

The First and Last Enemy: Jew-Hatred in Islam
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By [Andrew G. Bostom](#)

[Fawaz Damra](#), the former Imam of the Islamic Center of Cleveland was convicted in 2004 for lying to immigration officials about his links to the terrorist group Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and subsequently deported. Yet Damra was touted as a promoter of interfaith dialogue even after [evidence](#) of his participation in [fundraising events for the PIJ](#), was produced, along with a videotape of the Imam telling [a crowd of Muslim supporters in 1991](#) that they should aim "...a rifle at *the first and last enemy of the Islamic nation*, and that is *the sons of monkeys and pigs, the Jews*."

As I will demonstrate, Imam Damra's blatant Jew-hatred was fully sanctioned by -- indeed he was merely paraphrasing, and quoting directly from -- the core religious texts of Islam. And the [historical treatment of Jews in Muslim societies](#) has been consistent with this sacralized religious bigotry. Sheer ignorance of such theology and history, combined with craven denial, allowed Damra's words to go unchallenged for more than a decade. However the Damra affair is pathognomonic of a much larger and more dangerous phenomenon: the complete, often willful failure to examine and understand the living legacy of Islam's foundational anti-Jewish animus.

[Islamic Antisemitism = Islamic Jew-Hatred](#)**

Although Jew-hatred is an uncompromisingly clear term, in both common and scholarly usage, the synonymous "Antisemitism," (which should *never* be written with a hyphen!), predominates. Robert Wistrich has emphasized the problematic nature of the term "Antisemitism", derived from a group of cognate "Semitic" (i.e., stemming from the Biblical Shem, one of Noah's three sons) languages -- Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Ethiopic -- and applied, inappropriately, to a pseudo-scientific racial designation by the German journalist Wilhelm Marr, in the 1870s. Regardless, for the past century, as Wistrich notes, ...the illogical term 'antisemitism'...[w]hich never really meant hatred of 'Semites' (*for example, Arabs* [emphasis added in original]) at all, but rather hatred of Jews, has come to be accepted in general usage as denoting all forms of hostility towards Jews and Judaism throughout history.

But perhaps the strongest evidence that antisemitism was never meant to be directed at Arabs (or Muslims, or any non-Jews) comes from the perpetrators of genocidal antisemitic violence, the Nazis. During a November, 1942 press conference, a Berlin Foreign Ministry spokesman, as reported in the *New York Times*, took "great pains" to assure Arabs that Nazi antisemitic policies were directed at Jews, *exclusively*. The spokesman elaborated:

The difference between Germany's attitude toward Jews and Arabs has been clearly shown in the exchange of letters between the former Prime Minister of Iraq, Rashid Ali, and the German Institute for Racial Problems. We have never said the Arabs were

inferior as a race. On the contrary, we have always pointed out the glorious historic past of the Arab people.

Moreover, in the specific context of the Arab Muslim world during the high Middle Ages (circa [950-1250](#) C.E.), S.D. Goitein's seminal analyses of the Geniza documentary record employed the term anti-Semitism,

...in order to differentiate animosity against Jews from the discrimination practiced by Islam against non-Muslims in general. Our scrutiny of the Geniza material has proved the existence of 'antisemitism' in the time and the area considered here...

Goitein cites as concrete proof of his assertion that a unique strain of Islamic Jew hatred was extant at this time (i.e., up to a millennium ago) --exploding the common assumption of its absence -- the fact that letters from the Cairo Geniza material,

...have a special word for it and, most significantly, one not found in the Bible or in Talmudic literature (nor registered in any Hebrew dictionary), but one much used and obviously coined in the Geniza period. It is *sin'ūth*, "hatred", a Jew-baiter being called *sōnē*, "a hater".

Incidents of such Muslim Jew hatred documented by Goitein in the Geniza come from northern Syria (Salamiyya and al-Mar'arra), Morocco (Fez), and Egypt (Alexandria), with references to the latter being particularly frequent.

Despite all of the following -- clear historical evidence of specific Islamic antisemitism, from the Geniza record of the high Middle Ages (including the coinage of a unique Hebrew word to characterize such Muslim Jew hatred, i.e., *sin'ūth*), published in full by Goitein as of 1971; important studies of foundational Muslim sources detailing the sacralized rationale for Islam's anti-Jewish bigotry, including Hartwig Hirschfeld's mid 1880s essay series on Muhammad's subjugation of the Jews of Medina; George Vajda's elegant, comprehensive 1937 analysis focusing primarily on the hadith (the putative words and deeds of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, as recorded by pious transmitters); and much more recently, Haggai Ben-Shammai's concise 1988 study of key examples of Jew hatred in the Koran and Koranic exegesis -- conventional academic (and journalistic) wisdom continues to assert that Muslim Jew hatred is entirely a 20th century phenomenon, a mere by-product of the advent of the Zionist movement and the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict over the lands comprising the original 1922 Mandate for historical Palestine (i.e., modern Israel, Jordan, Judea, Samaria, and Gaza).

Such thinking also contends that this strain of Jew hatred is a loose amalgam of re-cycled medieval Christian Judeophobic motifs, calumnies from the Czarist Russia "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," and standard Nazi propaganda. A prototypical assessment of this ilk was written by the journalist Lawrence Wright in his widely acclaimed investigative account of the events leading to the cataclysmic acts of jihad terrorism on September 11, 2001.

Until the end of World War II...Jews lived safely -- although submissively --under Muslim rule for 1,200 years, enjoying full religious freedom; but in the 1930s, Nazi propaganda on Arabic-language shortwave radio, coupled with slanders by Christian missionaries in the region, infected the area with this ancient Western prejudice [antisemitism]. After the war, Cairo became a sanctuary for Nazis, who advised the

military and the government. The rise of the Islamist movement coincided with the decline of fascism, but they overlapped in Egypt, and the germ passed into a new carrier. Wright's statement was not accompanied by documentation -- this *was* the accepted wisdom after all. And in its essence, Wright's views are entirely consistent with those of the more elaborate prevailing scholarly analyses summarized quite accurately by Esther Webman in 1994:

Antisemitism did not exist in the traditional Islamic world.... Antisemitism is, in fact, a relatively new phenomenon in the Arab world, gaining ground particularly since the eruption of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the mid-twentieth century. Nazi-style antisemitic books and publications have been produced openly. For example, there are at least nine different Arabic translations of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", which was translated into Arabic for the first time in the 1920s...The development of European-style antisemitism in the Arab countries is related to three major factors: first penetration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of a variety of European ideologies and concepts into the Arab world, among them antisemitism; second, the collapse of traditional political systems and of the loyalties and practices associated with them, giving way to the emergence of nationalistic government structures less tolerant in their treatment of religious, ethnic, and ideological minorities; and third, and most crucial, the development of the conflict over the domination of Palestine, beginning with Jewish resettlement in the late nineteenth century, followed by the establishment of the State of Israel and the ensuing Arab-Israeli conflict...Themes borrowed from European Christendom were adapted by incorporating references in them.

But this very flawed construct ignores primary, uniquely Islamic components of Muslim Jew hatred, both past and present. Indeed, for the Muslim masses, basic Islamic education in the Koran, hadith, and sira (earliest Muslim biographies of Muhammad) may create an immutable superstructure of Jew hatred on to which non-Muslim sources of Jew hatred are easily grafted.

The uncomfortable examination of Islamic doctrines and history is required in order to understand the enduring phenomenon of Muslim Jew hatred, which dates back to the origins of Islam. We can no longer view Muslim Jew hatred as a "borrowed phenomenon," seen exclusively, or even primarily, through the prism of Nazism and the Holocaust, the tragic legacy of Judeophobic Christian traditions, or "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" from Czarist Russia.

For example, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi wrote these words in his 700 page treatise rationalizing Muslim Jew hatred, *Banu Isra'il fi al-Koran wa al-Sunna [Jews in the Koran and the Traditions]*, originally published in the 1970s, and then re-issued in 1986/87:

[The] Koran describes the Jews with their own particular degenerate characteristics, i.e. killing the prophets of Allah, corrupting His words by putting them in the wrong places, consuming the people's wealth frivolously, refusal to distance themselves from the evil they do, and other ugly characteristics caused by their deep-rooted lasciviousness... only a minority of the Jews keep their word... [A]ll Jews are not the same. The good ones become Muslims, the bad ones do not. (Koran 3:113)

Tantawi was apparently rewarded for this scholarly effort by being named Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University in 1996, a position he still holds. These are the expressed, "carefully researched" views on Jews held by the nearest Muslim equivalent to a Pope -- the head of the most prestigious center of Muslim learning in Sunni Islam, Sunnis representing some 85% of the world's Muslims. And Sheikh Tantawi has not mollified such hatemongering beliefs since becoming the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar as his statements on the Jews as "enemies of Allah, descendants of apes and pigs", the legitimacy of homicide bombing of Jews, or "dialogue" with Jews (just below), make clear.

...anyone who avoids meeting with the enemies in order to counter their dubious claims and stick fingers into their eyes, is a coward. My stance stems from Allah's book [the Koran], more than one-third of which deals with the Jews...[I] wrote a dissertation dealing with them [the Jews], all their false claims and their punishment by Allah. I still believe in everything written in that dissertation. [i.e., from above, in *Banu Isra'il fi al-Koran wa al-Sunna*]

Tantawi's case illustrates the prevalence and depth of sacralized, "normative" Jew hatred in the contemporary Muslim world. Even if all non-Muslim Judeophobic themes were expunged from the Islamic world, the living legacy of anti-Jewish hatred, and violence rooted in Islam's sacred texts -- Koran, hadith, and sira -- would remain intact. The assessment and understanding of Islamic antisemitism must begin with an unapologetic analysis of the anti-Jewish motifs contained in these foundational texts of Islam.

[Jew Hatred in Islam's Sacred Texts: From Theory to Practice**](#)

The essential nature of the Koranic "revelation," as understood by Muslims, was elaborated in 1891 by Theodore Nöldeke (whose seminal 1860 *Geschichte des Qorans* remains a vital tool for Koranic research):

To the faith of the Muslims...the Koran is the word of God, and such also is the claim which the book itself advances...

And to this day, for the Muslim masses, as Ibn Warraq notes,

...the Koran remains the infallible word of God, the immediate word of God sent down, through the intermediary of a "spirit" or "holy spirit" or Gabriel, to Muhammad in perfect, pure Arabic; and every thing contained therein is eternal and uncreated. The original text is in heaven.... The angel dictated the revelation to the Prophet, who repeated it after him, and then revealed it to the world. Modern Muslims also claim that these revelations have been preserved exactly as revealed to Muhammad, without any change, addition, or loss whatsoever... the Koran remains for all Muslims, and not just "fundamentalists" the uncreated word of God Himself. It is valid for all times and places; its ideals are, according to all Muslims, absolutely true and **beyond any criticism**. [emphasis added]

Thus, the Jews' traits as characterized in the Koran are deemed both infallible and timeless. Unfortunately, as a central anti-Jewish motif, the Koran decrees an eternal curse upon the Jews (Koran 2:61/ 3:112) for slaying the prophets and transgressing against the will of Allah. This motif is coupled to Koranic verses 5:60 and 5:78 which describe the Jews transformation into apes and swine (5:60), having been "...cursed by the tongue of David, and Jesus, Mary's son" (5:78). The related verse, 5:64, accuses the Jews-as

Palestinian Authority President [Mahmoud Abbas did in a January 2007 speech](#), citing Koran 5:64-of being "spreaders of war and corruption", a sort of ancient Koranic antecedent of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The centrality of the Jews' permanent "abasement and humiliation," and being "laden with God's anger" in the corpus of Muslim exegetic literature on Koran 2:61 (including the hadith and Koranic commentaries), is clear. By nature deceitful and treacherous, the Jews rejected Allah's signs and prophets, including Isa, the Muslim Jesus. Classical Koranic commentators such as Tabari (d. 923), Zamakshari (d. 1143), Baydawi (d. 1316), and Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), when discussing Koran 5:82 ("*Thou wilt surely find the most hostile of men to the believers are the Jews and the idolaters; and thou wilt surely find the nearest of them in love to the believers are those who say 'We are Christians'; that, because some of them are priests and monks, and they wax not proud.*"), concur on the unique animus of the Jews towards the Muslims, which is repeatedly linked to the curse of Koran 2:61. For example, in his commentary on 5:82, Tabari writes,

In my opinion, [the Christians] are not like the Jews who always scheme in order to murder the emissaries and the prophets, and who oppose God in his positive and negative commandments, and who corrupt His scripture which He revealed in His books.

Tabari's classical interpretations of Koran 5:82 and 2:61, as well as his discussion of the related verse 9:29 mandating the Jews payment of the *jizya* (Koranic poll-tax), represent both Antisemitic and more general anti-*dhimmi* views that became, and remain, intrinsic to Islam to this day. Here is Tabari's discussion of 2:61 and its relationship to verse 9:29, which emphasizes the purposely debasing nature of the Koranic poll tax:

..."abasement and poverty were imposed and laid down upon them", as when someone says "the imam imposed the poll tax (*jizya*) on free non-Muslim subjects", or "The man imposed land tax on his slave", meaning thereby that he obliged him [to pay] it, or, "The commander imposed a sortie on his troops", meaning he made it their duty....God commanded His believing servants *not* to give them [i.e., the non-Muslim people of the scripture] security-as long as they continued to disbelieve in Him and his Messenger-unless they paid the poll tax to them; God said: "Fight those who believe not in God and the Last Day and do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden-such men as practice not the religion of truth [Islam], being of those who have been given the Book [Bible]-until they pay the poll tax, being humble" (Koran 9:29).. The *dhimmi*s [non-Muslim tributary's] posture during the collection of the *jizya*- "[lowering themselves] by walking on their hand, ...reluctantly

...Ibn Zaid said about His words "and abasement and poverty were imposed upon them", 'These are the Jews of the Children of Israel'. I said: 'Are they the Copts of Egypt?' He said: "What have the Copts of Egypt to do with this? No, by God, they are not; but they are the Jews, the Children of Israel....By "and slain the prophets unrightfully" He means that they used to kill the Messengers of God without God's leave, denying their messages and rejecting their prophethood.

Indeed the Koran's overall discussion of the Jews is marked by a litany of their sins and punishments, as if part of a divine indictment and conviction process. The Jews wronged themselves (16:118) by losing faith (7:168) and breaking their covenant (5:13). The Jews (echoing an ante-Nicaean, Marcionite polemic) are a nation that has passed away (2:134;

repeated in 2:141). Twice Allah sent his instruments (the Assyrians/or Babylonians, and Romans) to punish this perverse people (17:4-5) -- their dispersal over the earth is proof of Allah's rejection (7:168). The Jews are further warned about both their arrogant claim that they remain Allah's chosen people (62:6), and continued disobedience and "corruption" (5:32-33). Other sins, some repeated, are enumerated: abuse, even killing of prophets (4:155; 2:91), including Isa [Jesus] (3:55; 4:157), is a consistent theme. The Jews ridiculed Muhammad as Ra'ina (the evil one, in 2:104; 4:46), and they are also accused of lack of faith, taking words out of context, disobedience, and distortion (4:46). Precious few of them are believers (also 4:46). These "perverse" creatures also claim that Ezra is the messiah and they worship rabbis who defraud men of their possessions (9:30). Additional sins are described: the Jews are typified as an "envious" people (2:109), whose hearts are as hardened as rocks (2:74). They are further accused of confounding the truth (2:42), deliberately perverting scripture (2:75), and being liars (2:78). Ill-informed people of little faith (2:89), they pursue vague and wishful fancies (2:111). Other sins have contributed to their being stamped (see 2:61/ 3:112 above) with "wretchedness/abasement and humiliation," including-usury (2:275), sorcery (2:102), hedonism (2:96), and idol worship (2:53). More (and repeat) sins, are described still: the Jews' idol worship is again mentioned (4:51), then linked and followed by charges of other (often repeat) iniquities-the "tremendous calumny" against Mary (4:156), as well as usury and cheating (4:161). Most Jews are accused of being "evil-livers" /"transgressors" /"ungodly" (3:110), who, deceived by their own lies (3:24), try to turn Muslims from Islam (3:99). Jews are blind and deaf to the truth (5:71), and what they have not forgotten they have perverted-they mislead (3:69), confound the truth (3:71), twist tongues (3:79), and cheat Gentiles without remorse (3:75). Muslims are advised not to take the Jews as friends (5:51), and to beware of the inveterate hatred that Jews bear towards them (5:82). The Jews' ultimate sin and punishment are made clear: they are the devil's minions (4:60) cursed by Allah, their faces will be obliterated (4:47), and if they do not accept the true faith of Islam-the Jews who understand their faith become Muslims (3:113)-they will be made into apes (2:65/ 7:166), or apes and swine (5:60), and burn in the Hellfires (4:55, 5:29, 98:6, and 58:14-19).

A general guiding principle of the hadith for Muslims is *khalifuhum*, which means, "do not do like them." As Georges Vajda demonstrated, however, this seemingly banal principle which covers matters ranging from daily customs and practices (such as basic grooming and dress practices to avoid), is laden with anti-Jewish animus which only intensifies when the hadith deal with more profound subjects such as eschatology.

Even sanctioned Muslim practices of onanism/masturbation, and bestiality, in particular with slaves whom the Muslims wished to avoid impregnating, became a source of friction *vis a vis* the Jews, who were revolted by these practices. The customs to be observed at funerals, the matters of burial plots and tombs, and more decidedly, Muhammad's view of the fate of buried Jews, also illustrate anti-Jewish animus. For example, public lamentation over the dead became forbidden to the Jews (and Christians). The hadith further condemn certain physical gestures for being specific to Jews.

The hadith also portray the Jews' hatred and jealousy of Muhammad: despite being convinced of the authenticity of Mohammed's divine mission, the Jews did not become votaries of Islam due to pride in their birth and appetite for domination. (These charges became a recurrent theme in later Muslim polemics.) A related commonplace charge in the hadith is that Jews altered their sacred texts deleting Muhammad's name and precise description. Another series of hadiths elaborate on Koran 3:93, and associated Koranic exegeses, which accuse the Jews of misrepresenting their alimentary prohibitions, most notably camel's flesh, as in fact described in the Torah. Vajda observes, "distrust must reign" in Muslims relations with Jews-Muslims must especially beware of asking them for information of a religious kind because, "...the Jews...are rebels to the solicitations of Islam and keep their religious traditions in a way liable to lead Muslims into error."

Striking evidence of Jewish perfidy in the hadith is illustrated by their continual, surreptitious cursing of the Muslims while ostensibly offering proper greetings. Other traditions attribute evil spells to the Jews.

Following the Muslims' initial conquest of the Jewish farming oasis of Khaybar, one of the vanquished Jewesses reportedly served Muhammad poisoned mutton (or goat), *which resulted, ultimately, in his protracted, agonizing death*. Ibn Sa'd's biography emphasizes the conspiratorial nature of this poisoning as plotted by Jews, and insists that the offending Jewess who poisoned Muhammad was put to death. *Thus the Koranic curse (verse 2:61, repeated in 3:112) upon the Jews for (primarily) rejecting, even slaying Allah's prophets, is updated with perfect archetypal logic in this canonical hadith.*

Muslim eschatology, as depicted in the hadith, highlights the Jews' supreme hostility to Islam. Jews are described as adherents of the Dajjâl-the Muslim equivalent of the Anti-Christ-or according to another tradition, the Dajjâl is himself Jewish. At his appearance, other traditions maintain that the Dajjâl will be accompanied by 70,000 Jews from Isfahan wrapped in their robes, and armed with polished sabers, their heads covered with a sort of veil. When the Dajjâl is defeated, his Jewish companions will be slaughtered-everything will deliver them up except for the so-called gharkad tree. According to a canonical hadith-repeated in the 1988 Hamas Charter (in section 7)-if a Jew seeks refuge under a tree or a stone, these objects will be able to speak to tell a Muslim: "There is a Jew behind me; come and kill him!" Another hadith variant, which takes place in Jerusalem, has Isa (the Muslim Jesus) leading the Arabs in a rout of the Dajjâl and his company of 70,000 armed Jews. And the notion of jihad "ransom" extends even into Islamic eschatology-on the day of resurrection the vanquished Jews will be consigned to Hellfire, and this will expiate Muslims who have sinned, sparing them from this fate.

Stubborn malevolence, however is the Jews defining worldly characteristic: rejecting Muhammad and refusing to convert to Islam out of jealousy, envy and even selfish personal interest, lead them to acts of treachery, in keeping with their inveterate nature:

"...sorcery, poisoning, assassination held no scruples for them." These archetypes sanction Muslim hatred towards the Jews, and the admonition to at best, "subject [the Jews] to Muslim domination," as *dhimmi*s, treated "with contempt," under certain "humiliating arrangements."

Hartwig Hirschfeld's study of the *sira* and their depiction of Muhammad's interactions with the Jews of Medina concludes that "mutual disappointment" characterized their relationship, with predictably disastrous consequences for the Jews. During his attempts at proselytization, Muhammad's misunderstanding (or sheer ignorance) of Jewish doctrine was ridiculed by rabbis and Jewish poets. Ibn Ishaq, author of the earliest Muslim biography of Muhammad, accuses them of "hostility..., envy, hatred, and malice because God ha[d] chosen his apostle from the Arabs." Regardless, the Jews' stubborn refusal to convert to Islam altered, decisively, the trajectory of Muhammad's religious thinking. Following the Battle of Badr-which established the power of nascent Islam-Muhammad initiated a campaign of political assassinations of Jewish (or presumptively Jewish) poets and leaders. Ibn Ishaq recorded these telling words of one of Muhammad's Muslim assassins, "Our attack upon God's enemy cast terror among the Jews, and there was no Jew in Medina who did not fear for his life." Such fear proved to be well founded, as on the very morning after one political assassination (i.e., of Ka'b b. al 'Ashraf), Muhammad encouraged the Muslims to slay Jews indiscriminately, according to Ibn Ishaq:

The apostle said, "Kill any Jew that falls into your power." Thereupon Muhayyisa b. Mas'ud leapt upon Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant with whom they had social and business relations, and killed him.

These murders of individual Jews were followed by the siege, expropriation, and expulsion of the Medinan Jewish tribes B. Qaynuqa and B. Nadir, and the subsequent massacre of the Jewish men of the B. Qurayza whose wives, children, and possessions were then seized as booty by the Muslims. Muhammad subsequently prepared for his campaign against Khaybar-a farming oasis and the last Jewish stronghold in Northern Arabia, where survivors (most notably, the B. Nadir) of the Muslims earlier attacks on Medinan Jewry had also sought refuge-with two further political assassinations. Bloody assaults by the Muslims which ensued shortly afterwards resulted in the complete subjugation of the Jews of Khaybar, the survivors becoming *dhimmi*s. The theological animus which motivated Muhammad's political subjugation of the Jews, specifically, became an indelible part of Muslim attitudes toward Jews across space and time. It also defined eternal parameters in which Jews would be permitted to live as humiliated Muslim *dhimmi*s, the Jews of Khaybar-who, according to the hadith and *sira*, were eventually expelled from Arabia by Caliph Umar-being the prototype.

And a profoundly anti-Jewish motif occurring after the events recorded in the hadith and *sira*, put forth in early Muslim historiography (for example, by Tabari), is most assuredly

a part of "the birth pangs" of Islam: the story of Abd Allah b. Saba, an alleged renegade Yemenite Jew, and founder of the heterodox Shi'ite sect. He is held responsible-identified as a Jew-for promoting the Shi'ite heresy and fomenting the rebellion and internal strife associated with this primary breach in Islam's "political innocence", culminating in the assassination of the third Rightly Guided Caliph Uthman, and the bitter, lasting legacy of Sunni-Shi'ite sectarian strife.

As noted previously, consistent with Islam's theological Jew-hatred, S.D. Goitein's seminal analyses of the Cairo Geniza materials from the high Middle Ages (~ [950-1250](#)), reveal that Jews living a millennium ago were already experiencing an indigenous Muslim Antisemitism in the Middle East and North Africa. The intensity of this Muslim Jew-hatred motivated Jews of the era to coin two unique Hebrew words: *sinūth* for Muslim Antisemitism, and *sōnē* for the Muslim haters who promulgated it. Moreover, two independent Muslim observers writing in the mid-9th century (the polymath al-Jahiz, and the Sufi theologian al-Muhasibi) suggest the most plausible sources of such anti-Jewish animus among the Muslim masses were Koran 5:82, and the sira accounts of Muhammad's interactions with the Jews of Medina. Nearly a thousand years later in mid-19th century Egypt, E.W. Lane also attributed the Jew hatred he commonly witnessed among ordinary Muslims to their understanding of Koran 5:82.

Although Antisemitic Islamic motifs from the Koran, hadith, and sira were much more commonly employed in daily life as a form of chronic discrimination against Jews, they have also been used to incite, more extensive persecutions, including mass violence against Jewish communities.

Rigid conformity to a motif in the hadith (and sira) based on the putative death bed wish of Muhammad himself, as recorded by Umar (the second Rightly Guided Caliph), "Two religions shall not remain together in the peninsula of the Arabs," had tragic consequences for the Jews of Yemen. (The hadith and sira further maintain that Umar did eventually expel the Jews of Khaybar.) Thus a pious 17th century Yemenite ruler, Al-Mahdi wishing to fulfill the mandate of this hadith in Yemen, as well, in [1679-1680](#), expelled the entire Jewish population of Yemen - men, women and children- deporting them to the inhospitable wastelands of the plain of Tihama. This expulsion was accompanied by the destruction of synagogues, desecration of Torah scrolls, and inducements for conversion to Islam. Three-quarters of the thousands of Jews expelled perished from exposure to the intense daytime heat (and evening cold), absence of potable water, and the subsequent spread of epidemic disease. The major Yemenite Jewish community in San'a experienced a 90 percent mortality rate from this catastrophic exile-of about 10,000 persons exiled, only about one tenth, i.e., 1,000, survived.

References to the Jews transformation into apes (Koran 2:65 and 7:166), or apes and swine (Koran 5:60)-perhaps the most striking Koranic motifs for the Jews debasement, which have always transcended any mere application to "Sabbath breakers"-have been

exploited in polemical incitement against Jews, or odes celebrating their having been disgraced and slaughtered. Here again, the sacralized prototype is clear: right before subduing the Banu Qurayza and orchestrating the mass execution of the adult males from the besieged Medinan Jewish tribe, Muhammad addressed these Jews with hateful disparagement, as "You brothers of monkeys." Some 3000 to 4000 Jews were massacred in the 1066 Granada pogrom, inspired in part by an anti-Jewish ode containing the line, "Many a pious Muslim is in awe of the vilest infidel ape," referring to the Jewish communal leader, the vizier Joseph b. Samuel Naghrela. More Jews were killed in this one pogrom than in the Crusaders' much more infamous ravages through the Rhineland 30 years later. Anti-Jewish riots and massacres by Muslims accompanied the 1291 death of Jewish physician-vizier Sa'd ad-Daula in Baghdad-the plundering and killing of Jews, which extended throughout Iraq (and likely into Persia)-were celebrated in a verse by the Muslim preacher Zaynu'd-Din 'Ali b. Said, which begins with this debasing reference to the Jews as apes: "His name we praise who rules the firmament./These apish Jews are done away and shent [ruined]." Referring to the Jews as "brothers of apes", who repeatedly blasphemed the prophet Muhammad, and whose overall conduct reflected their hatred of Muslims, the Moroccan cleric Al-Maghili (d. 1505) fomented, and then personally lead, a Muslim pogrom (in ~ 1490) against the Jews of the southern Moroccan oasis of Touat, plundering and killing Jews en masse, and destroying their synagogue in neighboring Tamantit. Each of these massacres was incited and/or celebrated by depictions of Jews as apes in verses by popular clerics-in the case of Touat, the "composer" of such a verse al-Maghili (d. 1505), an important Muslim theologian whose writings influenced Moroccan religious attitudes towards Jews into the 20th century-led the pogrom himself. Maghili also declared in verse, "Love of the Prophet, requires hatred of the Jews."

Currently the invocation of Koranic references to the Jews as apes and pigs pervades Muslim (especially Arab Muslim) religious and political discourse in print, audio, video, and internet venues. Young children are targeted with these messages, and even encouraged to repeat them by approving adults during additional media coverage. Menachem Milson recently warned that repeated invocation of these motifs cannot be "dismissed as mere vulgar invective", or "primitive magical thinking". Rather, these recurring expressions need to be understood as a form of dehumanization serving as a pretext for the destruction of Jews. Given the murderous historical legacy of Muslim societies that invoked these Koranic motifs (i.e., in Granada, Baghdad, and Touat, Morocco) his concern is not alarmist.

[The Islamization of European Antisemitism**](#)

On Thursday, September 7, 2006, an All-Party Parliamentary Enquiry into Antisemitism issued its finding that anti-Jewish violence had become endemic in Britain, both on the streets and university campuses. A major surge of attacks had accompanied-and followed-the summer 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, and the report held a "minority of Islamic extremists" responsible for "inciting hatred toward Jews." As a press

report noted, The Parliamentary Enquiry's results are consistent with data recently published in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* by Yale University biostatistician Dr. Edward H. Kaplan, and Dr. Charles A. Small of the Yale Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism.

Drs. Kaplan and Small examined the views of 5004 Europeans, roughly 500 individuals sampled from each of 10 European Union countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). The authors' main publicized results confirmed their (rather commonsensical) *a priori* hypothesis: anti-Israel sentiments *strongly and independently* predicted the likelihood that an individual was Antisemitic in a graded manner, i.e., the *more* anti-Israel (on a scale of zero to 4), the *more* a person was likely to be Antisemitic. But perhaps an even more striking finding in light of the burgeoning Jew hatred now evident in Europe's Muslim communities, received much less attention: ***in a controlled comparison to European Christians (as the "referent" group), European Muslims were nearly eightfold (i.e., 800%) more likely to be overtly Antisemitic.*** [emphasis added]. Furthermore, in light of the Pew Global Attitudes Project data on Muslim attitudes toward Jews in Islamic countries, the Yale study likely underestimated the extent of Antisemitism amongst Europe's Muslim communities, had more poorly educated, less acclimated European Muslims been sampled. Pew's earlier international survey indicated,

In the Muslim world, attitudes toward Jews remain starkly negative, including virtually unanimous unfavorable ratings of 98% in Jordan and 97% in Egypt. *Muslims living in Western countries have a more moderate view of Jews - still more negative than positive, but not nearly by the lopsided margins that prevail in Muslim countries.*

The clear excess virulence of the Antisemitism in Europe's Muslim versus Christian populations, combined with the evidence that globally, Muslims in Islamic countries exhibit even more fanatical Jew hatred than their European co-religionists, defies the "conventional wisdom" regarding the ultimate origins of Muslim Jew hatred in Western Europe, and beyond. This very flawed construct-that Muslim Jew hatred is merely a loose amalgam of re-cycled medieval Christian Judeophobic motifs, calumnies from the Czarist Russian "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", and standard Nazi propaganda-continually ignores both empirical contemporary observations, and primary, uniquely Islamic components of Jew hatred, both past and present. When the late 23 year-old Parisian Jew Ilan Halimi was being tortured to death in February 2006, his Muslim torturers, as Nidra Poller wrote in the Wall Street Journal "...phoned the family on several occasions and made them listen to the recitation of verses from the Koran, while Ilan's tortured screams could be heard in the background." In the heart of Western Europe, Ilan Halimi's torturers/murderers did *not* invoke any non-Islamic sources of anti-Jewish hate, only the Koran.

[*Islam Über Alles-The Convergence of Jihad, Islamic Jew-Hatred, and Nazism***](#)

Thirty-four years ago (1973/74) Bat Ye'or published a remarkably foresighted analysis of the Islamic Antisemitism resurgent in her native Egypt, and being packaged for dissemination throughout the Muslim world. The primary, core Antisemitic motifs were Islamic, derived from Islam's foundational texts, on to which European, especially Nazi elements were grafted.

The pejorative characteristics of Jews as they are described in Muslim religious texts are applied to modern Jews. Anti-Judaism and anti-Zionism are equivalent due to the inferior status of Jews in Islam, and because divine will dooms Jews to wandering and misery, the Jewish state appears to Muslims as an unbearable affront and a sin against Allah. Therefore it must be destroyed by Jihad. Here the Pan-Arab and anti-Western theses that consider Israel as an advanced instrument of the West in the Islamic world, come to reinforce religious anti-Judaism. The religious and political fuse in a purely Islamic context onto which are grafted foreign elements. If, on the doctrinal level, Nazi influence is secondary to the Islamic base, the technique with which the Antisemitic material has been reworked, and the political purposes being pursued, present striking similarities with Hitler's Germany.

That anti-Jewish opinions have been widely spread in Arab nationalist circles since the 1930s is not in doubt. But their confirmation at [Al] Azhar [University] by the most important authorities of Islam enabled them to be definitively imposed, with the cachet of infallible authenticity, upon illiterate masses that were strongly attached to religious traditions.

Nazi academic and propagandist of extermination Johannes von Leers' writings and personal career trajectory—as a favored contributor in Goebbels' propaganda ministry, to his eventual adoption of Islam (as Omar Amin von Leers) while working as an anti-Western, and Antisemitic/anti-Zionist propagandist under Nasser's regime from the mid-1950s, until his death in 1965—epitomizes this convergence of jihad, Islamic Antisemitism, and racist, Nazi Antisemitism, as described by Bat Ye'or. Already in essays published in 1938 and 1942, the first dating back almost two decades before his formal conversion to Islam while in Egypt, von Leers produced analyses focused primarily on Muhammad's interactions with the Jews of Medina. These essays reveal his pious reverence for Islam and its prophet, and a thorough understanding of the sacralized Islamic sources for this narrative, i.e., the Koran, hadith, and sira. von Leers provided this reverent summary characterization of Muhammad's activities in Mecca, and later Medina, which is entirely consistent with standard Muslim apologetics, in 1942:.

[Mecca] For years Muhammad sought in Mecca to succeed with his preaching that there was only one God, the sole, all-merciful king of Judgment Day. He opposed to the Christian Trinity the unity of God, rejected the Christian doctrine of original sin and

salvation, and instead gave every believer as a guiding principle the complete fulfillment of the commands of the righteous, given by a compassionate and just God, before whom every individual person had to account for his acts.

[Medina] September 622 he left Mecca for Medina, where he took up residence. Here he encountered the Jewish problem for the first time. He believed in the victorious power of good in the world, he was firmly convinced that the religion of the one and only God, with its easy, practical, reasonable, basic laws for human life was nothing other than the original religion. He wanted to take mankind out of the current turmoil and lead it toward the original, clear vision of God. But since he had to deal with people who had been influenced by both Christianity and Judaism, he said that it was the religion in which Abraham (Ibrahim) had already believed, and which Christ and Moses had proclaimed, only each time it had been distorted by human beings. He said that this had been revealed anew to him by God. He wanted to make the path easy to follow for both Christians and Jews; thus at first he allowed his followers to pray facing toward Jerusalem. He repeatedly emphasized that he only wanted to purify the existing religions, to establish the restored, newly revealed faith. At the same time he was a skilled statesman. When the Arab tribes were unified, the Jews became a minority in Medina. Muhammad provided them with a kind of protectorate agreement: they were to retain their administration and their forms of worship, help the faithful defend the city, not ally themselves with Muhammad's opponents, and contribute to the faithful's wars. The Jews could have been satisfied with this. But they began a general hate campaign against Islam, which proclaimed a pure conception of God...

Citing (or referring to) the relevant foundational text sources (i.e., Koran 13:36; 8:55-58; 59:1-15; the sira and canonical hadith descriptions of the fate of individual Jews such as Abu Afak and Ka'b ibn Ashraf, and the Jewish tribes Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir, Banu Qurayzah, as well as the Jews of the Khaybar oasis), von Leers chronicles Muhammad's successful campaigns which vanquished these Jews, killing and dispersing them, "...or at most allow[ing] them to remain in certain places if they paid a poll tax." Von Leers further describes the accounts (from the hadith, and more elaborately, the sira) of Muhammad's poisoning by a Khaybar Jewess, and also notes the canonical hadith which records Caliph Umar's rationale for his putative expulsion from northern Arabia of those remaining Jews who survived Muhammad's earlier campaigns.

On his deathbed Mohammed is supposed to have said: "There must not be two religions in Arabia." One of his successors, the caliph Omar, resolutely drove the Jews out of Arabia.

And von Leers even invokes the apocalyptic canonical hadith which 46 years later became the keystone of Hamas' 1988 charter sanctioning a jihad genocide against the Jewish State of Israel.

Ibn Huraira even communicates to us the following assertion of the great man of God: "Judgment Day will come only when the Moslems have inflicted an annihilating defeat on the Jews, when every stone and every tree behind which a Jew has hidden says to believers: 'Behind me stands a Jew, smite him.'"

Von Leers' 1942 essay concludes by simultaneously extolling the "model" of oppression the Jews experienced under Islamic suzerainty, and the nobility of Muhammad, Islam, and the contemporary Muslims of the World War II era, foreshadowing his own conversion to Islam just over a decade later:

They [the Jews] were subjected to a very restrictive and oppressive special regulation that completely crippled Jewish activities. All reporters of the time when the Islamic lands still completely obeyed their own laws agree that the Jews were particularly despised...

Mohammed's opposition to the Jews undoubtedly had an effect-oriental Jewry was completely paralyzed by Islam. Its back was broken. Oriental Jewry has played almost no role in Judaism's massive rise to power over the last two centuries. Scorned, the Jews vegetated in the dirty alleys of the [mellah](#), and were subject to a special regulation that did not allow them to profiteer, as they did in Europe, or even to receive stolen goods, but instead kept them fearful and under pressure. Had the rest of the world adopted a similar method, today we would have no Jewish question-and here we must absolutely note that there were also Islamic rulers, among them especially the Spanish caliphs of the House of Muawiyah, who did not adhere to Islam's traditional hostility to Jews-to their own disadvantage. However, as a religion Islam has performed the immortal service of preventing the Jews from carrying out their threatened conquest of Arabia and of defeating the dreadful doctrine of Jehovah through a pure faith that opened the way to higher culture for many peoples and gave them an education and humane training, so that still today a Moslem who takes his religion seriously is one of the most worthy phenomena in this world in turmoil.

And even earlier, in a 1938 essay, von Leers further sympathized with, "the leading role of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in the Arabians' battles against the *Jewish invasion* in Palestine." He observes that to the pious Muslim, "...the Jew is an enemy, not simply an 'unbeliever' who might perhaps be converted or, despite the fact that he does not belong to Islam, might still be a person of some estimation. Rather, the Jew is the predestined opponent of the Muslim, one who desired to bring down the work of the Prophet." Thus, von Leers continues, "how shocked and angry the Muslims of today are...when the Jews are once again introduced into Palestine by a European nation against all historical common sense, and set up as a ruling class!" He then proclaims, "For the pious Muslim, this is nothing other than a manifestation of the *enthroning of Satan!*" von Leers concludes by warning that,

The British political policy here is not paying sufficient attention to the true realities of spiritual history. They would do better to free themselves from the Jew-friendly teachings of liberalism and to listen closely to the cry of the anger of Islam...

Until his death in 1965 von Leers remained unrepentant about the annihilationist policies towards the Jews he helped advance serving Hitler's Reich. Indeed he was convinced of the righteousness of the Nazi war against the Jews, and as a pious Muslim convert, von Leers viewed the Middle East as the succeeding battleground to seal the fate of world Jewry. His public evolution over the course of three decades illustrates starkly the shared centrality to these [totalitarianisms](#)-both modern and ancient-of the Jews as "first and last enemy" motif. Finally, an October 1957 US intelligence report on von Leers' writings and activities for Egypt and the Arab League confirmed his complete adoption of the triumphalist Muslim worldview, desirous of nothing less than the destruction of Judeo-Christian civilization by jihad:

He [Dr. Omar Amin von Leers] is becoming more and more a religious zealot, even to the extent of advocating an expansion of Islam in Europe in order to bring about stronger unity through a common religion. This expansion he believes can come not only from contact with the Arabs in the Near East and Africa but with Islamic elements in the USSR. The results he envisions as the formation of a political bloc against which neither East nor West could prevail.

Fifty years later ignorance, denial, and delusion have engendered the sorry state of public understanding of this most ominous conversion of hatreds, by all its potential victims, not only Jews. This lack of understanding is little advanced by the current spate of analyses which seek ["Nazi roots" of the cataclysmic September 11, 2001](#) acts of jihad terrorism, and [see Nazism as having "introduced" antisemitism](#) to an otherwise "tolerant", even philosemitic Islamic world beginning in the 1930s. Awkwardly forced, and ahistorical, these analyses realign the Nazi cart in front of the Islamic steed which has driven both jihad and Islamic antisemitism, since the 7th century advent of the Muslim creed, particularly during the last decade of Muhammad's life.

Even if all vestiges of Nazi militarism and racist antisemitism were to disappear miraculously overnight from the Islamic world, the living legacy of jihad war against non-Muslim infidels, and anti-Jewish hatred and violence, rooted in Islam's sacred texts-Koran, hadith, and sira-would persist. The assessment and understanding of the uniquely Muslim institution of jihad, and Islamic antisemitism, begins with an unapologetic exposure of both the injunctions sanctioning jihad war, and the anti-Jewish motifs contained in these foundational texts of Islam. Yet while the West has engaged in self-critical mea culpa, acknowledging its own imperialistic past, shameful role in the slave trade, and antisemitic persecution, and has taken steps to make amends where possible, the Islamic nations remain in perpetual denial. Until Muslims acknowledge the ugly realities of jihad imperialism, and anti-Jewish persecution in their history, the past will

continue to poison the present, and there will be no hope of combating resurgent jihadism, and Islam's unreformed theological hatred of Jews in modern times, from Morocco to Indonesia, and within Muslim communities living in Western, and other non-Muslim societies across the globe.

[Editor's Note: This is the text of a speech delivered by the author at the "Counterjihad" conference in Brussels, Belgium, October 18, 2007]

**All adapted from Andrew G. Bostom's forthcoming, [*The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*](#), 2007, on Prometheus Books.