

"The Civilizational Thought of Imam Reza (PBUH) Justice for Everyone, Injustice for No One": A Christian Perspective

Introduction

In this short presentation I will be reflecting on the life and teaching of Imam Ali al-Reza,¹ from a Christian perspective. This will not however, be an exhaustive or comprehensive analysis of Islamic and Christian ethical codes, but rather a comparison of some of the examples contained in the Rezavi Codes of Ethics and Selected Sayings of Imam Reza, with similar statements found in the teaching of Jesus.

Given that you will likely already be familiar with the example and teaching of Imam Reza, I will elaborate more on the teaching of Jesus to illustrate similarities and differences, recognising that Imam Reza, living many centuries after the New Testament was written, may well have been influenced by it, consciously or otherwise.

However, I am not a specialist in Islamic studies, or indeed of comparative religion. Nevertheless, I have helped organise, or have contributed to, several international conferences on Christian-Muslim dialogue, for example, with the World Islamic Call Society, Libya (2009), Fuller Theological Seminary, USA (2009); the League of Arab States in Qatar (2012) and Iraq (2013), the New Horizons conference, Iran (2014), and the Institute for Advanced Islamic Studies, Malaysia (2023).

In my own engagement with Muslims, I am deeply indebted to the Syrian Christian scholar, Chawkat Moucarray. In his life and teaching, he promotes Christian-Muslim dialogue, as well as challenges many popular stereotypes held by Christians of Muslims. In a paper entitled, "*A Plea for Dialogue Between Muslims and Christians*"², Moucarray defines dialogue in these terms:

"I take dialogue to mean a deliberate effort to engage genuinely and respectfully with each other; willingness to listen and understand; a readiness to learn and be challenged; a desire to relate to, communicate with, and be understood by one another. In Christian-Muslim dialogue, the focus is the Christian and Muslim faiths and their implications for individuals and communities in this life and the next.

For many centuries Western Christians have ignored or confronted the Muslim world. Ignoring Muslims is no longer an option in our "global village" where Muslims and Christians live next to each other. Some Christians seek to reach out to Muslims in confrontation, attacking Islam in a war of words. This approach is counterproductive as it usually inspires Muslims to become more radical in their beliefs, and often provokes an offensive reaction, too—Muslims attacking Christianity even more vehemently. A polemical engagement with Islam is also incompatible with "the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15), which is about love,

¹ Rezavi Codes of Ethics: A Glance at Imam Reza's Personal and Social Behavior (The Islamic Relations Office and Foreign Pilgrim's Affairs of the Astan Quds Rezavi); Selected Sayings of Imam Reza by Mohammad Hakimi (Behnashr Co, Astan Quds Rezavi Publications)

² Chawkat Moucarray, "*A Plea for Dialogue Between Muslims and Christians*" (Fuller Theological Seminary) <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/a-plea-for-dialogue-between-muslims-and-christians/>

reconciliation, and forgiveness... Even in a heated debate the Christian apologist must refrain from polemics, personal attacks, and derisive arguments about Muslims and their religion."

*Dialogue should be understood more broadly than verbal engagement. It is a way of life: an open attitude toward others, seeking to reach out and to welcome people, including those who are different or even antagonistic."*³

With that objective in mind, let us now compare the example and teachings of Imam Reza and Jesus Christ.

1. Mercy for all believers

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
"While praying for believers, he would pray for their prosperity and would ask Allah, "O' Bounteous Lord! Forgive every believer man or woman in the east and west." ⁴	"I pray for them... for those you have given me, for they are yours... My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one... Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." ⁵

The character of God, expressed in compassion and mercy, is rightly emphasized in the first and most important of the Rezavi Codes of Ethics: "The mercy for all believers". Forgiveness is also central in the teaching of Jesus, which even included his enemies. From the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing"⁶

In John 17 we find Jesus praying for his disciples as well as those who would come to believe in him. He did not explicitly pray for their prosperity but did so for their protection from Satan and for their unity. However, in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus did promise God's blessing when we are generous in giving to others,

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38).

2. Respect for all

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
"Attending a gathering, he never sat in a way suggesting disdain and his disregard for others." "He treated his servants with respect and did not speak harshly	"When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also

³ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁴ Muhammad Baqer Majlesi, Bihar al-Anwar Vo. 49, p. 117

⁵ John 17:9, 15-17

⁶ Luke 23:34

or rudely to them. Being respectful of humanity's high status, he sat beside his servants for eating without [any] arrogance." ⁷	<i>should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."⁸</i>
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On the night before he was betrayed, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, something only a menial slave would be asked to do. Then he explained why he had done so – to set them example of how he expected them to treat one another.

Jesus repeatedly demonstrated the necessity of humility – not thinking less of oneself but thinking of oneself less. For example, when invited to a meal in the home of a prominent religious leader,

"he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table". In response he gave them this advice. "when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."
(Luke 14:10-11).

Unless we humble ourselves, others will, and we will be humiliated.

3. Care of the needy

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
"Traveling from Medina to Khorasan by Ma'mun's force, Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) stayed with the needy in the deprived areas... Although it was a short stay, the Imam chose to be the guest of a destitute lady named Pasandide, whose house was in Blush Abad or Plus Abad, a region with poor living conditions. It is evident that Imam's arrival at such regions or houses not only made those destitute people respectful but also poured in charitable contributions towards them." ⁹	"Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." ¹⁰

Care for the poor clearly features prominently in the example and teaching of Imam Reza as well as that of Jesus Christ.

⁷ Rezavi, Op. cit., p. 9.

⁸ John 13:12-17

⁹ Rezavi, Op. cit., pp. 10-11.

¹⁰ Luke 14:13-14

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus elaborated on this, pronouncing blessings on the poor and woes on the rich who have exploited the poor or are not generous with the resources the Lord has entrusted to them.

*“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied...
“But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.
Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.” (Luke 6:20-21, 24-25)*

Care for the poor and needy is central to the will of God. So much so, in his final public sermon, Jesus goes as far as to insist that how we treat the poor is a reflection of how we treat God, and indeed, will be the criteria for determining our eternal destiny.

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats... “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:31-40)

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (Matthew 25:41-46)

4. Affability toward others

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
<i>“Everyone who smiles at his Muslim brother’s face not only for his own benefit but for the sake of Allah and his humility before Him, Allah will enter</i>	<i>“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is</i>

<i>him to Paradise." "To be kind to people is half of wisdom"</i>	<i>kind to the ungrateful and wicked." Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."</i> ¹¹
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While it is difficult for a non-Muslim to confidently interpret Imam Reza’s teaching at this point¹², it is clear that humility, as well as “kindness toward others”, are an essential attribute of godliness. Jesus expected his followers to show love, compassion and mercy not just to friends and neighbours but even toward enemies because this an attribute of God.

One of the most notable conversations recorded in the Gospels was between Jesus and a Samaritan woman.¹³ Even his disciples, as well as the woman, were shocked that he broke with cultural norms to speak with her and even ask her for water. Jews looked down on Gentiles and the two communities did not mix, let alone speak to, or help one another. However, because of Jesus’ kindness to her, many people in her community came to faith in God.

“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.” (John 4:39-41)

In the face of rising religious and racial prejudice, we can help diffuse tensions by showing compassion to others irrespective of their ethnicity or religious beliefs.

5. Forgiving the faults of others

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
<i>“Believers do not seek vengeance, harbour hostility or act vindictively towards others. They do struggle against injustice and defend their own rights. But they forgive the others' faults when they are in power... even if a person forgives his fellowman's faults for the sake of Allah, He will punish the wrongdoers and ill-mannered people who do not deserve to be forgiven.”¹⁴</i>	<i>“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.”¹⁵</i>

Forgiveness and reconciliation with God, and with one another, are central to both Christianity and Islam. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus emphasizes both our responsibility to seek, as well as to give, forgiveness where there is repentance in order that there be reconciliation and restored relationships. And Jesus places the emphasis on reflecting on our own sin and need for forgiveness and not the sins of a brother or sister.

¹¹ Luke 6:35-36

¹² Feqh al-Reza, p. 398; Tohaf al-Oqul, Vol. 15, p. 52; Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 78, p. 435

¹³ John 4:1-42

¹⁴ Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol. 49, p. 126.

¹⁵ Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15.

In what is known as ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ (but should actually be called ‘The Disciples Prayer’, since it is how Jesus taught his disciples to pray), Jesus explains that forgiving a brother or sister is a prerequisite to receiving God’s forgiveness for our own sin. *“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”* (Matthew 6:12). A few verses later Jesus elaborates why.

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

Forgiving others their sin against us demonstrates our thankfulness to God for forgiving us our sin against Him. In answer to the question, *“but what if a brother or sister who has sinned against you, refuses to listen to you, what should you do?”*, Jesus outlines the steps to be taken to stop the sin proliferating, bring the person to repentance, avoid division and maintain harmony among believers.

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:15-18)

In response, and presumably thinking he was being magnanimous, the apostle Peter asked Jesus,

“Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, *“I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”* (Matthew 18:21-22)

By this Jesus probably meant “stop counting, just forgive”. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus reiterates why we should be quick to seek as well as show mercy.

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6:36-38)

6. Humane treatment of all people

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
<p><i>“Someone said to Imām Hossein (a.s.), “Whenever a good deed is granted to those who do not deserve it, the deed is wasted.” The Imām said: “It is not so, but rather, the righteous deed is like large</i></p>	<p><i>““You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes</i></p>

<p><i>raindrops in spring which shower over the righteous and the evil.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is even possible that humane behaviour toward others alerts them and awakens their sense of consciousness and opens their eyes to their mistakes. This can teach humane principles and develop humanity.”¹⁶</i></p>	<p><i>his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-48)</i></p>
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Humane treatment of people irrespective of their behaviour, faith, ethnicity or status is clearly emphasized in the teaching of Imam Reza. For example,

“The peak of reason and wisdom – after faith in God – is friendliness with people and doing good to all humans, whether benefactors or evildoers.”¹⁷

It is possible that, in likening righteous deeds to rain falling on both the righteous and unrighteous, Imam Reza may have been drawing on a similar illustration of Jesus Christ he used to describe the way Almighty God treats each of us irrespective of our relationship to him (see Matthew 5:43-48 above). In both Islam and Christianity there is an understanding of the motivation for such acts of kindness, namely the restoration of the one who has strayed from God by demonstrating the grace and mercy of God toward them.

7. Respecting the human rights of all

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
<p><i>“Yaser, the Imām’s servant, says: A letter was sent from Neyshaboor to Al-Ma’mūn, informing him that a Zoroastrian had willed before his death a great wealth to poor people. The judge of Neyshaboor distributed that money among the poor Muslims.</i></p> <p><i>Ma’mun asked the Imām, “My master, what do you say about this?”</i></p> <p><i>The Imām said: “Surely non-Muslims might not donate to poor Muslims. Write to the judge and order him to take the same amount from the Islamic</i></p>	<p><i>Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the</i></p>

¹⁶ Selected Sayings of Imam Reza p.29.

¹⁷ Oyune Akhbar- AlReza, Vol: 2, p. 35.

<i>treasury and donate it to poor Zoroastrians.”¹⁸</i>	<i>law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:30-37)</i>
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In the Selected Sayings of Iman Reza, impartiality in respecting human rights is emphasized, even after death, when a person’s wishes as to the disposal of their assets should be respected. An example is given of a judge who showed partiality in distributing the estate of a wealthy Zoroastrian to poor Muslims. In response, Imam Reza insisted that funds from the Islamic treasury be given to poor Zoroastrians to compensate for the judges’ actions. Mohammad Hakimi observes,

“In the above wonderful Razavi wisdom, the great significance of the respect for human rights has been recognized. In the viewpoint of Imām Rezā (a.s.), man has the right to think, choose and act in line with his religious ideas. This freedom and right must be respectable even after his death, and his opinion and action must be preserved although they may be incompatible with ours. His rights may not be violated on the ground that he is not a Muslim.”

In the Gospels we frequently find Jesus challenging the prevailing supremacism of the Jews and their prejudice toward those of other faiths whether Samaritans or Gentiles.

In answer to a question “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus told a story or parable about a Samaritan. Jesus describes a victim on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho who was robbed, beaten, stripped naked and left unconscious. That created a dilemma for others travelling along that road because they could not tell whether the man was one of their own community or not. Jesus told the story to emphasize that we have a responsibility for anyone we meet who is in need, irrespective of their faith or ethnicity. They become our neighbour and we must seek their welfare, that is, their human rights.

8. Challenging exploitation

Imam Reza	Jesus Christ
<i>Imām Rezā (a.s.) says: “(The sign of pure Islam is) avoiding grave sins such as murder,... selling short weight in scale and measure and treachery (in financial affairs)...¹⁹</i> <i>“O my people, fill up the measure and the balance justly, and do not diminish the goods of the people, and do not mischief in the land, working corruption...”²⁰</i>	<i>“He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Luke 4:16-19, Isaiah 61:1-2)</i>

As Mohammad Hakimi observes,

¹⁸ Selected, Op. cit., p.43

¹⁹ Oyūn Akhbār al-Rezā, Vol.: 2, p. 127, cited in Sayings, Op. cit., p. 59.

²⁰ Surah Hood, verse: 85, cited in Sayings, Op. cit., p. 60.

“Exploiting workers and peasants and paying a low price for their goods and services is the practice of capitalistic systems and of those who cheat the rights of the public. This great oppression has existed throughout the history of mankind and is now more severe and pervasive. ... today’s economic affairs and their measures and balances have been totally transformed and exploitation and economic oppression are performed in vast scales by economic cartels, corporations and trusts. The dominance of capitalists over factories, farms and financial resources has globalized the problem.”²¹

In his first and probably shortest recorded sermon, Jesus quoted the words of the prophet Isaiah who predicted his coming as the Messiah – to bring freedom to prisoners, justice to the poor, liberation to the oppressed and healing to the sick and vulnerable. The text says,

“Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”” (Luke 4:20)

Jesus further elaborated on his criticisms of those who exploited the labouring poor by telling a parable intended to illustrate how God treats us graciously and generously based on our needs rather than our worthiness, our works or entitlement.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. “He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ ““Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’ “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ (Matthew 20:1-15)

In this parable the landowner gave his workers the same pay (a day’s wage) irrespective of how many hours they had worked. This is because they each had to feed and provide for their families. Although the landowner was criticised by those who had

²¹ Sayings, Op. cit., pp. 59-60.

worked a full day because he gave the same pay to those who had only worked a few hours, he insisted it was his right to be generous. Jesus wanted people to know that is how God treats us.

Conclusions

We have seen that there are indeed many parallels between the civilizational thought of Imam Reza and the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. This is perhaps to be expected given that both Christianity and Islam build on the ethical teaching of the Hebrew scriptures and that chronologically, Christianity preceded Islam.

There are differences however, notably in the means and ends of achieving righteousness. John Span, points out:

“Christian ethics is focused on an end-result. This goal is to be Christ-like in every way and so bring glory to God... rather than an emphasis on divine commands – important as they are – Christian ethics focuses on a Christ-like heart disposition that has an overflow of right action, rather than prescribing right actions that will effect a change of heart disposition.”²²

This is because the ultimate source for Christian ethics is the moral character of God, rather than the commands of God. This distinction, albeit subtle, between Muslim and Christian ethics, is perhaps worthy of further discussion on another occasion.

Chawkat Moucarray helpfully emphasizes the commonality in Christian-Muslim dialogue, which this presentation has sought to emulate.

“Christian-Muslim dialogue is an encounter at three levels, like Jesus’s encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26).

First, Christians and Muslims meet each other as human beings, with common needs and aspirations, joys and sorrows, hopes and struggles.

Second, they meet as monotheistic believers, sharing many beliefs and ethical values, despite differing understanding of these.

Finally, Christians and Muslims claim to be God’s witnesses. An integral part of dialogue is removing the huge misunderstandings we have about each other’s faith, so bearing witness.

A fruitful dialogue is measured by its outcomes: a better understanding of each other’s faith and of one’s own. It should also lead to better relationships between the two communities, strengthening their social commitment. Dialogue is also an

²² John Span, “What Ought or Ought Not to be Done? Ethics in Islam and Christianity” Biblical Missiology <https://biblicalmissiology.org/blog/2021/01/04/what-ought-or-ought-not-to-be-done-ethics-in-islam-and-christianity/>

excellent school for tolerance. It helps us overcome our ignorance, our prejudice, our self-centeredness, our fanaticism, and our spiritual pride.”²³

Beyond this brief comparison between the respective teaching of Imam Reza and Jesus Christ, as we sadly live in a divisive and volatile world, characterised by intolerance and extremism, it is vital that we hold on to the common ground of religious belief we share, which provides ample motivation for mutual respect, for deeper engagement and lasting cooperation.

Revd Dr Stephen Sizer
1 May 2024

²³ Moucarry, op. cit., pp. 2-3.