

Wolfgang Palaver

**The Ambiguous Cachet of Victimhood**  
**Elias Canetti's "Religions of Lament" and Abrahamic Monotheism**

"Lamentations are simply the need to constantly irritate the wound." (Dostoevsky 48)

The increase of religiously motivated violence in our contemporary world – especially religiously motivated terrorism – has revived an old charge against all monotheistic religions that are today again accused of causing violent conflicts. In order to evaluate this currently fashionable critique of monotheism my paper will discuss Elias Canetti's concept of the "religions of lament" in the framework of René Girard's mimetic theory. By this I will first sharpen our understanding of the difference between pagan religions and Abrahamic monotheism (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). It is the overcoming of human sacrifices and the disclosure of the scapegoat mechanism that marks the end of paganism in this tradition and applies to all three monotheistic religions. Following this thread we discover the emergence of modern individuality and human rights as a result of the monotheistic legacy. This overcoming of the pagan sacred, however, is not without its own dangers. Abrahamic monotheism easily perverts into a form of lament that inspires a vitriolic form of violence unknown to the pagan world. It is therefore not only the root of modern human rights and our contemporary concern for victims but also a possible source of resentment abusing the perspective of the victim. According to Canetti, a lamenting pack changes easily into a war pack. The temptation coming along with lamenting a persecuted victim is that it quickly legitimizes without much doubts violent resistance and even acts of revenge. Our world of today is full of victims turning into perpetrators. It is especially for this reason that the role of the victim has become so attractive and dangerous at the same time. From the perspective of mimetic theory this is the reign of the Antichrist, in which fighting persecution leads to even more cruel acts of persecution. A final question therefore has to ask what kind of help we can find in the Abrahamic tradition to overcome this dangerous threat.

### ***The Religions of Lament***

To evaluate the currently fashionable critique of monotheism we will discuss in the following Elias Canetti's concept of the "religions of lament". Referring especially to Christians and Shiite Muslims Canetti called those religions "religions of lament", whose members are siding with a persecuted victim in order to expiate their own guilt as persecutors:

"The face of the earth has been changed by the religions of lament and, in Christianity, they have attained a kind of universal validity. ... The legend around which they form is that of a man or a god who perishes unjustly. It is always the story of a pursuit, a hunt, or a baiting, and there may also be an unjust trial. ... Why is it that so many join the lament? What is its attraction? What does it give people? To all those who join it the same thing happens: the hunting or baiting pack expiates its guilt by becoming a lamenting pack. Men lived as pursuers and as such, in their own fashion, they continue to live. They seek alien flesh, and cut into it, feeding on the torment of the weaker creatures; the glazing eye of the victim is mirrored in their eyes, and that last cry they delight in is indelibly recorded in their soul. Most of them perhaps do not divine that, while they feed their bodies, they also feed the darkness within themselves. But their guilt and fear grow ceaselessly, and, without knowing it, they long for deliverance. Thus they attach themselves to one who will die for them and, in lamenting him, they feel themselves as persecuted. Whatever they have done, however they have raged, for this moment they are aligned with suffering. It is a sudden change of side with far-reaching consequences. It frees them from the accumulated guilt of killing and from the fear that death will strike at them too. All that they have done to others, another now takes on himself; by attaching themselves to him, faithfully and without reserve, they hope to escape vengeance. Thus it appears that religions of lament will continue to be indispensable to the psychic economy of men for as long as they remain unable to renounce pack killing." (Canetti 168-171)

Canetti refers to two consequences stemming from the legacy of religions of lament. First and more directly, he mentions the tremendous increase of the value of each human individual going along with the spread of Christianity. What he describes in the

following passage refers to our modern understanding of an inviolable human dignity stemming from the Abrahamic concern for victims:

"The image of him whose death Christians have lamented for nearly two thousand years has become part of the consciousness of mankind. He is the dying man and the man who ought not to die. With the increasing secularization of the world his divinity has become less important, but he remains as an individual, suffering and dying. The centuries of his divinity have endowed the *man* with a kind of earthly immortality. They have strengthened him and everyone who sees himself in him. There is no one who suffers persecution, for whatsoever reason, who does not in part of his mind see himself as Christ. Mortal enemies, even when both are fighting for an evil and inhuman cause, experience the same feeling as soon as things go badly with them. The image of the sufferer at the point of death passes from one to the other according to who is winning or losing and the one who in the end proves weaker can see himself as the better. But even one too weak ever to have acquired a real enemy has a claim to the image. He may die for nothing at all, but the dying itself makes him significant. Christ lends him his lament. In the midst of all our frenzy of increase, which includes men too, the value of the individual has become not less, but more. The events of our times appear to have proved the opposite, but even they have not really altered man's image of himself. The value that has been put on his soul has helped man to the assurance of his earthly value. He finds his desire for indestructibility justified. Each feels himself a worthy object of lament; each is stubbornly convinced that he ought not to die. Here the legacy of Christianity, and, in a rather different way, of Buddhism, is inexhaustible." (Canetti 543-544)

A second, much more indirect consequence going along with the religions of lament is, according to Canetti, a certain tendency to legitimate violent and revengeful actions by siding with a persecuted victim. Lament can easily turn into war. Canetti mentions a typical transmutation that stands at the beginning of wars: "A man is killed and the members of his tribe lament him. Then they form into a troop and set out to avenge his death on the enemy; the lamenting pack changes into a war pack." (Canetti 150) The lament for the death can easily inflame war: "The quick-forming lamenting pack operates as a crowd crystal; it, as it were, opens out, everyone who feels the same threat attaching himself to it. Its spirit changes into that of a war pack." (Canetti 162)

With the example of the Pueblo tribes in the south of the United States, which are "distinguished by the atrophy of war and hunting, and by an amazing suppression of lament", Canetti underlines indirectly the connection between lamenting and violence. According to him, the Pueblo tribes "live entirely for peaceful *increase*" (Canetti 150).

Despite the fact that Canetti mentions Shiism as one of the examples of a religion of lament he sees Islam in general as a "religion of war" more directly connected to the war pack not really in need of the lamenting pack as its crowd crystal (Canetti 165-168). In a broader sense, however, this also can be connected to the Abrahamic siding with the victim typical of the religions of lament. The Islamic legitimation of war is rooted in a concept of just war allowing self-defense and the struggle for a just and decent society (cf. Armstrong 164-210; Osman 62-63). Canetti's view of Islam as a warmongering religion is part of Western Islamophobia and not an accurate evaluation. But it is also true that concepts of just war can easily be misused justifying violence caused by resentment or sheer lust for conquest. In this regard we can find many historical examples in Islam as well as in Christianity.

There are many examples of vengeful religious lament throughout history. Following Canetti's reference to the Shiites lamenting Husain leads to its recent impact on the Iranian Revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini's war against Iraq is an example how lamenting a past hero can help to motivate people going to war (cf. Volkan 134-135; Bonney 246). Also the Christian tradition is not free from this temptation connected to lament. The most striking examples are the Crusades where Christians fought against Jews and Muslims legitimating their violence by emphasizing their solidarity with the crucified Jesus (cf. Bartlett 109). The temptation of a vengeful religious lament has become a common dimension of contemporary religiously—and also secular—motivated violence, especially of terrorism. Muslim, Jewish and Christian terrorists and even the Aum Shinrikyo group, that carried out a poison gas attack on the Tokyo subways in 1995, legitimate their violent acts as deeds in defense of persecuted victims (cf. Hoffman 95-127; Juergensmeyer 12; Taylor 36). Osama bin Laden is a perfect example of this tendency when he accuses in an interview from 1996, America and Israel of "killing the weak men, women, and children in the Muslim world and elsewhere" (Bin Ladin 40). He sides instead with all the victims and refers

to oppressed Muslims in Saudi-Arabia, to persecuted Palestinians, to 600.000 children suffering in Iraq because of the U.N. sanctions, to killed Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina and even to Japanese victims who were killed by atomic bombs used by the United States in World War II.

The temptation of vengeful lament has so much influenced our world that even fascism—including National Socialism—is characterized by a violent exploitation of the claim of being victimized (cf. Paxton; Taylor 30, 36). The Austrian historian Friedrich Herr, for instance, used Canetti's concept of the "lamenting pack" to explain the political religion of Adolf Hitler (Heer 570). The Dutch writer Geert Mak used Robert Paxton's description of fascism's violent exploitation of its feeling to be victimized to explain radical Islamism and right-wing populism in his book reflecting on the murder of Theo van Gogh by a radical Muslim. According to Mak, the emphasis on victimhood plays a central role for such extremists to justify their violent actions (Mak 81-83, 90). As soon as such people view themselves as victims the aggression against their enemies becomes limitless. Against the background of Canetti's concept of the religions of lament it is furthermore interesting to note that suicide bombers first emerged among Shiite Muslims known for their lament of Husain, the murdered grandson of Mohammed. Only later Sunni terrorists started to imitate them (cf. Allam 139-140). Navid Kermani, a German Muslim writer and Islam scholar, summarizes how lamenting Husain is connected to contemporary wars and acts of terrorism:

"During the Iran-Iraq War, the Shiite cult of martyrdom prompted many Iranian soldiers, including children and teenagers, to rush headlong into the Iraqi minefields, with the cry 'Ya Hussein' on their lips. It also led in 1983 to a member of the Lebanese Hizbollah being willing, for the first time, to carry out a suicide bombing.' (Kermani)

Kermani, however, is also right to claim that there is no direct connection between lamenting Husain and terrorist acts like 9/11: "The question of why people are prepared to transform themselves into living missiles cannot ... be fully explained by

telling the story of Hussein; but September 11 probably also cannot be explained without reference to this story." (Kermani)

Fare beyond Islam as such or specific developments in this religion there is a general tendency towards a "cult of the victim" in our world that easily leads to violence (Lasch 67-68). Terrorism is closely connected to a vengeful instrumentalization of victimhood. It is part of what psychiatrist Vamik Volkan called the "egoism of victimization" (Volkan 176). Volkan explains plausibly, how a certain view of one's victimization, the inability to mourn properly and one's own weakness may lead quickly towards terrorism: "The individual who perceives his group as victimized and whose own sense of self is threatened by that perception may be drawn to terrorist activities in the same way that a nation that perceives itself to be victimized may go to war." (Volkan 176-177) What makes our situation today even worse is the fact that counter-terrorism, too—especially Bush's war against terror—has been strongly influenced by the temptation of a vengeful religious lament (cf. Tönnies 46-49).

Is the temptation of a vengeful religious lament connected to monotheism? Despite the fact, that Canetti views Christianity "the most important of all the religions of lament" (Canetti 171) his answer to our question would be negative. According to him, religions of lament can be found in different cultures and different historical periods (mythic and historical). His list of lamented victims illustrates his broad view: Adonis, Tammuz, Attis, Osiris, Husain and finally, of course Jesus Christ, whose crucifixion Canetti calls "the most humane of all passions" (Canetti 169).

Following Canetti it would be rather easy to reject accusations attributing the temptation of vengeful religious lamenting to the monotheistic traditions. Unfortunately, however, Canetti's view is wrong. Already his term "religions of lament" indicates its closeness to the Biblical tradition and one just wonders why he—born to a Jewish family—uses a term alluding so closely to the Psalms of lamentation without ever referring to any Jewish example of lamenting. This strange omission surely has biographical reasons. Canetti realized that many religions narrate acts of collective violence against a single victim. What he did not understand by following thinkers like Frazer and Freud, who continued an identification of the myths about Osiris, Attis or

Adonis with the passion of Jesus beginning during the Roman Empire (cf. Girard 1999a, 10-11), however, are the differences of perspective these religions have narrating acts of violence (cf. Scheffler 1997). Whereas the mythic religions did not take the side of the victim but joined the view of the persecuting mob it is the specific Biblical perspective to express vehemently a concern for the victim. Nietzsche was most likely the first who clearly understood this change of perspective in his famous fragment "Dionysus versus the 'Crucified'" (cf. Girard 2001, 170-181). Following Nietzsche, also Max Weber emphasized the enormous difference between mythic lamenting and expressions of lament in the Jewish tradition. Comparing the Servant of God in Deutero-Isaiah with a mythic dying god like Tammuz Weber discovers a "fundamental change of meaning" (Weber 1967, 374). According to Weber, lamenting "the dying and resurrected vegetation or other deities and heroes" in "all known mythologies" (Weber 1967, 375) must not be identified with the Biblical lament. In the prophetic tradition of the Bible martyrdom is characterized by a unique "ethical turn". Weber refers, for instance, to Deutero-Isaiah, underlining the "guiltless martyrdom of the Servant of God" and his "unmerited suffering". The unique ethical perspective of the Bible is its partisanship with the persecuted and oppressed victims. Weber points to the "pariah situation" (Weber 1967, 376) of the Jewish people recognizing its climax in the prophet Deutero-Isaiah's "apotheosis of sufferance, misery, poverty, humiliation, and ugliness" (Weber 1967, 369).

### ***Resentment and the Judaeo-Christian Revelation***

Joining Weber's recognition of the "Biblical 'Difference'" (Girard, 2004, 14-17), however, forces us to deal with the fact that in this tradition we also find the origin of vengeful religious lament. Weber clearly points to this revengeful side of the Biblical tradition by referring to the Psalms: "The psalmists raised frightful wails against the rich and cried out for revenge." (Weber 1967, 31) According to Weber, the "religiosity of the Psalms" is "often permeated by passionate wrath and hatred or to the sharp resentment toward the godless who are well off" (Weber 1967, 403):

"The religion of the Psalms is full of the need for vengeance... The majority of the Psalms are quite obviously replete with the moralistic legitimation and satisfaction of an open and hardly concealed need for vengeance on the part of a pariah people." (Weber 1971, 111)

Weber's insight into the vengeful side of the Biblical tradition must be taken seriously. It would be wrong to evade its challenge. Contrary to pagan myths that obscure the deadly fate of the victims the Bible brings the violence of the persecutors in all its cruelty and ugliness out into the open. If one understands that to reveal hidden persecution means taking right and wrong seriously one understands also why the "Jews cursed more bitterly than the Pagans" (Lewis 30). René Girard very explicitly stresses the revengeful side of the Psalms:

"Many psalms are not only violent but full of hatred and resentment. The narrator complains that he has many unjust enemies who not only destroy his reputation but threaten his life and even physically assault him. In some of the psalms the narrator is surrounded by these enemies who are about to lynch him. He curses them, he insults them; above all he asks God to rain fire and destruction on these enemies. ... These are the so-called psalms of malediction or execration. Nowadays in order to minimize their violence many Bibles call them 'penitential.' They are not penitential at all but vengeful." (Girard 1999b, 388)

Before criticizing the Bible overhasty, however, we have to realize that most of the violence that the Bible brings out into the open is the violence of the mob released against their victims. According to Girard, the Psalms

"tell the same basic story as many myths but turned inside out, so to speak. They are like a beautiful fur coat. If you turn the garment inside out, you will perhaps still see traces of blood and you will become aware that, at some point in the past, the garment was part of a living creature that first had to be killed for the beautiful coat to come into being." (Girard 1999b, 391).

The vitriolic acts of the victims—contrary to the physical aggression of the mob—consist mostly in nothing but words crying to God for revenge. Not they

themselves but God is responsible to revenge their fate. Weber called this "the leaving of revenge to God" (Weber 1967, 260). In this regard the vengeful lament visible in many Psalms still participates to some degree in the sacred violence typical of pagan myths that helps to distance human beings from their own violence. Modern versions of the vengeful lament are due to the rapidly diminishing power of the old sacred much more destructive. Now people take revenge themselves acting as the faithful agents of their God or their ideological program.

Bringing scapegoating to light—taking the side of the victim—was really an ethical turn that changed the face of the world for ever. It was the origin of our modern concern for human dignity and our eagerness to overcome all forms of victimization. Abrahamic monotheism caused this ethical turn. Today it is important to understand that Islam is clearly part of this legacy. Following the Biblical siding with Abel who was killed by his brother Cain, the Qur'an stresses the sacredness of all human life that is typical of Abrahamic monotheism: "Whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." (Surah 5:32; Pickthal)

Though the Biblical revelation by taking the side of the victims has contributed very positively to the development of human morality it has also enabled human beings to increase tremendously violence and destruction. The temptation to vengeful religious lament is an important part of this destructive consequences the Biblical revelation indirectly brings with it. Already David Hume remarks in his comparison of theism and idolatry that the "corruption of the best things gives rise to the worst" (Hume 163, 165). This insight that the corruption of the best is the worst—*corruptio optimi pessima*—is an important key to explain negative consequences of the Biblical legacy. Ivan Illich used this idea to understand the contribution of Christianity to the crisis of our modern world (Illich/Cayley).

Taking the temptation of resentment as a possible consequence of the Biblical revelation seriously must not, however, lead us to the conclusion of Nietzsche—and partly also of Weber—that the Biblical perspective results in nothing but resentment. Girard clearly rejected such a simplistic thesis. Against Nietzsche he claims, that

"resentment is merely an illegitimate heir, certainly not the father of Judaeo-Christian Scripture" (Girard 1987b, 108; 1996, 252; cf. Fraser).

### ***The Abrahamic Tradition of Forgiveness***

Reducing the Bible to resentment would mean to overlook an enormous development that is visible in its religiosity, its image of God and its attitude towards violence. The Biblical revelation is despite its visible leanings towards resentment ultimately resentment overcome. This is not only true of the New Testament but also of the Old Testament. Despite her very harsh critique of the Hebrew tradition until the Babylonian exile even Simone Weil emphasized how passages in the Book of Job, parts of the Psalms or the prophet Deutero-Isaiah are clearly taking a critical attitude towards violence (Weil 2003a, 60, 137, 161; 2003b 14, 18, 24, 64). The image of God as we can find it in the vengeful Psalms is not the only image of the Old Testament. Whoever reduces the Biblical monotheism to a vengeful distinction between friends and enemies overlooks the development of the image of God in the Hebrew Bible. Gradually the image of a warrior God was replaced by a God, who no longer relies on military power:

"The warrior God was highly significant during long periods of Israel's understanding of its faith. But this image was not the only image, and it was gradually transformed, particularly after the experience of the exile, when God was no longer identified with military victory and might." (United States Catholic Conference, *The Challenge of Peace* No. 31)

A good example how strongly violence is rejected in certain passages of the Hebrew Bible can be found, for instance, in 1 Kings 3:2-15, in which king Solomon asks from God not a long life, wealth and the destruction of his enemies but only "an understanding mind". God praises Solomon's extraordinary plea and rewards him with a wise mind. Also a long living, wealth and honor—for which the king has not

asked—God bestows on Solomon.<sup>1</sup> But a wish that the enemies of the king should die is not fulfilled by God. This wish is revealed as a poorly human projection that is not compatible with God's being at all. In the songs of the suffering servant we can find the climax of the rejection of a violent image of God in the Old Testament. Max Weber emphasized the non-violence of the suffering Servant:

"The meaning of it all is plainly the glorification of the situation of the pariah people and its tarrying endurance. Thereby the Servant of God and the people whose archetype he is, become the deliverers of the world. Thus, should the Servant of God even have been conceived as a personal savior, then he qualified only by voluntarily taking upon himself the pariah situation of the Exile people and by suffering without resistance and complaint misery, ugliness, and martyrdom. All the elements of the utopian evangelical sermon 'resist no evil with force' are here at hand. The situation of the pariah people and its patient endurance were thus elevated to the highest station of religious worth and honor before God, by receiving the meaning of a world historical mission. This enthusiastic glorification of suffering as the means to serve world deliverance is clearly for the prophet the ultimate and in its way supreme enhancement of the promise to Abraham, that his name in days to come shall be great and that he shall be 'a blessing.' The specific ethic of meekness and non-resistance revived in the Sermon on the Mount and the conception of the sacrificial death of the innocent martyred Servant of God helped to give birth to Christology." (Weber 1967, 375-376)

Weber is right that this line in the Old Testament directly leads to Jesus Christ's nonviolence in the New Testament. In the Passion of Jesus the Biblical concern for victims comes to its conclusion. Contrary to all temptations of a vengeful lament the New Testaments solidarity with the victims does not at all legitimate any revenge or retribution. Jesus's heavenly father personifies the love for enemies and the rejection

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 3,11-14: "God said to him, 'Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup> I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. <sup>13</sup> I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. <sup>14</sup> If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life.'" "

of revenge: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous." (Mat 5:44-45). In accordance with his father Jesus forgave his enemies when he was murdered on the Cross: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Luk 23:34) And when he met his disciples again after his resurrection he offered them his peace without blaming them for their weakness and cowardliness (cf. Schwager 1999, 146, 152, 207): "Peace be with you." (Joh 20:19) The true Christian spirit contradicts vengeful lamenting and is beyond all resentment.

Of course also in the other two Abrahamic religions, Judaism and Islam, we can find important ways overcoming resentment and preventing the vengeful exploitation of victimhood. Derrida speaks about an Abrahamic tradition of forgiveness (Derrida 28, 42). We are today so much in need of forgiveness that we should encourage all religions and world views to develop it as strongly as possible. Marc Gopin, for instance, emphasizes how important it is for a Jewish conflict resolution theory to overcome conceptions of enmity defining the enemy as the incarnation of evil (Gopin 41-42, 78-79). In Exo 23:5 ("When you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden and you would hold back from setting it free, you must help to set it free") and in Pro 25:21-22 ("If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat; and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink; for you will heap coals of fire on their heads, and the LORD will reward you") he sees important starting points in the Bible leading to the humanization of the enemy.

Forgiveness is most important to overcome the temptations of vengeful lament. It is not only recommended in the Bible, in Judaism and Christianity, but also in Islam. Just look to its version of the Biblical story of Joseph, one of the few Biblical stories that is also fully narrated in the Qur'an. Surah 12 – its name is Yusuf – is completely dedicated to this story. The story of Joseph represents the overcoming of scapegoating and the monotheistic rejection of the divinization of the victim. Furthermore, it is also an important story concerning reconciliation because Joseph ultimately forgives his brothers (Genesis 50:20-21; cf. Williams 1994, 82). This forgiveness is powerfully expressed in the Qur'an: "Have no fear this day! May Allah

forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy." (Surah 12:92; Pickthal) In accordance with God who is seen as the "All-Mercifull" the Muslim believers are called to overcome retaliation and repel evil with good. Mohamed Fathi Osman has listed some verses from the Qur'an that point in this direction: 42:40-43, 16:126, 60:7, 4:34-35 (Osman 58, 69-70). I will quote the first one to show how also Islam emphasizes the need of forgiveness: "A requital for a wrongdoing is equal to it, but whoever forgives and makes peace [with the other], his [/her] reward rests with God; He, verily, does not love the transgressors." (42:40) One of the main problems of the Islamic tradition is the fact that Mohammed was not just a prophet but also a ruler and a military leader. Compared to the Christian tradition, one could probably say that Mohammed was his own Constantine. But even in this difficult realm we can find important hints emphasizing forgiveness and reconciliation. According to a Peace-Hadith, the following words were written on the hilt of Mohammed's sword: "Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you, and speak the truth although it be against yourself." (Bonney 46)<sup>2</sup>

The temptation of vengeful religious lamenting has accompanied Abrahamic monotheism. It has remained, of course, a permanent temptation throughout Christian history. Many secularized versions of it are also contributing to our contemporary culture of a radical victimology often turning the concern for victims into a even more dangerous weapon (cf. Girard 2001, 178-181; 1996; 208-209, 275; 2004, 18-19; 2005, 188-189; Taylor 29-30, 67-68, 35-37; Waldmann 232-238). According to Girard, today we often "practice a hunt for scapegoats to the second degree, a hunt for hunters of scapegoats" (Girard 2001, 158). This perversion of the concern for victims is the reign of the Antichrist, in which fighting persecution leads to even more cruel acts of persecution (cf. Girard 1994, 65; 2001, 181). It is exactly this temptation that makes forgiveness so important in our world of today.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sufism.org/society/articles/PeaceHadith.htm>.

## Works Cited:

- Allam, Fouad. 2004. *Der Islam in einer globalen Welt*. Aus dem Italienischen von K. Pichler. Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach.
- Armstrong, Karen. 1993. *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Bartlett, Anthony W. 2001. *Cross Purposes: The Violent Grammar of Christian Atonement*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.
- Bespaloff, Rachel. 2005. "On the Iliad." In: Weil, Simone/Bespaloff, Rachel. *War and the Iliad*. With an Essay by Hermann Broch. Translated by M. McCarthy. Introduction by C. Benfey. New York: New York Review Book, 39-100.
- Bin-Ladin, Usama. 2005. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*. Edited and introduced by B. Lawrence. Translated by J. Howarth. London: Verso.
- Bonney, Richard. 2007. *Jihad: From Qur'an to bin Laden*. Foreword by Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burggraeve, Roger. 2004. "'Because you are lukewarm, I spit you out of my mouth!' Foundations and Major Themes of Christian Ethical Radicalism." In: *Incredible Forgiveness: Christian Ethics between Fanaticism and Reconciliation*. Edited by D. Pollefeyt, 7-52. Leuven: Peeters.
- Canetti, Elias. 1973. *Crowds and Power*. Translated from the German by C. Stewart. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Derrida, Jacques. 2001. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. With a preface by S. Critchley and R. Kearney. Translated by M. Dooley and M. Hughes. London: Routledge.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. 1991. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Translated and annotated by R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage Books.
- Fraser, Giles. 2001. *Christianity and Violence: Girard, Nietzsche, Anselm and Tutu*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Girard, René. 1986. *The Scapegoat*. Translated by Y. Freccero. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 1987b. *Job: The Victim of His People*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 1994. *Quand ces choses commenceront ... Entretiens avec Michel Treguer*. Paris.
- . 1996. *The Girard Reader*. Edited by James G. Williams. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- . 1999a. *Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair*. Paris: Grasset.
- . 1999b. "Violence in Biblical Narrative." *Philosophy and Literature* 23.2, 387-392.
- . 2001. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*. Translated, with a Foreword, by J. G. Williams. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- . 2004. "Violence and Religion: Cause or Effect?" *The Hedgehog Review* 6/1, 8-20.
- . 2005. "Violence and Religion." In: *Das Gewaltpotential des Monotheismus und der dreieine Gott*. Hrsg. von Peter Walter. Freiburg: Herder, 180-190.
- Gopin, Marc. 2002. *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Heer, Friedrich. 1989. *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler: Anatomie einer politische Religiosität*. Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Sachbuch.
- Hoffman, Bruce. 1998. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hume, David. 1998. *Principle Writings on Religion including Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and The Natural History of Religion*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by J. C. A. Gaskin. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Illich, Ivan/Cayley, David. 2005. *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich as told by David Cayley*. Foreword by C. Taylor. Toronto: Anansi.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2001. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2004. "Religion the Problem?" *The Hedgehog Review* 6/1, 21-33.
- Kermani, Navid. 2002. "A Dynamite of the Spirit." *Times Literary Supplement* (March 29).
- Lasch, Christopher. 1991. "Liberalism and Civic Virtue." *Telos* No. 88, 57-68.
- Lewis, C. S. 1986. *Reflections on the Psalms*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Mak, Geert. 2005. *Der Mord an Theo van Gogh. Geschichte einer moralischen Panik*. Aus dem Niederländischen von M. Müller-Haas. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Osman, Mohamed Fathi. 2004. "God is the All-Peace, the All-Merciful." In: *Beyond Violence: Religious Sources for Social Transformation in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Edited by James L. Heft, 57-73. Ashland: Fordham University Press.
- Paxton, Robert O. 2004. *The Anatomy of Fascism*. New York: Knopf.
- Pollefeyt, Didier. 2004. "Ethics, Forgiveness and the Unforgivable after Auschwitz. In: *Incredible Forgiveness: Christian Ethics between Fanaticism and Reconciliation*. Edited by D. Pollefeyt, 121-159. Leuven: Peeters.
- Scheffler, Thomas. 1997. "Vom Königsmord zum Attentat. Zur Kulturmorphologie des politischen Mordes." In: *Soziologie der Gewalt*. Hrsg. von Trutz von Trotha. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 182-199.
- Schwager, Raymund. 1999. *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation: Toward a Biblical Doctrine of Redemption*. Translated by J. G. Williams and P. Haddon. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Taylor, Charles. 2004. "Notes on the Sources of Violence: Perennial and Modern." In: *Beyond Violence: Religious Sources for Social Transformation in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Edited by James L. Heft, 15-42. Ashland: Fordham University Press.
- Tönnies, Sybille. 2002. *Cosmopolis Now: Auf dem Weg zum Weltstaat*. Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt.
- United States Catholic Conference. 1983. *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our response. A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*. Washington D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- Volkan, Vamik D. 1988. *The Need to have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationships*. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Waldmann, Peter. 2003. *Terrorismus und Bürgerkrieg: Der Staat in Bedrängnis*. München: Gerling Akademie Verlag.
- Weber, Max. 1967. *Ancient Judaism*. Translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale. New York: Free Press.

- Weber, Max. 1971. *The Sociology of Religion*. Translated by E. Fischoff. Introduction by T. Parsons. London: Social Science Paperbacks.
- Weil, Simone. 2003a. *Intimations of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*. London: Routledge.
- . 2003b. *Letter to a Priest*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Williams, James G. 1994. "Steadfast love and Not Sacrifice": A Nonsacrificial Reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. In *Curing Violence*, edited by M. I. Wallace and T. H. Smith. Sonoma: Polebridge Press.