

A Brief Look at the Commonalities of Three Divine Religions in Ahkam

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Abstract:

As all holy religions have been sent to us by the same unique God, it is completely natural to find commonalities among them, paying attention to the fact that the holy books are for our life and include laws and commands which are based on our nature (Fitrat). In the previous part, the commonalities in Tohid had been studied. In this essay – being the second part - the commonalities among holy books in Ahkam have been presented.

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Key words:

Ahkam, Taharat, Worship, Fasting, Zakat, Marriage, Divorce, Tax, Usury

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Islamic Commandments (Ahkam)

*A*hkam refers to the Divine laws expressed in the Fiqh¹ books; if these laws and regulations are not observe, it may lead to transgression of others rights.

Here, we will outline the shared laws mentioned in the holy Quran, Bible and Torah; though you should bear in mind that the religious laws mentioned in the Bible are far more limited than the other two holy books.

As the Torah has been confirmed in Bible and in it Jesus introduced himself as the completer not the destructor of laws or prophets emphasizing that all the laws of Torah should be performed², we can infer that quite a few number of documents of the Bible have been placed in the Torah or Old Testament which are accepted by Christians. Ahkam, being a group of laws which tell you what to “do” and what “not to do”, is needed for living a pure life and is very similar to ethics but as its social effects are more comparing ethics in this article, it is fallen into the category of Ahkam which is separated from ethics.

2.1. Purity (Taharat)

*T*he four Bibles of “Matthew, Mark, Luke and John” all referred to purity of soul far more important than purity of body. In Torah, it is talked about “impure and pure”,

¹ Fiqh means Islamic jurisprudence, science of Islamic jurisprudence

² Gospel of Matthew (5:17-18)

“clean and unclean” things and also about purifying impure things with water.

Of other commonalities between the Torah and Quran are namely “blood”, “corpse”, and “wine” as “impure”, and body or clothes which are stained by them should be purified by water.¹

2.2. Worship

*I*n this realm, there are common commands among all divine religions which are mentioned here:

Worshipping God, His obedience, loving Him wholeheartedly and more than other things, returning to Him, following His commands, aspiring for His kingdom, asking daily bread from Him, asking Him to forgive our sins, and seeking His protection from temptations of Satan. It is necessary to say that in all holy books it has been asserted that kind of worship is accepted by God which is performed out of pure intention and only for God, not out of hypocrisy; hypocrisy will demolish the rewards of God; that prayer is accepted by God which is performed in the Qibbla direction, and specially the one which is performed after midnight.²

¹ The Quran(4:43), (5:6), (6:145), (8:11), (25:48); Gospel of Matthew (15:11); Gospel of Mark (7:15-16); Leviticus (5:2-3), (22:4-8), (10:8), (15:1-19)

² The Quran (2:115,144,149,150),(5:44, 50, 114), (6:57), (7:205), (12:40, 67), (29:17), (39:2,11,14), (62:11); Gospel of Matthew (6:11), (6:9)

2.3. Fasting

*F*asting is of the divine commands which existed in former divine religions. In Bible, it is mentioned as a way to increase faith and purifying the soul and expelling impurities from the soul and body. It is advised to avoid hypocrisy while fasting. In the holy Quran, besides mentioning the rules of fasting, it is cited that fasting is obligatory for Muslims as it was obligatory for previous nations to make them pious.¹

2.4. Islamic Tax (Zakat)

*I*n the Quran it is frequently advised to pay zakat and about 32 verses in which the word zakat is included have been mentioned. In the first verses of al-Baqara chapter, paying zakat is regarded as the attributes of the pious. In the Torah, zakat is mentioned as Oshr and in the Bible, from Jesus it is said that you should give one tenth of your income in the path of God, but also you should not forget other affairs like justice and his love.²

2.5. Punishment for Offenders

*I*n the Quran, it is declared that if someone kills someone

¹ The Quran (2: 183, 185,187); Gospel of Matthew (6:16)

² The Quran(2: 3,43,83,110,177,277); Gospel of Matthew (23:23); Gospel of Luke (11:42); Deuteronomy (14:22,23)

else, his / her penalty is to be killed and in this killing there is “life”. In addition, it says that the sin of everyone will return to him/her. In Torah, this punishment is regulated as each member of body in return for its counterpart or “soul for soul”; it also said each person is responsible for his/her sin.

In Bible, it is asserted that if an eye or hand or foot or other members of body commits sin, it is better to cut that part rather than falling into Hell.¹

2-6. Eating And Drinking Pure Things

*I*n Torah eating some animals like pigs, drinking wine and alcohol, and things like blood and corpse are forbidden. The characteristics of allowed and forbidden animals have been mentioned in the Bibles as well. In Luke, it is said that an angel came to Zacharias and gave him the good news of Johns birth declaring: “He will not take wine or strong drink; he will be full of the spirit of God from his birth. And he will go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, turning the hearts of fathers to their children,... to make ready a people whose hearts have been turned to the Lord.”

This shows that avoiding drinking wine is of the characteristics of good people. Quran in some verses advises to eat pure and Halal things and forbid consuming blood, corpse, pig, and other Haram animals.²

¹ The Quran (2:178,179), (5:33,38,45); Leviticus (24:18,19); Deuteronomy (24:16)

² The Quran(2:57,168,173,219), (5:3,90,91), (6:138,146), (16:115); Gospel of Luke (1:12-17); Leviticus (7:23- 27), (10: 8-10, 11),(19:26), Deuteronomy (14:4-21), (29:5,6)

2.7. Halal Sexual Relationship

Regarding this topic, I would like to draw your attention to 3 subcategories related to it in a way or other. Sex in marriage (which is hillal), sex out of marriage (which is not halal) and divorce.

2.7.1 Marriage

Marriage is regarded as something very valuable in the Quran and Bible and its limitations such as: marriage with our family members or intimate relatives like father, mother, sister, aunt, uncle, sister-in-law, (sister of your wife), mother-in-law (mother of your wife), father-in-law (father of your husband)....have been mentioned. Also marrying to adulterers is forbidden. It is asserted that only an adulterer can marry an adulterer.¹

2.7.2. Forbidden sex (out-of-marriage sex)

Keeping your virginity before marriage has been greatly advised in the holy Quran . Besides Quran, the Torah and Gospels forbid homosexuality and a severe torture is allocated for its committers.²

¹ The Quran(2: 222,223), (4:22-25), (24:3,31); Gospel of Matthew (19:4-6), Gospel of Mark (10:6-9); Leviticus (18:6),(20:14, 17), (21:7); Deuteronomy (27:16, 20)

² The Quran(7: 33, 80,81), (6 :151), (17 :32), (23: 5,6), (24:2, 19,30, 31,33), (33 :30); Gospel of Matthew (5:27), (15:19), Gospel of Mark (7:21), (10:6-8,19), Leviticus (18:22,23), (19:19), (20:10-17)

2.7.3.Divorce

*T*hough holy books allow divorce but it is still regarded as something unapproved and hated. From the verses belong to divorce it can be inferred that marriage is very valuable and necessary but in cases of constraint and compulsion, divorce is allowed.

But divorce with no reason but out of carnal desire will bring hatred of God and it should be strongly avoided.¹

2.8. Loan

*A*ll holy books encourage people and the faithful to lend their money to others and declared that a great reward is allocated for their deed by God.

The Quran says, in fact when the faithful lend money to needy people, they loan God, and God in return will reward them in double or more and will forgive their sins. The Gospels talk of lending money without expecting its return. The Torah advises people to lend interest-free money to relatives or friends.²

2.9. Avoiding Usury

*O*f other commonalities of the holy books are prohibition of usury. Quran knows trading as something halal.

¹ The Quran(2:230-232), (2: 227-229, 241), (65:1), (66 :5); Gospel of Matthew (19:8,9); Gospel of Mark (1: 11,12); Deuteronomy (24:1-3)

² The Quran(2:245,282), (5:12), (57:11), (64:17); Gospel of Matthew (5:42); Gospel of Luke (6:34,35); Leviticus (25:35,36), Deuteronomy (15:8), (23:19,20)

Torah is not allowed usury as well.¹

2.10. Truthfulness in doing business

Observing justice and fairness in business and trading and being honest in weighting are advised by all holy books. Likewise, it is said it is not ok to sell something lesser than what is claimed in weight. This law has not been specialized for any special career; but it is true for all jobs and professions.²

2.11. Fair Judgment

Fair judgment, solving disputations and arguments of people on the basis of justice, also, aspiring for having justice are of other commonalities of all religions. Quran besides denoting to being fair in judgment explains that the things which are hindrance in having justice like carnal desires should be avoided. Torah advises people not to make deviation in judgment.³ Bible encouraged us to seeking peace and justice in arguments and do attempt to have peace.

¹ The Quran (2:275), (3:130), (30:39); Leviticus (25:35,36); Deuteronomy (23:19,20)

² The Quran (6:152), (7:85), (17:35), (55:14),(83:1); Leviticus (19:35, 36); Deuteronomy (25:13-16)

³ The Quran(4 :135), (5 :8), (16:90), (42 :15), (49 :9); Gospel of Matthew (5:6, 9, 10, 25-27), Deuteronomy (27:20)

2.12. Faithful Governor

*A*ccording to commonalities, it is believed that the governor of each society should be one of the members of that society. That is, in a society in which people believe in God, their governor should believe in God and should not be infidels or the one who is God's enemy and does not follow His commands.¹

2.13. Obeying God's Command And His limits

*P*eople should observe God's rules and regulations and one of the other commonalities is that these rules and regulations should be followed completely not to observe and follow some and put the rest aside.²

2.14. Avoidance of Committing Sins

*A*voiding committing sins is of the very emphasized commands mentioned in holy books. Some of these sins are as follows: killing other people (manslaughter), robbing, infidelity, telling lies,...³

¹ The Quran (4:59,83), (5:51, 55), (10 :35), (60 :1); Deuteronomy (17:14-20)

² The Quran (2:187, 229), (3:33), (4:13,14,59,150), (5:92), (6 :151), (47:33); Gospel of Matthew (5:17,18), Leviticus (19:37), (0:22), (26:14); Deuteronomy (4: 1, 2)

³ The Quran (2:81), (4:31), (6:151), (42:37), (53 :32); Gospel of Matthew (4:17), Gospel of Mark (1:15); Leviticus (6:2)

2.15. War

*F*ight with evils or evildoers and separating good from bad or infidels from believers are of the other commonalities. Quran orders Jihad and fight towards enemies. In Bible, Jesus said Do not have the thought that I have come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace but a sword.¹

¹ The Quran (2:216), (5:35), (8 :74), (22:78); Gospel of Matthew (10:34)