.

- 3) We must be careful not to play the numbers game. For each case of terrorism whose ideological roots are based in a religious doctrine, we can also find forms of terrorism based in other ideological doctrines such as Marxism and nationalism.
- 4) To choose not to destroy evil is in and of itself evil, thus there are societies that have made a conscious choice to use evil in order to gain political advantage. Each of these societies has found an ideological underpinning, be that underpinning religious or secular.
- 5) In wars there is collateral damage. There is however a major difference between choosing to bring about the destruction of innocent civilians and the accidental death of innocent civilians. While in both cases unjust death does occur, the two should not be confused.

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ⁱ <http://news.yahoo.com/calls-jihad-martyrdom-during-ramadan-192227321.html> (June 27, 2015)

ⁱⁱ Durkheim, E. (1979) *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. G. Simpson (ed.), J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson (transl.). New York: The Free Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/06/23/new-low-isis-reportedly-gives-away-sex-slaves-as-prizes-in-koran-contest/> June 23, 2015

^{iv} Originally these books were seen as separate books and it is only much later that they were considered to be a single book.

^v The modern Hebrew word (dat) for “religion” is actually a loan word from ancient Persian and meaning “law”.

^{vi} Hazony, Yoram, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012