

Attacks on the Istanbul Synagogues Defy Islamic Code

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The heinous attacks against the synagogues in Istanbul, Saturday morning, were committed by a group that included Islam as part of their name; The Great Eastern Islamic Raiders' Front.

The rationale provided by the caller to Anatolia News is that these acts were intended to stop the oppression of Muslims. While I acknowledge that the injustices that befell the Muslims should be addressed, and that justice is the cornerstone of peace, terrorism does not follow as an Islamically accepted conclusion from the oppression premise. In fact, it is in direct violation of several Islamic teachings.

Muslims should never translate their pain into a violation of Islamic Law, which could result in inflicting pain and injustice on others:

“Let not the injustice [inflicted] by others on you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all that ye do.” Qur’an, 5:8

There is a need to establish a non-violent world community, and to promote non-violence as a viable method for the attainment of rights. It is my conviction, as I have declared elsewhere, that Islam prohibits suicide for political reasons. Even for those Muslims who do not subscribe to non-violence, and engage in warfare, it is imperative for them to adhere the sublime ethical codes in Islam mentioned in a well-known speech of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph. These include leaving the “monks in peace in their monasteries” during times in conflicts. Through analogical reasoning, this applies to all those who are praying in their respective houses of worship. Added to this, the same speech confirmed the sanctity of the lives of children, women and elderly. In fact, it goes on to prohibit cutting trees and killing animals except for food.

The protection of all houses of worship is the subject matter of a very relevant verse in the Qur’an:

“...Had not God checked one set of people by means of another there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, in which the name of God is commemorated in abundant measure...” Qur’an, 22:40

It is rather obvious that God wanted these houses of worship, including the synagogues, to be protected. One does not need to be a Muslim scholar to understand that these disgusting attacks are in direct violation of divine will.

In 1994, Barukh Goldstein, a Jewish settler, entered Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron and committed a horrid massacre. He shot Muslims while prostrating on the floor of the Mosque. Not only Goldstein violated the sanctity of the Mosque, he also violated the oath that he took as a physician. For me, there is no doubt that he violated Judaism.

In ancient Sparta, the prevailing ethos was that only a warrior had a respected position. Warfare was seen as the only relationship with the *other*. I pray to an end of all ideologically motivated Spartan theologies, on all sides. I also pray for a different kind of world order, where double standards disappear and where justice and equity are the norm, for inasmuch as I condemn terrorism, including state-terrorism, I know that it does not occur in a vacuum.

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