

Danger! The Biryonim Are Rising Again!

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Deja Vu! It's happening all over again. Close to two thousand years ago, zealot extremists in the Judean religious camps entrenched themselves in delusional beliefs, and convinced that God was on their side, declared war against the world. It was not enough for these suicidal fanatics to declare war against the Roman government, these self-same sanctimonious fundamentalists also declared war on their own people, on all other members of their religion who did not embrace their narrow, extremist interpretations.

History recorded the results. There was a holocaust. The Temple, Jerusalem, and most of the land of Israel was destroyed. Casualties were over a million. All this tragedy came about because of the fanatic extremists. All blame for what happened must be laid fully at the feet of the delusional zealots, those that supported them, and equally upon those who could have spoken out against them, but were silenced by fear or apathy.

Here we are again, in present day, witnessing an uncanny repeat of history. At present, the world is in upheavals because of Muslim extremism. But watch out! Jewish religious extremism is on the rise, and although it has not yet reached its previous levels of ruthless violence against its opponents, give it time, and there is no doubt that the extremists of today will act with equal evil as did their zealot compatriots from the past. We already see this coming closer and closer. It's time to raise the alarm!

Religious extremism, regardless of what kind it is, is always dangerous. Sooner or later, it always leads to bloodshed. Religious extremism is by its very definition an aberration of everything sacred. It is a perversion of the word and will of God.

The extremist, together with the fundamentalist, looks towards their religion to seek out and embrace every element within it that can be twisted to justify narcissism, elitism, separatism, racism and the disregard, disrespect, and outright hatred on anyone outside their own isolated extremist camp.

The beliefs alone are bad enough, but when these beliefs are acted upon, innocents suffer, and in large numbers. How soon will it be before the extremist, fundamentalist Jews perform their first act of violent terrorism against their fellow Jews? Maybe, the first strike has already happened?

Since Biblical times, the Torah path has been wide and embracing. One can simply look into the earliest of Rabbinic literature to see recorded how different religious

opinions are mentioned side by side. Very often, even the most divergent of opinions are hotly debated, and not necessarily agreed upon. Yet, this is considered totally acceptable. There is a very famous Rabbinic statement, "Elu v'Elu Divrei Elokim Hayim, these and these are the words of the living God." It has always been the way of the Torah sages to be embracing and tolerant of the many different opinions of others. One can see this mentality expressed on every page of the Babylonian Talmud.

The Sages existing in the times of the Temple saw firsthand the devastating influence of the extremist fundamentalists. One of the leading Sages of the day was Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakkai. He was caught in Jerusalem at the time when the extremists took control of it.

The assaulting Romans did know or understand Torah. In Roman eyes, the extremists were no different from all other Torah faithful. Rabbi Yohanan had to take the chance to try convince the Roman authorities that this was not so. Rabbi Yohanan was desperate to ensure that the Torah itself would survive this war with Rome.

In order to reach the Roman authorities, Rabbi Yohanan had to fake his own death in order to sneak out of zealot controlled Jerusalem. Once free from the extremist fundamentalist oppressor, Rabbi Yohanan went directly to the head of the Roman forces to plead his cause. The Roman general was not unsympathetic, and granted Rabbi Yohanan's wish that a town be established for Torah scholars, who would be devoted to their religion, instead of involved with extremism, fundamentalism, and politics. This town was Yavneh, and it is because of Yavneh that Torah traditions have survived to this day.

Rabbi Yohanan was pliant and tolerant. Therefore, he lived. The extremist, fundamentalist zealots, were intolerant and inflexibly rigid. Therefore, they died, and they did not die alone, they brought down in flames over a million along with them.

We see from this that the way of the extremist fundamentalist zealot is not the way of Torah. On the contrary, the extremist zealot was/is the opposite of Torah, and their revival in the present day is a direct slap in the face to the all the great Sages throughout the generations.

Let me be very clear, Torah is about righteousness and shining the light of morals and ethics. Anything contradicting this is not Torah. Anyone contradicting this is not walking the path of Torah, even when they describe themselves as Torah zealots.

Anyone presenting, believing embracing, or tolerating any attitudes or ideas of elitism, racism, extremism, fundamentalism or chauvinism are contradicting Torah and must be recognized as dangerous religious hypocrites. These extremists must

