

Observance of Religious holidays, Festivals in Judaism and Islām A comparative study of socio- economic aspects

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Abstract:

Observing the religious holidays are one of the important aspects of any religion. Way of observing Religious days reflects history, teaching, culture and followers' psychology of any particular religion. Religious Celebration keeps followers of specific religion culturally, traditionally unites and connected. It keeps religion alive by-passing thousands of years old traditions to new generation practically. Judaism tracks their origin back through revealed text as Islām do. Islāmic scriptures verified Moses (ﷺ) as a Prophet but Jews denied Muḥammad (ﷺ) as the last messenger. Jews are addressed at many places in Qur'ān as people of the book by narrating the stories of Moses (ﷺ) and asked to accept Qur'ān as a last message from the very same divine nature who revealed Torah. Qur'ān also talks about Sabbath (Holy Saturday). For this purpose, in modern day Muslims should have acquaintance about religious holidays in Judaism for interfaith harmony and peace. By Adopting Descriptive and comparative methodology, religious holidays their significance, way of observing and performing rituals in Judaism and Islām are brought into light in this article. Moreover, their socio-economic aspects are discussed.

Key Words: Religious holidays, Festivals, Judaism, Islām.

Preface

Semitic religions hold a unique position among other religions as they share long chain of Prophets, Messengers and religious history. Beside that they share long history of rivalry, war and hostility too. Utmost need of coexistence and harmony among these three religions are required in Modern world. This Goal can be achieved by knowing more about each other. Muslim, Christian and Jews all claims to be the beloved one of God.

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This research study focuses on core and comprehensive teachings of holidays and festivals in Islām and Judaism. As there are orthodox, conservative, modern, practicing and non-practicing approaches are prevailing in both religions. Followers of both religions take their religious commandment from primary as well as secondary sources. Jews cannot stand without *Talmūd* (Mishnāh and Gemāra) as Muslims considers traditions of Muḥammad (ﷺ) essential to understand and act upon Qur'ān.¹

Methodology has been adopted to compare the religious days first, their source (either they are mentioned in primary source or secondary source), way of observance has been analyzed and in the end a comparison has been concluded. A comprehensive study also shows religious calendars of both religions as they are quite different from each other. Jewish people observe Hebrew civil calendar which is a combination of lunisolar calendar meanwhile pure lunar calendar is used by Muslims to observe religious holidays. It is observed that calendar is a matter of great concern for all religious matter in Islām. There are many commandments relates to time and days for example observing fast, divorce, celebrating 'Eīd and four holy months in which war is forbidden.

Literature Review:

Books written by Jewish scholars are consulted to get first-hand information about Religious holidays in Judaism. Though minor differences are found among the opinions of different writers but main theme remain the same. Valuable books and articles are available on Jews online libraries written by Rābbaīs (Jew religious Scholar) for examples Encyclopedia of Modern Jewish Culture Edited by Glenda Abramson (B.1938). These books are written by adopting descriptive methodology that is why comparison did in this article also follows the same pattern. To understand more and get a comprehensive idea about what is written in books, many videos on YouTube channels managed by Muslims and Jews are available also. Important discussion about Islāmic Festivals has been done by Muslim Scholars in Qur'ān exegesis, book of Ḥadīth (narration of Prophet ﷺ) and jurisprudence books.

Significance and limitations of this work:

Festivals are important for people, society and country. It spread love, peace and brotherhood among people. It also develops sense of respect for other peoples' faith. Festivals should be celebrated peacefully without harming other peoples' emotions. Today we are living in multi-culture countries with pluralistic approach.

¹ Qur'an 3:31

Millions of Muslims are living in non-Islāmic countries due to certain reasons. On the other hand, many non-Muslims living in Islāmic countries too. But situation is bit terrible in few countries. Number of Muslims tortured and killed by mob over cow slaughtering on 'Eid-ul-Adḥā in India the world's largest democratic country. Cow is considered a holy animal for Hindū. It is alarming and contradicting situation. So, we need a world where people do live with harmony. Almost all religions are going through dramatic reform since 20th century due to advancement in science, technology and mass communication. Dialogue and peace talk are often take place on international forum to ensue inter-religions harmony. World is now a global village. Judaism also reformed and divided into many schools of thought. It is not the same as it was described in old Islāmic literature. Over the past few decades after the creation of Israel, a Jewish nation state, aggression has been observed in their behaviour² towards neighbour states. It is time to know each other in modern world and ease the tension between these two religions. Once upon a time Jews enjoyed full liberty and security under Muslim Umbrella in golden days of Muslim History. Indeed, the most discussed nation in *Qur'ān* is *Banī Isrā'īl/Children of Isrā'īl*. So, it is important for Muslim preachers and scholars to know some of their basic festivals, philosophy and similarities to Islām. Dialogue and peace talk among religions is necessary to restore world peace at international level. This study covers basic festivals of Islām and Judaism.

Judaism:

Agreed by all three Semitic religion's followers, Judaism stands first as far history is concerned.³ Torah is viewed oldest revelation which has been found today apart from the debate over originality and authenticity of its text. So I select Judaism first for discussion. In the modern time, the great majority of Jews do not observe complete religion. There are strictly orthodox people, who convinced that the first five books of the Hebrew and laws within the Scriptures were directly revealed by God and must be followed in every detail. There are also completely secular people, who live absolutely like their non-Jewish neighbours.⁴

Jewish calendar:

Muslims knows very well the importance of seeing *Shawwāl* month's first crescent to celebrate 'Eid-ul-Fiṭr. Same was the importance crescent did holds in

² <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/israel/palestine> retrieved 10-10-2018

³ Qur'ān established this fact that all prophets and messenger are given title Islām but later on their follower alter this by themselves Qur'an 22:78

⁴ Cohen-Sherbok Lavenia. (2006) A guide to Judaism. Subject centre for philosophical studies, School of theology and religious Studies, University of Leeds, p.3

Judaism in old times. But later Jewish calendar developed and received significant variation by Jewish scholars. Now their religious holidays are almost fixed and occurs in same part of the solar calendar. Judaism takes relation of time and divine laws from Hebrew Torah as it says, "Heaven has set a proper time and reason for everything".⁵ The first sentence of the Torah points out the value of time, "in the beginning".⁶ Rābbīnic tradition narrates when Children of Israel escaped from Egypt God asked them to observe and consider new moon holy for their religious matters.⁷ They were asked not to follow the solar tradition of Egyptian.

Hebrew calendar was a lunar calendar in early days. Day starts with sundown. One month comprise over 29 or 30 days. Saturday (Sabbath) is the holiday of week. Different stages of moon are important to count time. Different Seasons which occur throughout the year were welcomed by celebrating special festivals. After every six year there is a special seventh year known as *Sh'mitāh*- a *Sabbatical* year⁸ and after 49 years the Jubilee Year (Yōvel) observed".⁹ According to Jews Rābbīnic traditions this world may last for 7000 years. Because God made this world in seven days and each day indeed indicates to 1000 years.¹⁰

In old times new month of Hebrew calendar starts when two persons witness new moon. But current fixed calendar is absolutely changed. In 4th century a Jew scholar Hillel ii(d. 365 CE) made some drastic change. Continues amendments are done to Hebrew Calendar until 10th century.¹¹ Ultimately it doesn't remain the same as commanded by God. But the Goal for these changing's achieved and festivals starts to come in a specific time of the year (e.g. Sukkot in the fall, Passover in springtime etc.) we know that lunar year is shorter than solar year. Jewish scholar comes with a solution and adds an extra leap month after every three-year called *Addār* ii. Twelve months are included in Jewish calendar as do Islāmic Calendar have but with different names as following Tishri, Chesvān, Kislēv, Tevet, Shēvat, Adār, Nissān, Ijār, Sivān, Tamūz, Av and Elūl. Names of seven days are as followings: Yom Rīsho (Sunday), Yom Sheni, Yom Shlishī, Yom Revi'i, Yom Chamishi, Yom Shishi and Yom Sabbath (Saturday).

Festivals source:

Festivals have been derived from three sources in Judaism Hebrew Bible,

⁵ Ecclesiastes 3:1, The Holy Bible, King James Version

⁶ Genesis 1:1

⁷ Exodus 12:1-2

⁸ Leviticus 25:2-5

⁹ Leviticus.25:8-17

¹⁰ <https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Holidays/Calendar/calendar.html> retrieved 18-05-2018

¹¹ <https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Holidays/Calendar/calendar.html> retrieved 18-05-2018

Rābbīnic mandates and Jewish history. While some other scholars divide Jewish holidays and festivals as major holidays and minor holidays. Major holidays e.g. Sukkot (Feast of booths), Yom Kīppūr (day of Atonement) Shiminī Atzēret (8th Assembly day), Roash Hashnā (New year), Chanūkāh (festivals of Light), Purīm (Lots), Pesāch (Passover), Shāvuot (Pentecost/feast of week), Tishā b’av (Ninth of Av.) have similar obligation and restrictions to Sabbath in the sense that normal work is forbidden. Jewish Holy year starts with Rosh Hashnā on first or Second Teshrī correspondence to September/October. There are two types of calendar in Judaism one is spiritually calendar start from month Nissān the other is chevalier / civil calendar determines with month Teshrī.

Torah says, “ADONAI spoke to Moses (ﷺ) and Haron (ﷺ) in Egypt he said, this would be the first month of the year to you”.¹² It was the month of Nissan. But on the other hand, Jews celebrate New Year in the month of Tishri. And Torah says Tishri is 7th month.¹³ Indeed In ancient Biblical era, "Nisān" name was "Avīv" and "Tishrī", was called "Etānīm" then.¹⁴

So indeed, it is confusing and need more detail from Jews scholar to explain how they fixed it. To me it is kind of Abrogated order in Judaism. Concept of abrogation to some extent is found in mainstream Islām too. Few Muslim scholars do not accept it though.¹⁵ According to Jewish traditional year 2010 CE was 5771st year of Hebrew calendar.¹⁶

Rosh Hashnāh: (the Jewish New Year)

In 2018 it was observed on Sunday 9th September to Tuesday 11th September. According to Hebrew civil calendar it falls on first two days of the Hebrew month Tishreī. It is a first of the major holidays observed 10 days before Yom Kīppūr. Torah states, “God asked prophet Moses (ﷺ) to convey his message to Children of Israīl, First day of the seventh month would be the rest day for you. Establish holy gathering on this day and produce loud sound by blowing Ram horn (shofār)”.¹⁷ There are no specific logic and reason for this practice. Few scholars consider this sound similar to repentance. No sounds are produced if this holiday occurs on Sabbath. Work of any type is not allowed on this day. Most of the day time is spent in synagogue and Special prayer book Machzōr is read. Eating

¹² Exodus 12:2

¹³ Leviticus 23:24

¹⁴ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/the-history-of-rosh-hashanah-which-wasn-t-always-the-new-year-1.5301295>, Retrieved 20-09-2017

¹⁵ Allama Rahmatu Allah Tariq (1929-2003 Multan) Mansookh-UI-Qur’ān

¹⁶ Becher Mordechai, Rabbi. (2005) Gateway to Judaism, A Shaar Press publication N.Y. p.82

¹⁷ Leviticus 23:24-25

apples soaked in honey is a common practice on this day to start a happy new year. Another man made custom in Judaism on this day is to cast off (Tāslīkh) sins symbolically. Jews goes to flowing water and make their pockets empty and cast few piece of bread in it. There is no reference for this practice in Old Testament. If first day of Rosh Hashnāh falls on Saturday then Tāslīkh would be performed on Sunday afternoon.¹⁸L'shanāhtōvāh (for a good year) is a common greeting on this day. In Islām no such festival regarding welcome of New Year does exist.

Yom Kīppūr: (Day of Atonement)

It is observing on 10th of Tishrī. 8th & 9th October would be most probably a date to observe this day in 2019. It is among the High or major holiday. Torah says, “On 10th day of seventh month you all deny yourself. Native and foreigner do not perform any work. Because Lord want to cleans and purify you”.¹⁹ One thing should be noted here according to last verse I did quote, Tishrī is numbered as seventh month.

Indeed, the holiest day of the year is Yom Kīppūr in Hebrew Calendar. For about 26 hours Jewish burden their souls, do not drink and eat food, do not wear leather shoes, avoid matrimonial relations, do not use cosmetics. On this holiday Jews pray for forgiveness by spending large part of their time in Synagogue.

At first sight it seems God has given very strict commandments to Jews and it is very hard to act upon them. But Qur'an says Children of Isrāēl themselves formed few new laws and implemented on them regarding food²⁰scarifies and worship. Indeed, Qur'an describes Children of Israel as a stubborn nation. For example, Allah (SWT) asked them to slaughter a cow but they started to ask question from Moses (ﷺ) by keeping the intention of delay or cancel this order.²¹And Qur'an affirms that Torah is altered.²²Muslim does not believe in the authenticity and commandments of Torah but the few of its teachings that match the Qur'an.

Sukkot: (Feast of Tabernacles)

15-22 Tishrī/13-20 October is an expected date to observe this festival in 2019. Sukkot follows Yom Kīppūr. Its celebration took place right after five days of Yom Kīppūr. Sukkot is named after the booths or huts (Sukkot in Hebrew) in which Jews are assumed to reside during this week-long celebration. According to

¹⁸ Olitzky Rabbi Kerry M. and Judson Daniel, Rabbi (2007) Jewish Holiday. A brief Introduction for Christian, Jewish Light Publishing Vermont P.13

¹⁹ Leviticus 16:29-30

²⁰ Qur'an 3:93

²¹ Qur'an 2:71

²² Qur'an 2:59

rabbinic practice, these fragile sukkot represent the huts and shelters in which the Israelites lived during their forty years of wandering in the desert after fleeing from slavery in Egypt. This historical event mentioned in Qur’an too.²³ But Qur’an perspective is that this wandering is imposed as wrath from God because they disobeyed Moses (ﷺ) and started to worship calf. Sukkot is included in three great pilgrimage festivals.²⁴ When the ancient Israelite living in the realm of Judah (9th century BC) they were supposed to make a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem as commanded by torah. In Jerusalem they would attend festivities ritual warship in concurrence with the services of priest (kohānim) at the temple. After the demolition of the second temple (70 CE) and until the construction of third Temple the real pilgrimage is no longer mandatory on Jews and no longer performed on a national level. In synagogue the related paragraph from Torah scroll describing the holiday are read on the platform (Bīmāh) formed in the middle of the synagogue services. In modern Israel many Jews living in Jerusalem make an effort to attend period services at the Western Wall emulating the ancient pilgrimage in some small fashion. Samaritans (ethno religious group of the Levant originating from the Israelites) makes pilgrimage to mount Gerīzīm three times a year to this day near city of Nablus Palestine. Torah says, “three times in a year celebrate a festival for me. First festival is of unleavened bread. Eat bread without yeast for seven days. Do this in Avīv month because you came out from Egypt in that month. Celebrate second festival at the time of harvesting first fruit from your crop. Third festival should be celebrated when you gather crops from the field in end of the year. And appear before the God on these three festivals”.²⁵

Concept of 3rd Jews temple construction is linked with the coming of Jewish Messīāh. But number of Jews organization working on immediate construction of Third temple. Its proposed location is right beneath the Al-Aqsa mosque and dome of the Rock²⁶ which creates unpleasant feelings on international level. Indeed, this Jews self-proclaim site for third temple is baseless. Even many Jewish scholars like Yoav Frankel director of interfaith encounter association said let the Prophet come to decide the precise location and construction of temple. Otherwise there would be great bloodshed.²⁷

Anyhow, on Sukkot work is not allowed on first two days which are called

²³ Qur’an 5:26

²⁴ Becher Mordechai, Rabbi. (2005) Gateway to Judaism, A Shaar Press Publication N.Y. p.146

²⁵ Exodus 23:14-17. See also Deuteronomy 16: 9-17

²⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-history-of-the-temple-in-jerusalem-1.5256337>
retrieved 30-08-2018

²⁷ <https://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Jewish-Features/Can-Third-Temple-be-built-without-destroying-Dome-of-the-Rock> retrieved 20-08-2018

Yom Tōv. In evening candles are burn and festive meals are prepared. The intermediate days arenon-holy day of festival. Jews lives in the Huts (*sukkah*) and on every day of Sukkot take four plants²⁸ (except for Sabbath, when they do not take the Four Kinds of herbs). The final two days are a separate holiday.

Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah: (Eighth day of Assembly)

These are considered last days of Sukkot on which final passage from book of Deuteronomy is read in synagogue. Everyone is invited to the Torah reading. Carrying Torah scrolls around in seven loops and dancing at the same time is a common practice on this holiday.²⁹ For Muslim, to some extent it is like reciting the last chapter of *Qur'ān* in *Tarāvīḥ* Prayers in *Ramaḍān*. Muslim expresses their happiness as they complete reading and listening the Holy *Qur'ān* by heart at night in *Tarāvīḥ* Prayer. Though Muslim celebrates it in very descent manner and asks forgiveness from Allah (SWT).

Chanūkāh/ Hanūkkāh: (Festivals of Light)

It has been observed on 25th of Kislēv third month of Hebrew civil Calendar to 3rd of Tevēt fourth month. According to Gregorian calendar it would be observed on 22nd to 30th December 2019. Hanūkāh is a rābbinic holiday. The name Hanūkāh derived from the Hebrew verb meaning to dedicate the Maccabeus Jews³⁰ occupation of Jerusalem and regaining control of the temple. Lighting the candles with 9 branches called a Hanūkāh menūrāh is a major practice on this holiday. One special helper candle (Shamash) is used to burn other candles. That special candle is placed sometimes above all others candles and sometime below. One by one candle is lit on each night by the help of Shamash candle. On final night of the holiday all candles are lit together.³¹ This is not a biblical holiday therefore very less laws and commanding found to be observed relating this holiday. Indeed, more than religious holiday it is more likely a historical day. It is understood due to these holidays Jews are so unite and transfer their historical tales to new generation and feel as a one nation. In long winter nights elders narrate Biblical stories to younger one in a most fascinating and charming way. Jews kids give live performance in home theatre. They sing songs.³² Enthusiasm and zealous approach kids gets from

²⁸ Etrog, Lulav, Hadass, Aravah (four plants)

²⁹ StolperPinchas, Rabbi. (2000) Living beyond time , The Mystery and Meaning of the Jewish Festivals, Shaar Press, p.142

³⁰ Group of Jewish rebels, founder of Hasmonean Dynasty 110B.C

³¹ Becher Mordechai, Rabbi. (2005) Gateway to Judaism, A Shaar Press Publication N.Y. p.165

³² Detail songs poems and services can be read in H.M Adler book Songs for festival services (1927), Israel Zangwill, Hebrew Publishing Company.

these activities about their religion and nationhood. In Muslim world if we say festival of light is indeed a birth day of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) it would not be wrong. On this day, though no trace found in Islāmic history but today in modern Muslim world many Muslims put lights on their home to mark this day. And lot of charity in the form of food given to poor and deprived in Muslim community on this day.

Pūrīm: (Lots)

On 14th of Adar the sixth month of Jew civil calendar this holiday is observed. According to Gregorian calendar on 20th and 21st February 2019 this day would be celebrated. According to the book of Esther in Old Testament one Royal minister to king planned to murder all the Jews in the Kingdom. But his plan was breached by one small family specially their adopted daughter Esther who had risen to become queen of Persia. The day of liberation became a day of feasting and happiness. Jews do listen to the book of Esther in synagogue, wear costumes and eat festival meals. They also send food and edibles to other community members. Giving Charity and alms are also one of the rituals on this holiday.³³

Pesāch: (Passover)

It would be observed on 15-22 Nissān seventh month of civil calendar (19-27 April 2019). It is among the three pilgrimage festivals.³⁴ Torah says, “This day shall be memorial for you. Observe it as a Festival for Lord. Neither eat leavened bread in these seven days nor do any work except preparing food”.³⁵

Passover is holiday because on that day children of Isrā'el got freedom from Pharaoh's slavery under the leadership of Prophet Moses (ﷺ). Torah states that God set 10 plagues on Egypt in order to take revenge to those who wouldn't set his people free. These signs are also mentioned in Qur'an.³⁶ The last plague was sending demise to the doorway of the civilians to kill the first-born of the families. However, it was commanded to His people to paint the door with the blood of a lamb so that death would pass by those homes. Israelites were finally sent free after this last plague.

It is an important Jewish holiday that people celebrate every year. The festivities are about a week long and it is started with the Seder meal on the first

³³ Steinsaltz Adin, Rabbi. (2011) Change and renewal, The Essence of the Jewish Holidays, Festivals and day of Remembrance, Koren publishers Jerusalem Ltd. P.167

³⁴ Deuteronomy 16: 9-17

³⁵ Exodus 12:14-17

³⁶ Qur'an 7:133

night. During this feast, people would tell the story of Passover to all family members, sing songs, and ponder one's service to God. It is a general picture that may vary from home to home.³⁷

Shavuot: (feast of week)

It is observed on 6th & 7th of Sīvaān, ninth month in Hebrew Calendar. According to Gregorian calendar 8th to 10th June 2019 would be time to celebrate it. It is also among the festival related to three pilgrimage festivals. Jews celebrate the revelation of Torah, in other words the first five books of Old Testament. Torah revealed to prophet Moses (ﷺ) on Mount Sīnāī in Egypt. Seven weeks after Exodus from Egypt Torah had been revealed. In contemporary time this festival is being celebrated bit different as compare to Torah teaching. No first fruits from yield are offered in Jerusalem Temple. Most common practice is to recite Torah all night to celebrate receiving of this Holy book.³⁸

Traditionally Jews decorates their home on this day with flowers to remind spring harvest and offering first fruit to temple. Families enjoyed gathering and special meals. In Islām Muslim also celebrate the revelation of Qur'ān. It is a special night name *Laila-tul-Qadar*.³⁹ Muslim try to wake all nights and keep special prayers to Allah as this night is better than thousand months in blessing. Exact night is unknown. But it is among last ten odd nights of month of *Ramaḍān*. So, Muslims keep special relation with Allah Almighty for maximum nights of *Ramaḍān*. Jews remain ritually pure for three days before Shavuot to experience life changing experience of Torah revelation. There are special commandments relating to those days in Jewish Kabalā law. These days are also named "Days of Omer". There is long list of what to do and what not in Jewish literature. But like Islām in Judaism there are different school of thoughts and sects like Ashkenāzī and Sephārdic. So, laws vary from sect to sect. As far Muslims are concerned ritual purification is mandatory to offer prayer five times a day throughout the years.

TishB'av. 9th of Month AV:

It is 9th day of the AV, eleventh month in civil calendar is day developed over the course of history. It is a rābbinic holiday. Fasting and Morning Prayer observed on this day. It is a sad day. Jewish remind destruction of first temple (Beit Ha Mikdash) by Nebuchadnezzar ii (d. 562BC) in 587 BC and destruction of second temple by Roman in 70 CE. Others calamities which have be fallen to Jews also

³⁷ SidhuSalatiel, Dr. (2013) holidays and rituals of Jews and Christian, Author house, p.38

³⁸ Scharfstein Sol. (1999) Understanding Jewish holidays and customs, Historical and Contemporary, KTAV Publishing House, p.118

³⁹ Qur'an 97

reminded on that day. It observes five prohibitions as follows, eating and drinking is not permitted, cosmetics, oil and lotion are not allowed, abstain from shoes made of leather, use of water for bathing and washing is banned, no relation between husband and wife is permitted. Competent Rābī must be consulted first to get relaxation if someone suffering through health issues. Those who are ill can eat and drink. In synagogue book of Lamentations are read. That book contains sad poems (kīnnōte) which mourns over destruction of temple and loss of Jerusalem. Some kīnnōte also recall events such as murders of 10 Martyrs by the Romans, the holocaust.⁴⁰ Kīnnōte are bitsimilar to *Shī‘ah* Muslims lamentation in month of *Mūharrām*. They commemorate the martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat Ḥūsain (رضي الله عنه) grandson of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and family members by reading elegy which describes events of that tragedy.

Sabbath: (the 7th day of Jewish week)

Torah says, “six days in a week you work and labour but keep seventh day (Sabbath) holy for your Lord. Do not do any work on that day. Servants and cattle shall not do any work too”.⁴¹ Sabbath is Jewish holy day of week commanded by God. There are long list of laws relating rituals and customs of this day. This holiday starts at sunset on Friday and ends after one hour of Saturday sunset. Day is 25 hours long. God asked the Jewish People to observe the Sabbath and observe it holy as the fourth of the Ten Commandments. Torah states God created world in six days and he took rest on next Sabbath day. So, Jews people do so to remind this. No television, no telephone or other worldly business is allowed.⁴² Jews greet each other by saying Gut Shabbos or Sabbath Shalom on this day. Families get together to celebrate Sabbath. People wait all week for Sabbath because they feel a special relation with God on this holyday.⁴³ They consider themselves more beloved and special to God. It is most like Jum‘ah Day in Islām but Islām does not stop Muslim to do any legal and lawful work on this day. Afternoon prayer on every Jumu‘ah is most important congregation among Muslim Community. *Qur‘ān* says get hasten when you are called for Friday (*Ṣalāt ul Jumu‘ah*) afternoon prayer and after prayer disperse in the land to seek bounty.⁴⁴ *Qur‘ān* also talks about Sabbath but it states people of book (Jews) was commanded to keep Sabbath holy and do not transgress on this holy day but few of Jews people breaks it. Allah did curse them turning

⁴⁰ Beth Nina, Gevirtz Gila. (2002)Rediscovering the Jewish holidays, Behrman House Inc.p. 186

⁴¹ Exodus 20:8-11

⁴² Kozodoy Lurie Ruth. (1997) The book of Jewish Holidays. Behrman house inc. p.60

⁴³ Goodman Robert. (2007) Teaching Jewish holidays, A.R.E Publishing inc.p.15-20

⁴⁴ Qur‘an 62:9

them into Apes.⁴⁵

On January 2018 a bill presented in parliament of Israel to make legislation regarding ban on opening all kind of shops on Sabbath. Convenience stores and gas station were exempted from law. This law creates many troubles and tensions within Israel.⁴⁶

Islām:

Muslims are commanded by Allah to follow lunar calendar in *Qur'ān* which is the most sacred and authentic text book for Muslim belong to all denomination, “He (ALLAH Almighty) made the phases of moon for computation of years and the reckoning of time”.⁴⁷

Name and the number of pre-Islāmic central 'Arab calendar and current Muslim calendar are almost same. Alteration of months within a year was found in pre-Islāmic calendar which was decree illegal in *Qur'ān*. *Qur'ān* states Number of Months are twelve and four of them are sacred.⁴⁸

Nasī' (alteration of months) was the pre-Islāmic practices of the 'Arabs of Makah city, where they would change the setting of the forbidden months within a given year without implying a calendar manipulation, because in four sacred months war is unlawful. But this was forbidden in life of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). Muslim holy days occur around the whole year because of lunar calendar.

Muslim does not celebrate New Year but consider time a very precious. *Qur'ān* says, “By time. Men are in loss. Except who have faith and do right acts”.⁴⁹ Islāmic calendar begins when the Prophet Muḥammad (D:632 CE, Pease be upon him) migrated from holy city of Makkah to *Madīna* (around July 622 CE). Islāmic months are pure lunar months and fixed by observing new crescent moon.

'Umar Bin Al Khaṭṭāb (D:644 CE) second righteous caliph and close fellow of the Prophet introduced this calendar very first time under his caliphate in year 638 CE. He took opinion from his advisers and agreed on that Hijrah is the proper reference point to start New Islāmic calendar.⁵⁰ It was a landmark for Muslim Ummah (community). Few historians like *Ibn-e- 'Asākir* (D:1176 CE) have opinion that Hijrah date was first used by Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) himself in

⁴⁵ Qur'an 4: 47 &154

⁴⁶ <http://www.jspost.com/Israel-News/Politics-and-Diplomacy/Haredi-Grocery-Banning-Shabbat-Operations-Passed-in-Cabinet-515867> , retrieved 18-06-2018

⁴⁷ Qur'ān 10:5

⁴⁸ Qur'ān 9:36

⁴⁹ Qur'an103

⁵⁰ Mansorpori, Qazi Muḥammad Suliman.Rahmatal-ul-Alamen.Al Harmain-ul-Islām. Faisalabad. V.2. p.577, Accessed on 20 June 2018

correspondents with other Kings and leaders of tribes and clans. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) migrated from Makkah to Madīna by the will of Almighty Allah to form an Islāmic state. That state was ruled by Prophet Muḥammad under the Guidance of Almighty Allah through revelation time to time. That revelation was compiled in the life of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). Madīna state was ideal Islāmic state and even role model for all other contemporary political states today.

In few Muslim countries Islāmic calendar is an official calendar, especially Kingdome of *Sa'udī 'Arabiā*. Gregorian calendar is used for civil purposes in majority of Islāmic countries. They use Islāmic calendar for religious matters only. But in almost every Muslim country there are special body on Government level who keep record of Islāmic month by observing new crescent.

The Islāmic Months:

Following are the name and meaning of Islāmic month. I should repeat here Islām did not originate new names. These are the same names as used in pre-Islāmic era in 'Arab peninsula. *Muḥarram* (Forbidden), *Safar* (void), *Rabī' al-Awwal* (First bloom), *Rabī' al-Thānī* (second bloom), *Jamādi ul-Ūlā* (first parched land) *Jamādi ul-Thanī* (second parched land), *Rajab* (Respect), *Sha'bān* (Distributed), *Ramaḍān* (Scorching heat), *Shawwāl* (vigorous), *Dhul Qa'dah* (the one of rest), *Dhul -Ḥajjah* (the one of Pilgrimage). Four months are sacred and warfare is not allowed including *Muḥarram*, *Rajab*, *Dhul-Qi'dah* and *Dhul -Ḥajjah*.

Islāmic Festivals:

Like Jews, Muslims have also festivals derived from two sources. One is from Qur'ān and prophetic traditions which are agreed by all Muslim. Others are derived from course of history by different sects like mourning procession on 10th day of *Muḥarram* (*'Ashūra*). Surprisingly few non-Muslim consider this mourning procession as a ritual of mainstream Islām.

I 'Eid -ul-Fiṭr:

Nearly 1.5 billion Muslims around the world observed this wonderful rejoicing holiday on 13th and 14th June 2018. According to Islāmic month it occurs on 1st of 10th Islāmic month *Shawwāl*. *'Eid-ul-Fiṭr* is a unique festival in its spirit and philosophy. There is no historical background for this event. Neither it is linked with cycle of agriculture nor associated with changing of seasons. *Anas bin Mālik* (D.709 CE) prophet's companion reported: when prophet came to know that people of *Madīna* used two days recreation in days of ignorance. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) informed about something better Allah given you, *'Eid-ul-Fiṭr* and *'Eid-ul-*

Aḍḥa.⁵¹ It has been celebrated on very first day right after holy month of *Ramaḍān*. Muslims pay thanks and be grateful to Allah for given them strength to observe fast.

In Muslim world, this day is all about happiness. Indeed, it is a reward given to Muslims by Almighty Allah after successful completion of heavy-duty task in Ramadan. In 624 C.E first *'Eid-ul-Fiṭr* was celebrated by Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his companions. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was 55 years old then. Why he didn't celebrate this event before because Allah almighty didn't command to do so before.

On this day Muslims wake up early in the morning. Muslims offer pre-dawn prayer like any other day of the year. They take special bath (*Ghussal*) for ritual purification. After that they take breakfast. This breakfast has special feeling because for last thirty days they were taking pre-dawn breakfast which is called (*sahūr*). Sweet is preferred in meal. Then all family member moves together towards Mosque for congregational prayers known as *Ṣalāt ul-'Eid*. It is very essential part of this holy day. Muslims utter the *Takbīr*, a declaration of faith on their way to *Ṣalāt ul-'Eid*. Muslims practices all these by following the footprints of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). They pay special kind of charity named *Dhakāt al-Fiṭr* in form of specific amount of food (wheat/ dates other grains) or money⁵² are given by wealthy Muslims including women and kids to needy one before this prayer. Research study shows around Rs240 billion given annually by *Pākistānis* to charity.⁵³

Muslims celebrate this day by gathering with family, relatives and friends, wearing new clothes and preparing lot of delicious meals. "Have a blessed Eid" (*'Eidu-Kum Sa'ēd / 'Eid Mubārak*) is a common greeting. Muslims tried their best that no single person around them be deprived and sad especially on this day. They share maximum clothes and food to needy one. Muslim countries have three days holiday on this occasion. Non-Muslim country should arrange a special holiday for Muslim minority. Employer should spare their Muslim employs to celebrate and participate in their festivals. As Muslim calendar is a lunar calendar so it mostly occurs on alternate date even within Islāmīc world. That is because Muslim world is stretching from Far East country Indonesia to North West country Morocco.

⁵¹ Abu Dawud, Suliman. Sun'anAbiDawud.(2008) Maktaba Dar-us-Salam Volume1. book of Prayer, Chapter of Prayer, Narration no. 1134

⁵² For example UAE fixed an amount of DH20 for its citizen to pay, Pakistan fixed 100PKR, and KSA fixed 15KSR

⁵³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1664949/9-pakistan-one-charitable-nations-world-reveals-stanford-study/> retrieved 18-06-2018

II ‘Eid al-Aḍḥa:

It did occur on 10th of *Dhil Ḥajj*, 12th month of Islāmic calendar (21st to 24th august 2018). It is holiest celebrations relating to *Ḥajj* (Annual Pilgrimage). It is manifold event. All financially and physically capable Muslims, once in life time, must performed *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage) to the holy city of Makkah, *Sa ‘ūdī ‘Arabia* in these holy days.⁵⁴

‘*Eid al-Aḍḥa* (the feast of the sacrifice) is an honour awarded to Prophet *Ibrāhim*’s (عليه السلام) on his great commitment to Almighty Allah. When he did offers up his only son as a sacrifice.⁵⁵ Only son Prophet *Ismā‘īl* (عليه السلام) also did strengthen his old father to do so. But at the last moment Allah almighty replaced it with ram. Test has been passed and liked as much by Allah almighty as it was made an essential part of *Ḥajj*. Satan appears before Prophet *Ibrāhim* (عليه السلام) to stop him from sacrificing his only son. But Prophet did throw stones at him. To remind this story millions of Muslims throws small stones to symbolic devil situated near *Minā* in *Makkah* as a last major ritual in *Ḥajj*. *Ḥajj* is the most important and remarkable international annual summit of Islām. Muslim from All around the world reached to Makkah on specific days. In 2018 almost 3 million Muslims performed *Ḥajj*. Billions of dollars come in circulation. Five days long festival have simple rituals mostly related to Prophet *Ibrāhim*’s (عليه السلام) historical scarifies. Muslim wears two plain unstitched white clothes to perform *Ḥajj*. In any way this festival has no resemblance to any other religious festival in world. It is unique in its philosophy and the way it’s performed. One has to spend one night in camps while one night under sky with no shelter. After slaughtering animal Muslims shave their heads. Muslim men and women both perform *Ḥajj*. Its manifest Islām is an international religion. Muslims belong to all races, languages, countries perform *Ḥajj*. They share the same clothes same rituals and same ‘*Arabic* language.

Muslims celebrate and prepare for ‘*Eid al-Aḍḥa* in a number of ways. Beside their daily pre-dawn prayer, in morning Muslim gathers for ‘*Eid* prayers in mosques or spacious grounds. Special sermon is delivered at this congregation. This all worship took no more than an hour. Women also perform these prayers. Like ‘*Eid-ul-fiṭr* same greetings are exchange on this day too. After prayer slaughtering an animal is most important ritual on this holyday. Slaughtering can be done until third day before sunset. Those Muslims who are wealthy slaughter a goat, camel, sheep or cow. Meat of slaughtered animals consumed at home and distributed to needy and poor one. According to Pakistan Tanners Association report, almost 10m cattle

⁵⁴ Qur’ān 3:98

⁵⁵ Qur’an 37:102

heads (7.3m goats, 2.5m cows, bulls, buffaloes, 30,000 camels, 80,000 sheep) worth Rs250bn. were sacrificed during the three days 'Eid festival in 2016.⁵⁶ This practice plays a vital role to boost the growth of livestock sector and people involved in it. It is a great day in Islāmīc world from all aspects. People arrange special lunch and dinner for all family members and spend a quality time. Those who are working in other cities wait for this holiday and to get together. Kids force their parents to buy an animal few days early from 'Eid so they may spend much time to love and tame that special animal which is being sacrificed in the way of Allah. Above discussed are the two main holidays and festivals which are being celebrated unanimously by all Muslim. Rest of the festivals are developed later over the course of history and not accepted by all.

III Milād an-Nabī:

This day is celebrated as a birth day of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). It is a blessed day because Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) has declared mercy for all humankind in *Qur'ān*, born.⁵⁷ But it is not mentioned in primary Islāmīc books neither in *Qur'ān* nor in *Hadith*. Thus it is a disputed festival in Muslim community. A large number of Muslims in entire Muslim world without any discrimination of country language and race do celebrate it. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was born in 571 CE at Makkah in Arabian Peninsula. Though there is a scholarly debate over the exact date of his birth. On the 12th day of fifth Islāmīc month *Rabī' al-Awwal*, this festival is observed.

On this day Muslims celebrate by focusing on the life and teachings of Muḥammad (ﷺ). There is no specific way to celebrate this day. Muslim Community expresses her love towards their beloved prophet and last messenger of Allah by giving charity, offering special prayers on him. In some countries groups of people come on road and chant special poems to express their love to Muḥammad (ﷺ) with musical instruments. Pakistan and few other Islāmīc countries, Muslim decorates their homes, roadsides and government buildings with lights. There is big debate within Muslim communities on this controversial celebration. Those who oppose it say celebration of birthdays is associated with Christian (Christmas). In Pakistan this day is a public holiday. All banks, offices and educational institutes remain closed.

IV 'Āshūra,

10th of *Muḥarram* is not a festival to celebrate. It is a first month in Islāmīc

⁵⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1283496> retrieved on 20-06-2018

⁵⁷ Qur'an 21:107

Calendar. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) used to fast on 9th and 10th of Muḥarram and his companion also do so. It is narrated that when Prophet Muḥammad migrated to city of *Madīna* from city of *Makkah*, they did notice Jews of *Madīna* observed fast on 10th of *Muḥarram*/*Āshūra*. On query it is revealed they observed fast on this day because according to their literature Allah (SWT) saved *Banī Isrāīl* from Pharaoh Army. So, Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) fasted that day. By knowing this prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said, we have more right over Moses than you. So, prophet did fast on that day and asked his companions to do so.⁵⁸ But later on this day got importance in Islāmic history as a sad incident took place on this day. Prophet Muḥammad’s Grandson Ḥaḍrat Ḥussain (رضي الله عنه) with his family members got martyred in battle of *Karbalā*, *‘Irāq*. *Shi‘a* Muslims mourn first nights of *Muḥarram*. 10th of *Muḥarram* is known as the Day of *Āshūra*. Because these were the days in which *Imām Ḥussein* (رضي الله عنه) (grandson) of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his family and followers including women, younger and elderly people killed brutally by the army of king *Yazīd I*⁵⁹. That tragic incident took place at *Karbalā*, *‘Irāq* in 680 CE. These days are considered as a terrible chapter of Islāmic history. All Sūnnī Muslims feel the pain and express their grief. But at the same time, they condemned the way of intense mourning adopted by *Shi‘a* Muslims. Few Sūnnī Muslims do fast on this day to follow Muḥammad (ﷺ) practice. In Pakistan government announce two days public holidays on 9th and 10th *Muḥarram*. *Shi‘a* community arrange mourning congregation and procession on roads. In Pakistan Sūnnī people visit family graveyard and pray for departed souls.

These are the few major Islāmic festivals and holidays being observed in Muslim World. Indeed, Islām is not a new religion rather it’s the last message from Allah the Almighty which revealed to human being after Torah and Gospel. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) is the last part of the Prophets Chain started from Prophet Ādam (عليه السلام). Muslim respects all the messenger and Prophets which mentioned in Old and New Testament. Story of Children of *Isrāīl* and their redemption from Egypt’s Pharaoh is described very well in Qur’ān. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) preached the very same religion preached by Prophet Abraham (عليه السلام), and all other prophets mentioned in the Torah and the Bible. Muslims honour all the prophets Abraham,

⁵⁸ Bukhari, Muḥammad ibn Ismail. SahiBukhari, (1997) DarussalamPublishers and Distributers. Riyadh. Volume 3.Book 30.Fasting.Narration 2004.

⁵⁹ Commonly known as YazidI, was the second caliph of the Umayyad caliphate (and the first one through inheritance). Yazid was the caliph as appointed by his father Mu’aawyah I and ruled for three years from 680 C.E until his death in 683 C.E.

David, Moses, Joseph, Jacob and Solomon (ﷺ) as their own prophets. Islām does not discriminate among prophets.⁶⁰ Allah ordered Muḥammad (ﷺ) to go after the path of the Patriarch Abraham (ﷺ)

"Follow the path of Abraham the True in Faith, and he joined not associates with God."⁶¹

Monotheism is a common belief in Islām and Judaism. Believe in One God as the Creator, Law-Giver and Sustainers. Both religions teach the need for establishing the Law of God on earth.

Muslims act upon Sharī'ah (Law) in their daily life and Jews have Halakhā (an abstract of laws, derived from Torah). But instead of keeping peace on earth Jews started transgression on earth which is still continued. That's why they get out of the Allah beloved people. They Must pay attention to call of Qur'ān "And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you, and be not the first to disbelieve in it".⁶²

Socio economic aspect,

Aforementioned discussion on religious festivals and holidays in both religions shows their deep impact on socio economic culture of both societies. Sense of celebrating religious festivals together by making sure the participation of rich and deprived is overwhelmed in all commandments of God concerned to these special days. Either its Yom-e-Kippūr or 'Eid al-Adḥa both focus on feeding the needy and do not let them feel to be less happy according to their socio economics status. Central Sacred place of both religions play a vital role to keep their followers connected in a socio-cultural thread. Followers come from all around the world to attend Leading congress held on these places like Makkah and Jerusalem. In Muslim world major business activity take place in *Ramaḍān* before 'Eid-ul-Fiṭr and on 'Eid al-Adḥa. Complete month of *Ramaḍān* is spent in giving more and more charity to needy. Before offering 'Eid prayer *Fiṭrānā* (a prescribed weight of grain or money of its value) must be paid. Millions of animals are sacrificed on 10th to 13th month of *Dhil-Hajj*. In return it gives a sufficient support to live stock sector and all those who involved to this. After slaughter meet also goes to deserving community of Muslim world. One of the reasons why barren valley of Makkah is abode of world oldest living civilization.

According to scholar Mr. Nicholas, purpose of being a good Jew is to get holiness. "One area where the concept of sanctity is still very much alive is in the

⁶⁰ Qur'an 3:84- 85

⁶¹ Qur'an 16:123

⁶² Qur'an 2:41

Sabbath and festivals".⁶³ Torah explains, "If you listen to my voice.....you shall be mine and holy Nation".⁶⁴ A Muslim want to achieve the same goal described by Islām in Qur'ān, The pilgrimage is (in) month well-known..... And be pious to me"⁶⁵. Muslims rejoice on '*Eid-ul-Fiṭr* because they observe fast in whole month of *Ramaḍān*. Fasting is decreed upon Muslim so they may become pious.⁶⁶ Asceticism has been discouraged in both religions. Some Rābi has warned that we shall be accountable for the legitimate pleasure we denied ourselves.⁶⁷ Allah (SWT) demands from believers "And proclaim the grace of your Lord".⁶⁸ There are a very close connection between obedience and prosperity in both religions. Torah narrates if you be obedient to Lord your God will bless you in the land.⁶⁹ Qur'ān says those who fear Allah (SWT) shall be provided sources they never could imagine.⁷⁰ On another place Allah (SWT) says, if you are grateful, I will add more.⁷¹ Righteousness, faith, fear and love are some common goals which followers of the both religions attain after observing these festivals. Beyond all these blessing there are one ultimate gift which can be received after observing all these rituals is peace. In Bible words, the lord will bless his people with the peace.⁷² According to Qur'ān, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find Contentment.⁷³ Judaism insist on not to rejoice on these holidays alone. If someone eats alone and not share with needy then an impure force will capture that man's soul.⁷⁴ According to Jewish literature, God appears on the holidays and came to poor. If poor are not happy God weeps for them and go back to destroy the world.⁷⁵ Even if prosecutor enters a home and see family is celebrating holiday without the poor. He brings acquisition against the host of the feast.⁷⁶ These are fine teachings of Judaism. In Islām feeding needy and poor has been considered high standard virtue too. Qur'ān says, who threats the orphan and does not urge the others to feed the poor is indeed denying the Day of Judgment.⁷⁷ This subject is repeated

⁶³ Nicholas De Lange ,(2002)An introduction to Judaism, Cambridge University press p.189

⁶⁴ Exodus 19:5-6

⁶⁵ Qur'ān 2:197

⁶⁶ Qur'ān 2:183

⁶⁷ Nicholas De Lange ,(2002) An introduction to Judaism, Cambridge University press p.190

⁶⁸ Qur'ān 93:11

⁶⁹ Deuteronomy 30: 15-18

⁷⁰ Qur'ān 65:2-3

⁷¹ Qur'ān 14:7

⁷² Psalms 29:11

⁷³ Qur'ān 13:28.

⁷⁴ Laitman, Rav Michael,(2009) The Zohar, Kabbalah laitman publishers, p.355

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.356

⁷⁶ Ibid. p.360

⁷⁷ Qur'ān 107:1-3

numerous times in Qur'ān and tradition of Prophet (ﷺ). Give to the relatives, needy and the wayfarers. Do not waste your wealth.⁷⁸ Thus all these acts of Charity and kindness bring prosperity in economic and social life of people living around us. Teaching of these two religions is excellent. But it has been observed that the followers of these religions are practically far off from these teaching. Millions of people in number of Islāmic countries like Sudan, Yemen, Palestine and Somalia are facing starvation and famine.⁷⁹ But not enough steps have been taken by the rich Muslim countries and individual to overcome these human crises. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) says Muslim Ummah is like a body. When any limb aches then whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.⁸⁰ Muslim community should take effective steps to help the people. Similarly, according to international human right organization Israel has made life difficult for the citizen of neighbour country Palestine. Israeli government continued to enforce severe and discriminatory restriction on Palestinian Including demolition of homes in occupied West Bank. Basic human needs are restricted to Palestine by Israel according to UN report.⁸¹ These acts are against humanity and teaching of the Torah. Therefore, the followers of both religions should act correctly on their religion teaching. So may the path of happiness and peace in the world be smooth. Peace is inevitable for the development and progress of humanity. Ironically the greeting used in Both religions "Assalām-o-'Alaikum" and "Shalom" have same meaning, peace .But now it's time to bring concrete peace in world.

Conclusion:

Observing religious festivals and holidays are essential part of Islām and Judaism. Comparative Study lead the reader to come with this result that Islāmic teaching and philosophy to observe religious festivals is more precise, targeted and easy to act upon. All festivals aim to keep God-Man relation as strong and live as Man to Man relation. Both religion festivals focus on ritual and spiritual purification of its followers. Number of Muslim is much greater than Jews, so it is celebrated worldwide. It's a great opportunity for Muslim living in non-Muslim majority country that they must reflect true spirit of their holidays to convey more effective and peaceful message of Islām.

⁷⁸ Qur'ān 17: 26-27

⁷⁹ <https://globalnews.ca/news/3303014/20-million-people-in-4-countries-facing-starvation-famine-u-n/> retrieved 18-01-2019

⁸⁰ Muslim bin al-haj'jaj , (1930) Sahi Muslim, As'sah Al Mata'ba , Dehli, volume. 6, p.212

⁸¹ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/israel/palestine> retrieved 13-01-2019