

Judaism essay

Experience, Belief



Judaism is among the oldest religions in history. The origin of the religion can be traced back to nearly four thousand years whereby the religion was initially practiced near Canaan, that is the modern day Palestine and Israel. The religion is said to have similar traits as the beliefs and practices of the Jewish or Israeli people who were rescued from Egyptian slavery by God. The heritage of the Jewish religion practices and beliefs is reflected on the covenant that God made with Moses. The beliefs and practices of Judaism including the belief in one God, eternal afterlife and Holy Scriptures and narratives are similar to those of other major religions mainly Christianity and Islam.

The only difference is presented in terms of how each religion interprets these beliefs (Cohen, 18). Judaism was the first religion to believe in monotheism, a belief in one supreme God who controls the universe. Jewish faith beliefs in God's teachings contained in the Tanakh, which is the Hebrew bible particularly Torah that consists of the first five books of the Christians bible. Other beliefs include the sacred narratives especially about creation, and the redemption and exodus from slavery; rituals and ceremonies especially sacrifices, sacred space of worship which is the synagogue, and devotion and worship of one God.

Despite being the oldest religion in history, Judaism followers have faced endless persecution and seclusion in the Diaspora which involved the countries dominated by Christians and Muslims, especially after several Jews willingly or forcefully migrated from their ancestral land in Eretz Israel. After settling in new countries after moving from their homeland, few Jews assimilated with the residents in the Diaspora while others were persecuted

or fled to tertiary countries after a prolonged seclusion in anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic countries such as France and Germany.

The persecution of Jews in Islamic countries has been in existence for a long time especially as a result of the belief that Islam is the only true religion. For instance, the Jewish persecution by Islamic believers can be traced to historical events such as the public execution that involved crucifying of a Jewish vizier Joseph HaNagid on December 1066 in Granada, Spain. A similar case occurred in 1465 at Fez, Morocco where thousands of Jews were slaughtered with a claim that a Jewish Vizier had inappropriately treated a Muslim woman. Such cases have occurred in history with massive slaughters of Jewish people and destruction of synagogues in Muslim countries with the period between eighth to nineteenth centuries being the most intense (Bergen, 63). The persecution became rampant especially as a result of the Israel-Palestine clashes, with the recent massacre occurring in 1940's in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt and Yemen, thus resulting in mass exodus of the Diaspora Jews living in Islamic populated countries.

The systematic mass killing of the Jews by the German Nazis during the holocaust period is one of the historical significance of the persecution of Judaism believers in the Diaspora. According to the Nazis, Germans were superior racially and as such, the presence of Jews and other minor races such as Gypsies, and Slavic's people was a threat to the superiority of the Germans, and thus, they had to be executed or segregated. According to Bergen (156), the Nazis and other European collaborators killed millions of Jews in their 'final solution' strategy between 1941 and 1945. By the end of the World War II, approximately seven hundred Jews had survived the

holocaust and these immigrated to Israel and other allied countries such as the US. These series of events indicates that the ongoing religious and social conflicts that have created hatred even in the modern world have existed for a long time. Thus, unless the people learn to respect and appreciate religious diversity, the existence of hatred on the basis of religious beliefs is likely to continue.

Works Cited

Bergen, Doris. War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. Print

Cohen, Shaye. The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. Print