

Is Religion A Major Cause Of Violence?

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Introduction

The situation around the world, which had given the common perception of religion, is causing violence because of the growing number of incidents based on religious reasons. The media broadcast the news, which interlinks religion to violence by claiming extremism on any belief. The history, if observed closely, will give a number of examples in which the causes of all great wars started on the basis of conflict among people regarding religion. The complexity of the intersection between violence and religion is an ongoing debate, and the result of it intertwines both, but still, a definite answer is yet to be gained^[1]. This essay will analyze the relationship between violence and religion by highlighting different researchers' arguments on the basis of historical events.

Discussion

Every religion around the world is practiced on the basis of peace and love by spreading harmony and order in society. The religion which had started to become the cause of violence is on the basis of misinterpretation of the messages. The sacred texts of all religions are being interpreted by different people with a different mindset and those who go into violent acts by describing those sacred texts accordingly. It is the people who commit acts of violence rather than the religion itself recommends committing any act, which includes those practices with whom people experience violence. Studies conducted on all religions worldwide have shown that they spread the message of peace, and the practices are mostly harmless. The factors will be further discussed as well in order to understand the argument that religion can be a potential cause of violence^[2].

There are a number of studies that go in favor of religion causing the violence and extremisms that affect the harmony of this world. The reason behind such acts is not directly linked with the religion itself, but the attachment towards religion convinces people not to compromise on the will as they interpret God. Rather, they could possibly compromise on the dispute, which includes worldly matters. However, religion, which spreads the message of love and peace, should be the opposite of hate, but when extremism started intertwining, love took the form of passion. The clear example here is that when love started to be the reason for violence, the love between man and woman at times reached that level. It involved jealousy, and as a result, several cases of murder had happened^[3].

The misinterpretation which was mentioned earlier which causes the religion a potential reason of violence. The sacred texts of religion that were sent by God were supposed to spread love, but those who are influenced by the extremism interpreted them as their desire to justify the act of violence through the message of God. The conflicts which had occurred in the past, whether modern or

ancient, were considered to be religious reasons. There are several examples that could be analyzed in order to understand those incidents and the connection of religion with them. The Crusade Wars happened on the Muslim and Christian sides and caused bloodshed and mass conflict. Not just the Muslims and Christians but also Jews who believe in the oldest religion of this world currently have also committed genocide to serve the sole purpose, and that is religious people[4].

Apart from the ancient examples from the past, modern conflicts have also served the same reason, and the example can be taken back from 1991, in which Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Muslims committed bloodshed because of religious conflicts. Violence among different ethnic groups has also happened because of violence and not among different, but even the same groups have committed violence against each other because of religious conflicts. An example based on ethnic group violence can be taken from Burma, where monks were killed and executed. The Christian Reformation had also been the reason why thousands of people were killed due to religious beliefs. The significant reason behind the violence specifically occurring due to religious reasons is that those who commit violence believe that all the acts that are being committed by them are right. Several times, it has also been seen and witnessed that religious violence happened because they believed they were protecting their religion[5].

Contrarily, the teaching of every religion throughout the history of this world, from past and present, serves the purpose of spreading peace rather than violence. Never for once, throughout the past, any preacher invited people to commit violence for the problems that existed and were experienced by the people. The Quran, Torah, and the Bible scriptures are considered to be the most sacred and widely followed by millions of people. They are comprised of rules and principles that give the message to people to abide by the rules and regulations they convey. The studies that had been conducted on those sacred texts found that all the teachings and principles of the different religions of this world spread peace and forbade violence of any kind in the same manner. There's a single-line difference between them, and they mostly practice the same things. Their messages regarding harming, stealing, and any other act of injustice are alike, which condemns all these acts.

The examples which had been stated above regarding the violence which were committed by the people who were the followers of any particular religion can be proof that religion is the cause of violence and wrong perceptions. The interpretation that had been done differently had caused the violence, and in fact, the main reasons that had been suggested by renowned scholars and psychologists suggested that true reasons for violence in the world mostly happen because of political, economic, and ethnic disputes. Before forming any kind of firm perception, all the reasons and arguments presented in the studies should be analyzed. The past incidents which were known to be conflicts of people due to religion and caused the violence and extremists actually happened due to several other reasons and religious conflict was one of them. Those who believe religion is the sole reason for conflicts, violence, and terrorism always missed the external factors that had also influenced all the past incidents. The reason for highlighting religion is that it's the only way those who have committed such acts can justify those acts^[6].

Economic reasons have always played a major role in all the violence and wars that have happened in the past. The wars that they claimed had started for religious reasons actually happened to gain the lands, which eventually proved to be the benefit for those soldiers economically. The Muslims, who had been engaged in the wars throughout the years, basically fought for the land to harvest and preserve them. If, for once, the economic gains could eliminate all the wars that had happened, then there would be no reason left for those religious people to commit violence and engage in war, and then there would be nothing left in that war to commit. What justification would people have been given by those people to commit wars? If taking all the examples from the past which had been known because of the religious conflicts and religion is eliminated from those incidents, then the real reasons will be exposed had caused those acts of violence. All of those incidents happened because of power and wealth greed. Terrorism and warfare, which is the major conflict in today's world, are known because of religious reasons, and religion should be eliminated to understand those acts of violence[7].

When it comes to the believers of any religious group, there are all types of people with different mindsets and perceptions. In a religion where people commit acts of violence, in the meantime, there are several other people who live peacefully, spreading the messages of peace and harmony, which should also be considered before making any perception about any particular religion. Despite the common idea of the religion which they follow, the choices they make depend upon the people, not the religion. For example, if we take a look at Al-Qaida, which is spreading violence, terrorism, and extremism, but the meantime, there are other Muslims who are living peacefully, and they are not responsible for those acts of violence. Even if those peaceful Muslims show their sympathy to Al-Qaida but still that act is not an indication they also commit violence. The perception and choices that people make depend upon themselves rather than their religion, and if the religion is responsible for the violence, then all the followers should announce holy wars.

Religion has always been the only reasonable justification for those people who believe in violence and want to fulfill their own personal gains, whether political or economic, but the justification is always religion. Although all the religions in the world are spreading messages of peace and love, the interpretation of the Holy Scripture is the sole reason of being the cause of violence. The current wars and the significant wars from the past have been started by the people who wanted to gain their personal benefit. World War 2 was started by Germany, and Hitler used religion, but in reality, he was looking for power and land to conquer rather than the Jews. The constant state of war between Israel and Jerusalem is because of the land, not because of the difference of opinion regarding the religion. History shows that all the wars that had been committed in that particular area of Jerusalem were because the land started from Jews and religion and then Muslims and Christians, which came here among the Jews and Muslims. All the wars that took place there were because of capturing the land and showing strength[8].

The connection between religion and politics has always caused the reasons for committing the violence that occurred and affected many people. All those countries that had been the victims of religious wars can be examples of how politics and religious involvement in each other caused wars

among the people. When religion is being used to justify the acts of politicians who, in reality, tried to gain their own personal gains caused insurgencies. Even today, several countries that follow religious laws are involved in the holy war. An example can be taken from the Middle East, where the wars are creating violence, which had actually started with a dispute over worldly things. The politician who had used the religion to justify his act started the war, showing it was the religious duty. Still, in reality, that politician was insecure because of his political power.

The cultural connection also played a role in the religious violence. There are Muslim countries in which Muslims are insecure that their identity as Muslims is in danger. They engage themselves in the practice of religion openly and command other fellow people to do the same. In doing so, those who started representing the religion in public gained the title of piousness and could use the religion in any way. The conflict arises on the basis of the interpretation of the religious scripture that used the religion to inflict violence against those who raise their voices against those people. In the end, the researcher who had provided the findings that religion is not the sole reason but economic and political reasons played significant roles in the violence. The question with which this essay started is that religion can play a role in violence, then only if religion, when used for personal gain, can be the reason for violence, but religion is and can never be the sole reason because violence is the contradictory approach of religion.

Conclusions

In a conclusive tone, the reasons and arguments presented in the essay through several examples can be justified by presenting a firm perception of religion and violence. History, if observed closely, will give a number of examples of the causes of all great wars that started on the basis of conflict among people regarding religion. The complexity of the intersection between violence and religion is an ongoing debate, and the result of it intertwines both, but still, the definite answer is yet to be gained. Studies conducted on all religions around the world have shown that they spread the message of peace, and the practices are mostly harmless. The factors will be further discussed as well in order to understand the argument that religion can be a potential cause of violence. The religion that spreads the message of love and peace should be the opposite of hate, but when the extremism started intertwining, the love took the form of passion. The clear example here is that when love started to be the reason for violence, the love between man and woman at times reached that level. It involved jealousy, and as a result, several cases of murder happened. The conflicts which had occurred in the past, whether modern or ancient, were considered to be religious reasons. There are several examples that could be analyzed in order to understand those incidents and the connection of religion with them. The significant reason behind the violence specifically occurring due to religious reasons is that those who commit violence believe that all the acts that are being committed by them are right.

The Quran, Torah and the Bible scriptures are considered to be most sacred and widely followed by millions of people comprised of rules and principles that give the message to people to abide the rules

and regulation they conveyed. The studies that had been conducted on those sacred texts found that all the teachings and principles of the different religions of this world spread peace and forbade violence of any kind in the same manner. Before forming any kind of firm perception, all the reasons and arguments presented in the studies should be analyzed. The past incidents, which were known to be conflicts of people due to religion and caused violence and extremism, actually happened due to several other reasons, and religious conflict was one of them. The Muslims, who had been engaged in the wars throughout the years, basically fought for the land to harvest and preserve them. If, for once, the economic gains could eliminate all the wars that had happened, then there would be no reason left for those religious people to commit violence and engage in war, and then there would be nothing left in that war to commit. What justification would people have been given by those people to commit wars? If taking all the examples from the past which had been known because of the religious conflicts and religion is eliminated from those incidents, then the real reasons will be exposed had caused those acts of violence. All of those incidents happened because of power and wealth greed.

The perception and choices that people make depend upon themselves rather than their religion, and if the religion is responsible for the violence, then all the followers should announce holy wars. The current wars and the significant wars from the past have been started by the people who wanted to gain their personal benefit. World War 2 was started by Germany, and Hitler used religion, but in reality, he was looking for power and land to conquer rather than the Jews. The constant state of war between Israel and Jerusalem is because of the land, not because of the difference of opinion regarding the religion. The connection between religion and politics has always caused the reasons for committing the violence that occurred and affected many people. All those countries that had been the victims of religious wars can be examples of how politics and religious involvement in each other caused wars among the people. The question with which this essay started is that religion can play a role in violence, then only if religion, when used for personal gain, can be the reason for violence, but religion is and can never be the sole reason because violence is the contradictory approach of religion. Religion is personal belief of any human being which should never interfere in the public matters, the politics and economic gains should be separated from the religion because it had been used and manipulated wrongly.

End Notes

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16. Armstrong, Karen. *Fields of blood: Religion and the history of violence*. Random House, 2015. ↑