

Similarity

On Misogyny & Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary World

An Essay in Four Parts

By Norman “Nourollah” Gabay

English Translation by Payman Akhlaghi

لطفاً نسخه فارسی این نوشتار را در فایل همراه ملاحظه فرمایید.

Similarity	1
Part I	1
Part II.....	7
Part III	12
Part IV	18
Conclusion	24

Part I

Our beliefs reflect our understanding...

I read recently in an article on misogyny worldwide, entitled in Persian *Why the Violence Against Women Is a Global Issue?*, that even as today, 43% of women in 48 European countries have experienced violence; and that 1 in 3 Australian women has experienced physical violence. Considering my own bitter observations and learned experience regarding the grotesque treatment of some women in the Middle East, I realized that in its dominant pattern, the chronic and hereditary disease of misogyny is unexpectedly but considerably similar to another illness of the type, i.e. the traditional and religious anti-Semitism that pervades the entire globe. Both

women and the Jews around the world are constantly taken advantage of. And both are often made into scapegoats for a host of problems, whether they be political, social, economic, or the worst and mightiest of all, religious or even familial quagmires, whereas those problems have had nothing to do with these two sectors. Altogether, there emerges some shocking resemblance between these two despicable ills worldwide.

Women constitute approximately 50% of the global population, while the tiny band of Jews make up for only about 0.2% or two-thousandth of the entire human population. Yet, both women and the minuscule Jewish people with their miniature country, namely Israel, continue as before to be subjected to discrimination, ceaselessly and unfairly. History, especially **the history of religion**, attests that as their first step to phony power, every cruel oppressor has managed to take advantage of these two chronic, available, tangible and global ills, that is, **misogyny** and **anti-Semitism**, and to apply them as means to trample justice and to achieve their inhumane goals. Meanwhile, in a sad irony, the tolerance if not the indifference of the reasonable people has in turn helped advance such monsters!

As we saw, the pillars of the Pahlavi dynasty and the foundation of peace in Iran were fractured first when the perpetrators of certain evident murders — such as the horrific murder of Dr. Sulayman Berjis, a Bahai member of Kashan, or the heinous assassination of Ahmad Kasravi inside the Justice Ministry building during the Pahlavi era — they were not only acquitted on religious grounds, but also they were recognized even as heroes, a phenomenon which in itself led to further encourage the criminals and nourish their disastrous growth. Likewise, centuries earlier in France, that “Cradle of Civilization,” by the same religious philosophy, the young and beautiful Joan of Arc was burned alive at the stake by the command of the Church, just because she dressed herself like men. They fed her to the flames, like so many other innocent people, before the holy Church and in the presence of the holy fathers, these self-proclaimed promoters of religion, kindness and tolerance. And everybody cheered, and they all went on to commit ever more atrocities.



As the thinker **Steven Weinberg** said, and I paraphrase, “With or without religion, good people could do good things and bad people could do evil. But for the good people **to do evil in the guise of good** — that takes religion.” This has been the **philosophy of religion in the culture of the cruel people everywhere**, who commit incredible crimes, some day in the name of woman, and another day in the name of a religion or a sect. The **Dalai Lama** said it justly, and I paraphrase, that the ugliest thing for politics to do is to impose the most unwise person as wise and informed upon the people. If so, crying out aloud when politics and religion join hands together! Nazism attacked and invaded so many countries, killed hundreds of thousands of their children, and destroyed their cities to ruins. Yet, in those very places across Europe and elsewhere, in countries with claims to civilization, many European citizens, particularly in Hungary and Poland, did the unthinkable. Like the women who cooperate with the misogynists to suppress other women, these people joined the cursed Nazis in anti-Semitism and collaborated in their criminals acts. Similarly, in the post-revolutionary Iran, they executed her honor Dr. Farrokhroo Parsa, the meritorious Minister of Education during the Pahlavi era, that queen of dignity and humanity, even as the perpetrators of the crime shouted in “praise of God”. The words of **Václav Havel**, the author, thinker and former President of Czechoslovakia, aptly apply, who once explained that we could measure people, societies and states by the way they treated the minorities who lived among them; and thence, we could decide whether to call them civilized and indeed “human”.

Socrates is quoted to the effect that, “As you soar in life, your friends will know who you were. But when you fall, you’ll realize who your friends are.” These wise words apply well to the bitter experience of the Jewish people.

I ask whence so much religious, sexist and other types of cruelty and discrimination have originated from. I ask by what power the reasonable people have been trampled under the reign of the ignorant misogynists and anti-Semites, and how this ominous phenomenon has persisted so far. Our answer is as follows: **by the power of religion, by the means of the conditional and contradictory content of the religious books, and by the seal of holiness!** Even as some people emulate the example of some past prophets and present religious figures, be it in misogyny or anti-Semitism, and even as they continue to teach and promote those outdated writings, it should come as no surprise that every day, a girl is beaten or even murdered in the hands of her father, brother or husband, by the command of the religion, devoid of all

punishment for the perpetrators of the crimes. Likewise, on any given day, a group of people who think differently suffer incredible cruelties in the hands of the criminal oppressors, and they are destroyed, in the name of one religion or another sect. There are many people who still support and praise the oppressors endlessly on grounds of the “holy texts”, and worst of all, who teach much seditious content in the name of promoting the religion! Is there any solution to this ill? The solution is **to remove the entire seditious content of the sacred texts of all religions.** This could be done by the force of **Time**, by our wish, and by the will of our families, yours and mine.

Certainly, some people will object, that it’s neither permissible nor possible to even imagine for such a theory to be realized, that is, to correct or remove the content incompatible with the contemporary understanding, and to bring them in accord with modern science, even if that is meant to elevate and help them survive as a whole — because the essence of religion is unchanging.

For long, I too imagined as much, and I dared not express my thoughts, until I realized that the *Holy Torah* itself, in *Deuteronomy*, Chapter 17, had issued such exact permission as I sought. In a passage that reflects its miraculously liberal stance and foresight, the book commands the reader to follow, under certain circumstances, the verdict of the contemporary judges, and thus, it validates the notion of keeping step with every era. Even the *Gemara* says, “*savrA hu le-mah li karA*”¹— meaning that “not everything has to be written.” For, the word of reason needs no decree, provided it wouldn’t contradict the *Torah*. That is, the law, the teacher, or the parents, they won’t always be breathing down our neck. But instead, the Almighty gave humankind the faculty of intellect, so that at every step, we could consult our own reason to tell the proverbial pothole from the road, and we would act by the command of the Conscience, i.e. God’s representative embedded in humankind. Clearly, those with little intelligence and lots of faith, they’re the most dangerous enemies of the religion and the religious people! The murders and massacres of the world, past and present, they’ve all been aimed at defending the unreasonable beliefs of such people, whose actions have brought the entire philosophy of religion under question. As **Einstein** said, and I paraphrase, “No law can be superior to those who execute it.” **Let’s consult our own intellect.** Such ridiculous matters as the saga of the “*kosher* elevator” are

¹ סברא הוא למה לי קרא, it’s an Aramaic expression which can be closely translated as, “There’s an interpretation to what I read,” or “What was read to me has an explanation,” or “It’s an explanation to what I read.” (Tr.)

neither reasonable, nor something to be proud of. To the contrary, it was by following the aforementioned command of *Deuteronomy* that they managed to void and forbid 323 of the 613 holy commands; and by the command of evolution, all religions shall be required to follow suit. Sadly, many a person who reads things without understanding, accepts things without knowing, and mistakes imitation for religious observance.

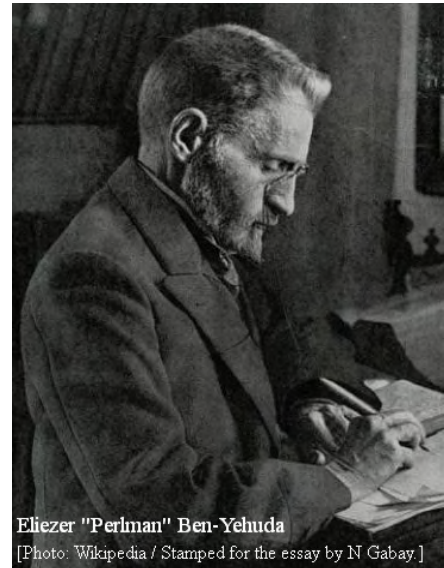
Faith is a gift of God. But we ask, “Faith in what?” The air too is a gift of God; but what air and how much of it?

A man had married too close a relative — a tradition with roots in the ages of the Diaspora. They scolded him that the *Holy Torah* did not see it right to marry certain close relatives. The man, unheeding of what the word “incest” meant, replied, “Although the *Torah* has mentioned a few relations, not for once it has named this type!” It’s clear that “people can understand things only so far as one’s mind can grasp.” Rather, he should’ve been reminded of what we cited from the *Gemara*, “*savrA hu le-mah li karA*” — not everything has to be written. Let’s consult our own reason. Granted, it’ll be nearly impossible to fix or delete all seditious content from the religious texts in a world so full of contradictions. Yet, a practical solution remains: we could remove such stains from the minds of people by preventing the nonsense from being taught or promulgated by the parents and teachers.

Romain Rolland said, “**Make me suffer by the truth, but sooth me not with a lie.**” One problem with the scriptures which has led to much incitement, and which continues to make things worse than they are, it’s been the conditionality of many of their commands. For instance, somewhere the book says, “Thou shall not murder!” Whereas in the subsequent pages, it orders, “Kill that certain person!” For thousands of years, the latter statement, even though it contradicts the primary commandment, has practically given the evil people the right to choose, has shown them the green light, and has remained a means of oppression in the hands of the seditious elements. Thus, the seditious person relies on a negative point, tramples humanity, and in the name of God, goes to fight someone who thinks differently, perchance his own righteous child. But thousands of years of bitter experience have been enough! These very “ifs” and “buts” tarnish the commandments in their entirety, whilst they make some ignorant imitators follow the prejudiced emulators.

I pondered how such change could be realized, and how we could eliminate the content incompatible with modern understanding by removing them from the public mind. I envisioned that the process would be likely approved by the reasonable people but opposed by the fundamentalists. I was reminded of the late Eliezer “Perlman” Ben-Yehuda,² whose name today adorns numerous streets in Israeli cities. Around 1885, Ben-Yehuda stepped forward all by himself to raise the status of the Hebrew language and to bring it up to date with the modern world. But the religious people subjected him to the worst of insults and accusations. They even made death threats against him, and to protest why he wished to make the *lAshon ha-kodesh* or the “Holy Language” into a daily tongue, they killed his dog! That ignorant bunch didn’t realize that “*lAshon ha-kodesh*” wasn’t merely a written script, but *lAshon* or “language” was our very word of reason.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda stood up to the opposition, and in 1889, he founded the Committee of the Hebrew Language, the precursor of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, whose members today include some of the greatest names in Israeli scholarship. Thanks to his efforts, modern Hebrew has been brought up to date, so far as only 20% of its vocabulary consists of the old Hebrew lexicon. If he hadn’t stepped forward to revive the Hebrew language, and had he not stood up to the challenges, Israel today would’ve been deprived of an official language. It’s wrong to call the superstitious people, those who worship some nonsense, as “religious”;



Eliezer "Perlman" Ben-Yehuda
[Photo: Wikipedia / Stamped for the essay by N Gabay.]

and that includes those who’ve been opposed to making Hebrew a world-class language, in order to preserve the “Holy Language”. Such people want Hebrew to continue decay in the museums, rather than to become a world-class language worthy of the modern times. To cite our forefathers, “O God! What ever you didn’t give to whom you endowed with the intellect! And what ever did you give to whom you deprived of it!”

I forewarn those who oppose resilience that **the world did not stop moving forward once the scriptures were received!** Instead, the world and its inhabitants, along with all books and

² Eliezer Yitzhak Perlman, a.k.a. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922), regarded as the father of modern Hebrew.

other writings, have continued to advance and evolve. To say that the religion is a hereditary issue, it's not to say that we should accept things without understanding, or practice things without knowing what they are. Let us each try personally and comprehend the commandments. Even as we are steadfast in our beliefs, let's avoid dogmatism, and let's remain resilient in practice.

As we mentioned, given that *Deuteronomy* commands us to follow the decision of the judges of the day, we could say that the *Holy Torah* is the most free-minded of all books. For in practice, it makes the reader understand that “to be alone and to stop, it is to die” — it's to regress, and to lose our way.³ Throughout the 2000 years of the Diaspora, having endured much hardship and oppression, the Jewish person was often forced to survive like water lilies upon the reeking waters of many swamps — **yet he or she never assumed the stench of the water.** Instead, relying on the Jewish culture, they endured those many centuries and they persisted to date, when they continue to sprout, grow and blossom upon clean waters.

Part II

To make the right decision, we need the right information. Thoughtless imitation will lead us astray.

As **Karl Popper** put it, and I paraphrase, “The passive and indifferent society **paves the road to crime, while the criminals are mere instruments of the crime.** The oppressor is not a person, but a culture, a certain way of life, the basis of which is defined as to attain power in a culture of domination and submission. It's certain that **the oppressors are not raised in the arms of the mothers, but in the embrace of the society.**”

All people are born pure and devoid of discrimination. It's the families and societies who can lead them to light or to darkness, in the name of religion and promoting it, or in any other guise.

As the German philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche** said in effect, “The worship of the sacred is the origin of dictatorship and totalitarianism.” To call anything “sacred” is to say that you no more have the right to express your opinion about it easily — unless you're a brave person from

³ The *Talmud* says, חֲבֵרֻתָא אוּ מִיתוּתָא, “*chevrutA o mitutA*”, i.e. “friendship with everyone or death.”

Kashan!⁴ — and that the slightest criticism of it could cost you heavily. The “sacred being” could be anything — a book, a person, a building, a marriage contract, or a theory — whereas nobody and nothing is indeed too sacred to be criticized. Well-placed criticism is different than fault-finding. Unreasonable people hate the critic, so far as they could fear an article to be published, for some of their beliefs aren’t quite defensible. Not long ago, every criticism of the religion was called “blasphemy”, because they couldn’t defend the religion on rational grounds. But the modern man’s understanding is different than that of people who lived 3000 years ago, or even a commentator a century ago. Increasingly today, most eyes and ears can see and hear better than before, and people will come to understand the commandments of the *Torah* as they were meant to be understood.

According to the *Talmud*, and I paraphrase, “Debating the religion leads to believing in the religion.” One global problem gripping the religious people in all societies, including our own community, is that the preachers of the nonsense pretend every criticism received to be an affront to the religion. Whereas “criticism” does not necessarily mean “repudiation”, but instead, justified criticism, such as what the author aims to make, they could be expressed to raise the status of the religion and to help bring it in agreement with modern science and understanding. Clearly, the disagreement between the author and other reasonable people on the one side with the fundamentalists on the other, it’s not a difference over the religion, for both sides aim to preserve and elevate the commandments of the *Torah*. Instead, our disagreement is about the differences in interpretation. When debated reasonably, the issue will lead undoubtedly to resolving the deficiencies, and the result would be in the interest of the entire society.

An enlightened **mystic** asked, “Do you need your friend because you love her, or do you love her because you need her?” **I said, “I have no needs, for I have her.”**

We have the reasonable commands of the *Torah*, and therefore, we love them. And **we need to preserve but *them*, instead of some nonsense put forth by certain commentators.** Keep in mind that a commentator is not the lawmaker. Sadly, however, we’ve seen how certain groups ignore the interpretations of such informed commentators as Maimonides, and instead, they lead the young minds, eager for religious observance, into the cages, on grounds of some pointless

⁴ As stereotypes go, it was said of the people of Kashan that they were easily frightened. The author, himself born in that Iranian city, makes a jab at that old prejudice. (Tr.)

commentaries. Whereas that is not the philosophy of the Jewish religion.⁵ I'm reminded of the words of the poet **Fereydoun Moshiri**, who aptly said,

**O lonely bird! This sad place is not the only cage:
When you're not free, the world entire is a cage.
As long as your wings are tied, until your vision remains blocked,
Everywhere, from the earth to the star-studded heaven, it's a cage.
As long as the ignorant rules the world,
In the eyes of the wise, everywhere is nothing but a cage.**

The most ignorant of all people spread discrimination. Discrimination is what turns into hatred, and hatred in turn leads to hostility. Our beliefs speak of our understanding, and our words are the showcase of our intellect and common sense. The power of a person's thoughts builds his or her identity, since our attitude is the decisive element, and our acts speak of our humanity. Strong societies look not at the title of the book or the speaker, but at the meaning of what is said. The progressive people are aware of their own inadequacies and those of their society, and they are proactive in resolving them. As a **poet** said,

**Why don't we ever know our interest?
Why do we merely dream of the house?
What plague may befall us, it'll be of our own doing!
Why do we follow the shepherd with closed eyes?**

What ever wrong did women and Jews commit to suffer discrimination, and what's the solution to this ill?

The patient complained to the psychologist, "I've endured all sorts of discrimination, and it has made me sick!" The doctor kindly said, "Be tolerant, resist, and laugh at the funny beard of miseries!" The patient moaned, "The problem is that my enemies don't all grow a beard!" The sad thing about those who suffer this ill, who discriminate between woman and man, or between different religions, it is that such people don't deal with reason. They are the unchanging lovers of some nonsense; and as the **Rumi** said, **"The water that met the sea, it won't return to the**

⁵ In *Mishnah, Pirkey Avot*, we read from Hillel the Sage, **וְלֹא מוֹסִיף יִסִּיף**, "*udla mossif yassif*," that is in effect, "Who does not add constantly to his (or her) knowledge, he will bring to an end what he already knows."

gutters! / Who fell crazy in love, he can't go back to sanity!" Alas, it's as if discrimination gets in with the infant's milk, and it leaves the body along with the soul. Thus, the question is how both women and Jews, given their particular circumstances, could fight against the two chronic illnesses discussed here and the diverse forms of injustice that result from discrimination. Misogyny and anti-Semitism may seem unrelated, but their resemblance is undeniable, and historic discrimination and injustice have been imposed on both groups on grounds of the scriptures. Let's keep in mind that the future will be what we make it to be. As such, let's start with ourselves and our families, and let's take firm steps against these two ills. Also, keep in mind that it's women who can eliminate misogyny, and who possess the power to act and to realize this imperative issue.

Mothers create the future. By **abandoning the hereditary religious and social traditions** which pertain to discriminating between the girls and the boys, from the outset of childhood, they can nip in the bud all discrimination between women and men, and by extension, they can bar all sorts of discrimination and hatred from the minds of the children and families. Unfortunately, however, to date in several countries including China and India, there are parents who abort the female fetus according to the ages of ignorance, and who may even bury them alive. When asked about their number of children, some parents exclude their daughter and claim, "Just one child!" The Iranian poetess **Parvin E'tessami** wrote beautifully,

**Today's daughters are the mothers of morrow;
From the mother, the greatness of children does flow.
Without a woman, the house lacks in love and compassion;
The chest wherein the heart has died,
Therein has withered the person's soul.
In no preface, nor in the text's body, ever wrote the Fate
Perfection for the man and flaw for the woman.
If Plato and Socrates were great, then great had been
Their nurse of the days of childhood.**

Every society has its share of superstitions and those who believe in them; and the more backward the society is, the larger those numbers would be. Even as today in the United States,

most buildings and elevators are missing the number 13 (*sic!*) as for instance, the 12th floor could be followed shockingly by the 14th, because many people deem the number 13 to be “bad omen”!

Are all of whom own such buildings superstitious? Not at all! But the owner is eager for and wanting of the rent payment, and lest she lose a superstitious tenant or buyer, she observes the custom in consideration of the others, even though she may ridicule in private such hollow beliefs. Sadly, such tolerance and consideration among all societies, in a variety of forms, have helped grow a diverse superstitious population. This has gone so far as the best and grandest hotels, in consideration of certain superstitious people, and lest they lose a customer, have implemented self-operating elevators on Saturdays, i.e. the days of Sabbath; and those who believe in such nonsense flaunt the phenomenon as a sign of their clout and a justification for their beliefs! As a scoundrel said, “A lie that is repeated becomes the truth in the eyes of many.” And superstitions are repeated lies. Consider, for instance, how some Iranians believe the owl to be bad omen, while in the United States, its presence is deemed a blessing, and even its sculptures adorn the living rooms — even though the owl is just a bird like any other.

In their fictitious world, such people misrepresent white as black, and they spread superstitions, in the name of God, religion and the like, such as the mind-boggling belief in the “good” or “evil eye”. Next, an uninformed crowd in turn approves of them, and gradually, the lies turn into absolute truths in the eyes of susceptible individuals! Thereafter, according to them, by the fantastic powers of the “evil eye”, a child falls sick, the chandelier dives from the ceiling, somebody’s car blows a tire on the freeway, and so forth!

Fortunately, the ladies have been shining brilliantly in a diverse range of ranks and roles, leaving behind the naysayers in shame. As I read in the papers, even as today, women constitute about 64% of the Iranian college and university students, and for the first time, the percentage of the female representatives in the United States Congress has risen up to 24%. Alas, some countries still have a long road ahead to women’s freedom, such as Saudi Arabia, where at some point in history the girls were buried alive. Why, some religious marriages have remained de facto synonymous with religiously sanctioned slavery or even the savagery of burying the girls alive.

Part III

I was a child when my mother started school at the age of 60!

My mother confronted those who referred to women as “home” or *za’eefeh*, literally “the weak female person”, those who on grounds of the scriptures (*sic!*) claimed that, “**Women are mentally handicapped!**” She argued against them, citing the progress made by modern women, showing them the merits of women, and comparing women against men as human versus human — and she did so with utmost competence. It made her so happy every time she heard a woman had been promoted to a high office. She had framed and mounted portraits of the ladies Golda Meir, the Prime Minister of Israel, and Dr. Farrokhroo Parsa, the Pahlavi era Minister of Education in her ministerial attire, on the wall in her room. She was so proud of them.

Mother had experienced an era when a large number of men thought of “marriage” as an act of “purchasing a slave”, an era when exchanging coins, deciding on the size of the *mehrieh* — i.e. the “bride-price”, or more literally “the worth of love” — haggling over the “deal”, and so on, while the marriage contract was being negotiated, they all reeked of the age of slave trade. She had lived through an era when basically the daughter had no rights to choose, to express her ideas, or to defend herself. Sadly, decades later, similar conditions persist in too many parts of the world.



As we can see, the above description wasn’t so different than the condition of minorities, because no minority had the right or the possibility of defending themselves against the majority.

Alas, a mistaken crowd still continues to misrepresent observing the cultures of the ages of slavery as “religious observance”. They give the male sex the right to tell women what to wear or where to sit, going so far as requiring women to wear wigs and to remain at all times behind opaque partitions at festive ceremonies! Really, do women carry contagious diseases to be quarantined?!

I very well remember how parents applied distasteful make-up to their beautiful daughters and made them wear in poor style. They made their children look ugly on purpose to avert the attention of the savage spirits, and to protect them against the trespass of indecent men.

The author believes that generally, the philosophy of *hijab* or “modest clothing”, the whole idea of covering women, it originated in that same idea of protection. Although clearly, it has no direct relation to religion, it’s been invested with a religious aspect to obligate its practice. It should be noted, however, that the more insecurity women are faced with, the more backward that environment, city or country is, and the more strictly the *hijab* is enforced there. Even as today, by comparing how women’s modesty covering is observed among different groups or lands, we can gain much insight into the degree of insecurity, the potential for violation, the mindset of those in charge of the affairs, and the mentality of the hunters who’re lurking behind the bushes.

For instance, in the Afghanistan of Taliban, women are covered literally head to toe, so far as only a tiny window is left open in the headwear to let them see and breathe. In some other countries, women’s eyes are the only parts of the body to be visible, and they’re forbidden to leave home without their husband — or rather, their “bodyguard” — in company!

Some zoos lock the animals in cages while people walk freely, whereas some others have the people inside the cage to watch the animals roam free. The comparison applies rather well to the situation with *hijab*, for in the ages of ignorance, when the savage men could not be controlled, women instead were confined to the cage of *hijab*. Tragically, that antiquated mentality has persisted to this date — because as of yet, not everybody has become “human”.

In the process of acquiring modern knowledge, the priority should be given to abandoning the outdated beliefs that disagree with modern civilization and understanding. Otherwise, an educated person who believes in superstitions could be more dangerous than the layman. Should the current trend persist, families will one day wake up only to find their children and

grandchildren gone astray. They'll find them mistaking some delusions related to religious and sexist discriminations for "religious observance", determined to prove right the misogynistic manhood and to establish an intolerant religious practice, one that is hostile to whoever thinks differently. There'll be no exception. The ultimate solution lies in prevention. What we can do is to look after the minds of children from their earliest days, and thus, to forewarn and protect the future generation against enduring again the frustration and suffering that would ensue misogyny and anti-Semitism. We could teach our children that "to be human" depends on "humanity", that the philosophy of religion is all about observing this principle, and that the rest are mere excuses.

In the past, an illiterate and ignorant man would take priority over the woman, according to the words of certain commentators, and by the virtue of being male. Why, until the recent past, many women had a lesser share of their legitimate parental inheritance, by the decree of the religion (*sic!*), and sometimes they might not even receive a share whatsoever. Likewise, merely on grounds of their own beliefs, many people saw themselves entitled to rule over the other believers. Ignorance toward the philosophy of religion has pervaded the adherents of all religions, and a mentality of "reading without understanding" has persisted among them, rendering who imitates the better as "the more religious". Often such people don't understand the meaning of the text at all, yet they read through it aloud at the speed of sound, and rather unintelligibly — and to this day, they've been praised for it! Obviously, **an incomplete knowledge is worse than ignorance**. Reading things without understanding the words has born no fruit other than a flock of sacred parrots who've nested in the temples! The phenomenon is true of all religions, since the absolute majority of the adherents of religions don't understand the language of their holy books. Thence, we could see a weakness of religious observance today, that is, "a lack of understanding of the religion." And we would weep for the countless innocent victims of this catastrophe throughout history, a tragedy with no end in sight.

I can't imagine that any other nation has served humanity, and the phenomenon of Theology, as much as the Jewish people have, relative to their population. But also, I don't believe that any other nation throughout history has been subjected to more oppression than the Jews have because of their religion. No nation but the Jewish people has lost six million of its beloved members — a vast group of absolutely innocent people — merely because of their belief, and an inherited belief at that (*sic!*), at one stage, and as the world watched in silence. Alas, scores of the anti-Semites exist to date who discriminate against the Jewish people — similar to the

rigid-minded misogynists, **who citing whatever they read in the scriptures**, may go so far as discriminating against their own mother, sister, wife or daughter. The anti-Semites may even be jealous of the Jewish poverty (*sic!*) out of contempt for this people, who ironically, had offered them Monotheism in the first place.

Anti-Semitism and misogyny are not two mere political ills. They are also religious diseases with roots in the monotheistic scriptures and their contradictions, which in part include some seditious content that pertain to sexist as well as religious and sectarian discrimination. It should come as no surprise that some people foolishly humiliate the other religions to make themselves look good. Such people never understood what the **poet** expressed so beautifully,

**Don't shame the others to endear yourself,
For they'd turn into the thorns on your path.**

As of now, at the traditional schools known as *maktab*, and inside the elementary school classrooms, including those in Iran, certain seditious beliefs are taught under “religious subjects” — e.g. “those who follow other religions are not humans, and they resemble pigs!” — whereas such nonsense has been alien to the Iranian people’s thought. Given the current situation, the future of children falls into the hands of their parents, and it’ll depend on how they would react to such rubbish. Until finally, as **Saadi** put it, **“humankind arrives at a point where he sees but only God;”** until when everyone understands what **Gandhi** said, and I paraphrase, that “sadly, humanity is a religion with far fewer followers;” until mothers everywhere, prior to all traditions, lifestyles and religions, raise their children as “humans” — until then, the present tragic state will persist as before.

I’m reminded of **Dr. Viktor Frankl**, one of the very few victims of Nazism who managed to survive the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, that monstrous human furnace of a slaughterhouse. Dr. Frankl wrote touchingly and most influentially on the ordeal, and more, in his classic autobiography and treatise on Logotherapy, entitled *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

I’m reminded of a *Memo*⁶ that shares so much with Frankl’s experience, a historic document perhaps by an unknown author, as if addressed to the educators around the world, which reads in part:

⁶ *Memo* written by a principal to his teachers on the first day of school, quoted in *Teacher and Child* by Haim Ginott, in *Congruent Communication*, Macmillan, NY, 1972. See Judy Mitchel, *Children of Holocaust* at Jstor.org.

“I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no person should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education.

“My request is: Help your children become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths or educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.”⁷

Make humans of your children and students before you would educate them as doctors, engineers, or religious people. Most everybody could become a physician or an engineer if they put a few years of hard work into it. But to help them see their “humanity” as their most valuable asset, it’s an achievement that no diploma could be compared to.

Indeed, who is the most conscientious, he or she is the most religious of people; and the best of mothers raise their children as humans, devoid of all hatred and discrimination. Today’s “World War” is taking place between science and ignorance, and between humankind and the humanoids.

But what was the Jew’s fault to suffer discrimination, and to be taken advantage of like a toy?

Besides the diverse effects of the negative content found in the religious books of the anti-Semites, the ill of anti-Semitism is essentially an excuse — and an excuse needs no cause, nor does it know any limits. Sometimes, anti-Semitism has been a means to make false accusations; and at other times, it’s been an instrument to seize the wealth of the victims, to trample their rights, or to commit a host of other crimes. As **Einstein** said, and I paraphrase, “With the whole might of the cosmos, we cannot travel back in time even as little as a second. But we can learn from mistakes of the past for the benefit of the future.” Anti-Semitism today, especially since the regained independence of the State of Israel, stems in major part from the longstanding intolerance of our enemies toward the rights of the Jewish people. Since for thousands of years, the Jew had no right nor a chance to defend themselves, our enemies today can’t seem to bear the thought of recognizing this basic right for the Jewish people — even though, fortunately, it’s

⁷ Ibid. Also see <https://www.holocaustandhumanity.org/about-us/educational-philosophy/>.

been a done deal, and as the poet said, “the vase shattered to pieces, and the oil’s spread on the soil!”

In the decades of 1940’s and 1950’s, the United Nations, with support from the United States, voted Yes to the independence of several countries, including India, Pakistan, Israel and the Arabian sector; and a group of the member states of the U.N. recognized these new states.

But the Arabs refused to accept their designated country. Subsequently, mere months after the independence of Israel, which was achieved about the same time as the vote of independence for India, Pakistan, and the others, five major Arab states attacked this newborn country.

The assailant Arabs thought in vain to keep their hands free to massacre the Jews who lived next to the Arab population. Therefore, they distributed fliers and asked the Arabs who lived then in Israel to leave the country temporarily, and to return once the invading states had pushed and thrown the Jews into the sea. As such, hundreds of thousands of the Arabs left Israel in hopes of coming back soon and seizing the Jewish homes and so forth. This group entered the Arab countries that bordered Israel, from Jordan to Lebanon and Syria; and as we know, once the assailing countries failed in their ominous plans, they never returned to Israel. In contrast, the Arabs who stayed in the country at the time, they’ve continued to enjoy the Israeli freedoms and to utilize the government privileges and benefits. They live in comfort, like the other Israeli citizens, so far as they’re incomparable to the Arabs in any other Arab country.

The nascent Jewish state was deprived of exorbitant oil revenues and the like. Yet, within a short period, it absorbed and resettled scores of immigrants, more than 10 times its population. That included about one million Jews whose properties had been confiscated before they were exiled empty-handed from the Arab countries. In contrast, the 22 Arab states didn’t want to resettle the innocent refugees and others who had fled during the war. As such, the latter group went on to stay in numerous camps, and to be manipulated each day since by various entities. In the meantime, the world placed the blame on the Jewish state, whereas Israel had never invaded another state, but instead, she had merely acted in self-defense. However, as we noted, the anti-Semites have never recognized the Jewish person’s right to defend themselves. Despite such adversity, the budding state of Israel defeated her old and seasoned foes, for the Jewish people took strength from the intellect, whereas the Arabs possessed mere power without the thought.

Hope has been the secret to Jewish survival, and the Spiritual Power and Science have been our refuge throughout history, so far as the contemporary circumstances permitted.

The Jew has suffered and learned from a diverse range of miseries, and given that experience, he or she has aimed to illuminate and to prepare his or her mind. The story of the Jewish people reads as an example of a sweet tale in verse by the **Rumi** about a painting contest between the Roman and Chinese artists.

In Book One of the *Mathnavi* we read how two teams of Chinese and Roman artists were set up to compete against one another. The King assigned a separate house to each team, and as they demanded, he provided the Chinese with a plentiful of paint in hundreds of colors from the royal treasury. But the other team had a different idea. Rather than using paint, the Romans chose to polish away the rust off of the walls. Behind closed doors, they filed and polished all the surface, until it was smooth and clear like a mirror. At the end, the Romans' ingenious work overshadowed the great art of the Chinese in the eyes of the King, because everything appeared more magnificent when they were reflected in the walls.

The poet explains that “color is like a cloud, whereas to be colorless is to be the moon.” And he concludes that “the Romans were the mystics, devoid of repetition, the craft or the book,” who “polished their chests” and “purged all greed, meanness, jealousy and hatred” from their hearts.⁸

Jews have been the Romans of our tale. They managed to depend on themselves, and by the way of their science, they've served the world several times over their share in population. They have won a remarkable number of the much coveted Nobel Prizes, and they have arrived where their tiny fledgling country of Israel, next to the major global powers, has achieved the fourth place worldwide in inventions and discoveries.

Part IV

Einstein said, and I paraphrase, “People should either learn to live next to each other, or they'll all die together!”

⁸ The reader may find the original excerpt in verse within the Persian version of this essay. (Tr.)

That is the absolute truth of the human life on this planet of dust. As history attests, no tribe, nor a nation, be what may their religion or sect, could live in isolation from the rest of the world. And the majority of the social groups, religions or sects, who for any reason wished to live on in the confinement of their cocoons, they disappeared from the earth. The very few who have survived to this day, such as the Amish, the Druze, and the like, who have closed the doors on themselves, and who wish to be only with their kind to protect their respective ways of life, they too are gradually diminishing in size and assimilating away — unless they come to in time and realize that the secret to survival is to be with the world and to keep step with the modern science and comprehension. They should also see that to do so, it doesn't contradict one's religion at all, nor does it go necessarily against preserving our worldview or tradition.

Let's remember that even two siblings, let alone the strangers who follow the same book, could hold drastically different beliefs. Thence, diverse sects branch out of a single religion, and even though they'll remain more or less faithful to the same religion, they could become the worst enemies to one another.

Such religious hostilities stem from a certain misunderstanding. For, unlike what these adherents of the faith think, religion is no public matter, but it's rather a private issue, from which a person takes so far as he or she can grasp, and which has little to do with the reality of the group. As the poet said, **“One takes from the eternal Grace so far as they can hold. / The sea's not to blame for your tiny pot!”** One person becomes an angel, while another turns into a terrorist; yet unfairly, they're both referred to as the followers of the same religion. Meanwhile, **only those profit** from the situation who manipulate both sides as means to gain power and to make a living. The bottom line is that one's understanding of the religion is a matter of personal belief. It can't be a public matter, and people can't blame an individual's mistake on the tens or hundreds of millions of others who follow the same religion.

As we noted, **Hope has been the secret to Jewish survival, and the Acquiring of Knowledge their refuge.** That's been how the Jew came to be present in all economic, scientific, political and cultural aspects of the world. That is how they've stayed in the arena despite all challenge — not by depending on their beliefs, which would've been a private matter rather than a public issue. For as we know, even the beliefs and the ways of life of the children are often different than those of the parents.

Let's reiterate one major problem with all religions today, that the absolute majority of their followers do not understand the original language of their holy books. As such, a philosophy of "to read without understanding" and "to accept without knowing" has come to be mistaken for "religious observance." Given the above, will any of the religions succeed? Never.

As we noted, who is the most conscientious, he or she is the most religious of people; and the best of mothers raise their children as true "human beings", devoid of all hatred and discrimination. No doubt, the people's superiority is measured neither by their sex, nor by their beliefs, but instead, by the superiority of their intellect and understanding.

I remember that as recent as 80 years ago, most physicians in the Iranian towns and the royal court, including those in Kashan, were Jewish doctors and *Hakims*, i.e. the traditional doctors, who were respected by everyone. That takes me to a historic letter from 1860 C.E. by the Hebra, the precursor of the Tehran Jewish Association. Written at the peak of poverty and cruelty brought about by discrimination, the letter was addressed to the Alliance Israélite Universelle, asking them for help. It was then submitted via the French Ambassador to Iran to the said organization. In response, the French Jews wrote, "Raise your children as educated people, so that the others would need them." It's probable that this letter and the awareness thus raised by the Jewish community of Iran paved the road for future developments on several fronts. Nasseraddin Shah's journey of July the 12th, 1873 C.E. abroad included a visit to France, during which he met with Monsieur Adolphe Crémieux, the founder and president of Alliance Israélite Universelle. Following this visit, the Alliance came to Iran, and thus, the modern Alliance or "Ettehad" schools, led by French educators, were established in several cities with sizeable Jewish populations. This admirable service of the French Jews at that historic juncture resulted in a sudden and unprecedented growth of that generation of the Iranian Jews, as well as segments of the larger Muslim society, at the time and for the following decades. Even as today, in 2019 C.E., we may still observe the invaluable effects of the Alliance Israélite initiative, not only in the Iranian society, but also in many other Middle Eastern and North African countries with a Jewish population, such as Iraq, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and so forth. Ever since, those who received from the grace of Alliance at the time, they've all remained grateful, generation after generation, to the kindness of the generous and liberal Jews of France.

Let's ask if the diverse scores of people, who benefited from the services of Alliance and numerous Jewish scientists, have all appreciated them for it. What if from the outset, those French Jewish public servants and philanthropists had held a different worldview, one similar to those held by the myopic minds today? What if they discriminated between the various Jewish sects, such as the "Ashkenazi" and "Sephardic", or the "religious" and "non-religious"? What if they avoided altogether Iran and the other countries in discussion, which would be considered more or less "Sephardic"? In contrast, sectarianism has entailed a great danger, that some shortsighted minds can tell people whom they could marry, what they could eat, or even what they should wear. Thus, in the guise of religious observance, this crowd tightens evermore the already narrow circle of their community — so far as a group terribly disappointed by both sides, gives it all up, sets themselves free, and leaves the circle altogether. Let's wake up and take a good look around.

This comes despite that the Jew is only one, and no matter how they dress themselves up, the world sees them as one. Enough of divisiveness! We ought to rinse our eyes to see the world as it is. Let's recall again that to be steadfast in our beliefs and yet flexible in our practice, it does not contradict religious observance at all. Let's keep step with the world and blend in, so the world will be with us in return. At any rate, in the words of the poet **Abu-Saeed Abul-Kheyr**,

The world's a game of backgammon which you win to lose.

To master the game, be content and do the most with the least.

The world's like the two dice of backgammon,

to seize which is to throw them on the board.

I am not suggesting that conforming to the world and assimilation will eliminate anti-Semitism. Not at all! That was the theory of the German Jewish society before WWII, one which failed tragically. To be with the world, we should first keep step with modern science and understanding, instead of following some superstitions in the guise of spreading the religion.

What is the solution? For one, we should be realistic and exercise foresight, we should stop swimming upstream in the river of life, we shouldn't make ourselves stand out obtrusively, we should avoid pretensions, and we ought to abandon and throw away the old nonsense. There's no room for antiquated beliefs, and we shouldn't blindfold ourselves into accepting about anything

that the Biblical commentators scribbled. Our legal reference is but one and that is the *Holy Torah*, which has no duplicates. A commentator isn't the lawmaker to deem everything they said to be correct. For instance, consider the matter of abstaining from the electrical power on Saturdays, the days of Sabbath. It's hard to believe that even as today, as a result of some absolutely pointless and harmful interpretation, they've established modern *ghettos* everywhere, just so that they could walk their way to the synagogue. Speak of irony, for what was forced on us in the past, it's now carried out voluntarily! I feel extremely sorry that an albeit well-meaning group, unwittingly and in the guise of "religious observance", often help bring about the wishes of our enemies, who want us to stick out, live within the vulnerable confinement of the *ghetto*, lack a solid education in modern sciences, waste much of the time and lives of our youth, and so forth, much of it better left unsaid. As a Finnish proverb quips, and I paraphrase, "Who slips twice on the same rock deserves to break their leg."

Another example is to say that because thousands of years ago, some great figure always used to cover his head at a certain holy place, therefore my little children and I should be wearing hats at all times, too. That way of thinking is in vain. We need to see what is reasonable and where our interests lie. Despite what the religious people think, the *Torah* nowhere obligates us to wear a piece of cloth on the head and make ourselves stick out even in public places swarming with enemies — so far as you could single out a sect by the particular color, shape or size of the hats that they wear! You cannot have forgotten how just a few decades ago, our enemies forced an ominous patch sewn upon our clothes to identify us. You respond, "But it's voluntary!" I point out that at any rate, as the German, Dutch and Danish governments have officially advised us today, it's best to avoid this practice. Why, my dear ones! Today, the problem facing the Jewish people is anti-Semitism, not what they should eat, wear or recite. To be realistic is the key to success.

I find it in our best interest to put aside for now tens of other issues which have absolutely no connection to the Commandments of the *Torah*, but which are observed nevertheless in the name of "being religious." I merely ask us to learn from the past, because repeating the mistakes of the past will have no result but re-living the ensuing frustrations.

**Do try and behave well, so that who intends ill,
He won't get a chance to speak ill of you.**

Gandhi said to the effect that, “If you don’t dare to tell the truth, at the least don’t applaud who utters the unjust words.” I don’t mean to be confrontational; rather, I ask if your acts and beliefs are reasonable and in our best interest, and whether religious devotion is measured by how some superstitions are practiced. It’s unfortunate that some uninformed individuals persist on saying that should people stop observing the nonsense, “the essence will be gone, too!” I ask, “Must we get poisoned by a fistful of superstitions before we could observe and enjoy the healthy meal of the progressive commands of the *Torah*?”

It’s more important to understand the commandments correctly than to believe in them. To fight a lack of true religion or any other wrong path, we should be able to change, and we need to offer a richer culture in its stead, not to spread some nonsense. The logic of success and salvation lies not in stagnation and imitation, but instead, it lies in keeping step with the modern science and understanding in today’s world. **To stop is to die.** Even a tree, this advanced but immobile life-form, would die if it didn’t grow. In the ongoing fight between tough incidents and stubborn people, it’s the firm people who persist, as the Jew did, whereas the difficult days shall pass. We can’t predict the storms of the future, but we can learn from the past to ward off the damage from the storms.

As the *Torah* says, humankind is a spark of the Being of God. The able poet **Ebrat Naeeni** described this thought beautifully, when he wrote,

**We’re a ray of the Truth — not Him, yet Him,
Like the light, which is and isn’t distinct from kindness.
Should you see your countenance in the mirror,
The visage in the mirror is you, yet it’s not you.
When the heavenly soul leaves the earthly corpse,
To some, it’s annihilated, but to the others, it’s not.
As with the light, which is and isn’t distinct from kindness,
The world entire is, yet it’s not, the signs of God.
Who dares ask why His grace and generosity extends
To both the enemy and the friend, and why it does not.**

Humankind is standing before a court to which the word “*Why?*” is inadmissible. The world regards science and individual merits above a person’s beliefs. That society shall succeed which

the world needs for its science and economy. As we see, the government of the United States, instead of resorting to military power and war, fights back its competitors and enemies by imposing sanctions, by withholding its economy and sciences. For, America faced the world not through the path of religion, but in the healthy shade of freedom and by acquiring modern science. Let's recall that religion is a private affair. Only the seditious elements have exploited religion, in various names, as a means to impose their vicious oppression.

Conclusion

No doubt, the past sheds light on the road to the future.

As we noted, to eliminate misogyny, mothers, these makers of the future, can nip the ill in the bud by barring the despicable heritages of discrimination from getting into their kids' minds, and they should do so from the earliest days of childhood. The same could be said of anti-Semitism, that tried and tired instrument in the hands of the seditious elements. Unfortunately, however, on a larger scale, as long as the books which speak ill of women and Jews continue to be held sacred, misogyny and anti-Semitism will both persist — one day with such slogans as “Wear the Scarf, or Get Hit on the Head!”, and another day with a diverse range of political slogans.

It suits our topic to visit briefly some recent past, so that we might draw a clearer vision of the future. It could motivate us to exercise foresight and take the initiative, not the least in the interest of our families, the society, and the coming generation.

Today, regrettably, centuries after the Crusades, several decades after the Armenian genocide in the Turkish Empire, 75 years after the catastrophe of the Holocaust, and 18 years after the terrorist tragedy of September the 11th, 2001, often known as “the 9/11” — during which the World Trade Center, New York, was attacked, and which brought about a major change in the global policy — little seems to have changed about the world. If anything, a new wave of enemies of the people have risen, and thousands of women, including those from the Izadi, Kurd and Christian tribes, have been enslaved and traded, a savage disease that has spread across parts of the Middle East, and that in the shade of the United Nations. The brutal disaster has resulted altogether in the loss or the homelessness of hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings.

Yet, amid their giant scale and complexity, these crimes and atrocities have all risen from the bed of religious hatred. That is, notwithstanding the progress made, religious hatred in its many ugly faces, including anti-Semitism and misogyny, has little diminished. Sadly, the one evident change seems to be that the enemies of the people, these anti-humans, with or without government connections, have become equipped better than before, and that the terrorists continue to train the world over in the name of “spreading the religion”. If so, what fate could await our world? Considering the above, more or less, a bright future doesn’t seem to be hovering in the horizon, not the least since the phenomenon of religion led by the self-proclaimed “representatives of God” is involved.

Clearly, the path pursued so far by major governments, which pertains to killing as many of the volunteers of death as possible, it’s been the wrong and futile road to follow. For a living and evident case in point, consider Afghanistan. Unfortunately, as of 2019 C.E., following decades of war between the Taliban and their associates against such global powers as England, France, the Soviet Union, the European Union, and the United States, and after dizzying loss of life on both sides, they have yet to defeat a barefoot mob. Why? Because those governments don’t see the root of the problem, neither do they ponder how it is that the more they kill of them, the more they’re replenished several times in numbers.

All things considered, the roots of the ill could be traced back to the scriptures, to the instruction of the scriptures, and to the daily task of marinating the brainwashed young and fresh believers. It’s a dilemma with no end in sight, unless as we mentioned, the books of all religions are corrected, and until we finally put an end to preaching the wrong ideas. Today, the United States and its allies, sooner than we may think, could probably leave Afghanistan, even though they’re aware that by doing so, the country could turn into a terrorist training hub. Nevertheless, they may leave the country, due to failure and frustration, after decades of war in vain, because the “books” seem still to hold sway, rather than the command of the unrivaled military powers.

Sadly, humankind is fooled best by himself, for we hardly learn from the past. People should rather realize that unlike all ordinary schools, the vengeful Nature examines first and teaches afterwards. And that She’ll keep battering us with Her bitter lessons in every which form imaginable, until humankind has come to understand that our happiness is in peaceful

coexistence, and that to achieve it, we should first reject the seditious content of the scriptures. As the erudite poet **Fereydoun Moshiri** put it,

They said, “Who’s not with us, he’s against us!”

I said, “Indeed, that’s the word of the Devil!”

For, the wise and the compassionate,

They’re friends even to the enemy.

O you! Enemies of the people,

With your hearts of steel...

However, **“Alas, the panacea of our hidden pain, / The solution to our agitation, / It’s been entrusted to those who imagine / Their prosperity in our devastation.”** Meanwhile, neither they chose their religion, nor did we ours! As **Vincent Benét** was cited, “Five minutes after you’re born, they decide your name, nationality and religion. And you spend the rest of your life defending things that you hadn’t chosen for yourself.” Thus we’re back full circle where we realize anew that the best religion is Humanity, which in itself contradicts no religion. I’m reminded of **Charlie Chaplin**, who was quoted to have said, and I paraphrase, “Had you been born in Israel, you’d likely be Jewish; in Saudi Arabia, certainly a Muslim; in Europe, probably Christian; and in Japan, most likely a Shinto. Your religion is decided for you by geography. If so, then what’s all that bigotry for? What matter most are morality and humanity, which are not bound by time, nor by location.”

Today, July the 1st, 2019, the world admired President Donald Trump for he took one step across the border into the North Korean soil! Meanwhile, I watched all kinds of birds who, heedless of all limits, crossed freely the artificial manmade borders. Some raise their chicks thousands of miles away, and to survive, they migrate across lands and seas. They feel as if the whole world belongs to them, as if it’s all their habitat, their home. Unlike humans, who use such artificial lines as religion, ideology or race to establish baseless borders and limits among themselves, and who go on fighting a lifetime over those very arbitrary boundaries!

I was reminded of the role-plays of our childhood. One kid became the king, another the guard, a third the janitor, and the fourth the prime minister. Few minutes later, they would start laughing together and argue over the ranks. I reflect upon the grown-up world, and I realize better than ever how short-sighted the people can be. Even though they know that the world is

only one and the people are all the same, they keep fighting and destroying each other over but the arbitrary lines that they drew between themselves, over who would become the king, or in the name of border, race or religion, in a sad and bloody parody of the games of childhood. Whereas the author continues to believe that in the long run, the entire world will be united into one country, to be run by a world government.⁹ Needless to say, if you ask me, “When?” I’d reply, “God’s day lasts a thousand years!” It’s said of a man in need who asked something of God. There came an answer from Heaven. “Most certainly!” Said the Voice. “Just please wait for a minute!” I reflected day and night for 90 years, until it became clear to me that nothing had become known.

Finally, as an **English adage** says in effect, “Writing is akin to jumping out of the grave and shouting aloud!” About forty years ago, having received the good news of the freedom of expression, I too leaped out of the dungeons of my soul, and with an albeit imperfect pen, I gifted a few green leaves to friends. Although recently, due to some shaking in the hand, it’s been a bit difficult for me to write, I’m optimistic that until recovery, with some extra effort, I’ll continue to join you in my future articles.

Fortunately, for future conversations — besides the many articles that I’ve published so far in several periodicals, as well as my books — I’ve made a refreshing little hut in English and Persian in a quiet corner of the internet at www.BabaNouri.com, where I could host your kindness and attention. I seize the opportunity to thank each and every one of my friends and other readers for your kindness and love. Until we meet soon in the next piece, I’ll be eager as ever for your attention toward www.BabaNouri.com.

**If no one told my tale of suffering,
There’d be just one legend less in the world.
Even if I’m no more there in the world,
There’ll be just one pearl less in the world.
The lover won’t avoid the burning flames:
For the candle of love, one can’t be any less**

⁹ As we read in the daily Jewish prayer, though mostly without understanding what it says, *ve-hAyah ba-yom ha-hu yihyeh adonAi ekhAd u-shmo ekhAd*; that is, the day shall come when people around the world will all worship one God and will all follow one law (i.e. the Bill of Human Rights). Let’s open our heart’s eye to understand the progressive content of our scriptures, in contrast to what some shortsighted commentators and promoters of the religion have kept telling us!

**Than a butterfly batting wings
'Round the light of his world.**

On the path of writing, one can't be any less than a butterfly...

Norman "Nourollah" Gabay

July 2019, Los Angeles

To receive copies of this and other writings by Norman "Nourollah" Gabay in Persian and English, including his earlier essays, as well as his three books, *An Invitation to Reason*, *A Dictionary of the Jewish Dialect of Kashan*, and the upcoming *Be Up to Date*, please visit the following website: www.BabaNouri.com.