

World Peace: Why We Need to Talk About Scandalous Religious Verses

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Calls for world peace usually focus on diplomacy, economics, and disarmament. Far less attention is given to a quieter but equally explosive layer: the “scandalous verses” embedded in our sacred and authoritative texts. Every major Abrahamic tradition lives with passages that, read plainly, seem to license cruelty, contempt, or exclusion in the name of God. For centuries, religious leaders have managed this tension by contextualizing, reinterpreting, or simply ignoring such texts. That strategy worked as long as most believers never saw the problematic material and outsiders had limited access. In the digital age, that world is gone. Today, anyone with a search engine can find the hardest Talmudic lines, the harshest verses of Leviticus, or the most troubling hadith—and they increasingly do so through polemical channels. If religious communities and AI systems respond with evasion, trust collapses and backlash grows. This paper argues that world peace now requires a shared ethic of scriptural honesty: naming scandalous verses as a category, owning their history, and publicly disavowing their use as weapons. Focusing on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and on the emerging “eighth front” of information war and AI, we sketch a compact framework for a peace that does not depend on sanitized texts, but on confessed and constrained ones.

Keywords: world peace, scandalous verses, scripture, Talmud, Leviticus, Qur'an, hadith, Karaites, antisemitism, Islamophobia, Christian theology, Jewish law, Islamic law, AI ethics, information warfare, eighth front.

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Note: This paper intentionally contains two Section 5s because of Netanyahu’s Eight Front. My editorial comment lies in between.

Outline

1. Introduction: Why Scandalous Verses Suddenly Matter

- 1.1 From military fronts to the textual front
- 1.2 The end of protective ignorance in the digital age
- 1.3 Scope: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and AI

2. What We Mean by “Scandalous Verses”

- 2.1 Verses that scandalize conscience, not merely taste
- 2.2 Canon, commentary, and contested authority
- 2.3 Law, story, and the problem of literalism

3. Parallel Tensions in the Abrahamic Traditions

- 3.1 Christianity’s hard texts: Leviticus, conquest, and punitive imagery
- 3.2 Rabbinic Judaism’s hard texts: Talmud, chosenness, and the image of God
- 3.3 Islam’s hard texts: Qur’an, hadith, warfare, and gender
- 3.4 Internal critics: Karaites, reformers, and dissenting voices

4. How Communities Contain Their Own Dynamite

- 4.1 Contextualization and historical limitation
- 4.2 Genre, hierarchy, and higher principles (love, justice, mercy)
- 4.3 Liturgical silence and quiet shelving of difficult material
- 4.4 When containment fails: weaponization and backlash

5. AI, Information Warfare, and the “Eighth Front”

- 5.1 Narrative management and engineered search results
- 5.2 Safety filters, accusations of bias, and taboo topics
- 5.3 How over-suppression protects bad readings instead of healing them
- 5.4 Designing AI for honest but de-escalating engagement with hard texts

6. Toward a Minimal Ethic of Scriptural Honesty for Peace

- 6.1 Acknowledging scandalous verses without voyeurism
- 6.2 Cross-tradition pledges of non-weaponization
- 6.3 Teaching clergy, laity, and publics how to handle hard texts
- 6.4 Final reflections: confessed scriptures, not sanitized ones

7. References

1. Introduction: Why Scandalous Verses Suddenly Matter

For most of history, the danger from sacred texts was mediated by scarcity. Scrolls were rare, books were expensive, languages were specialized, and interpretation was tightly controlled by clergy, rabbis, or jurists. The “difficult” parts of scripture and commentary—the passages that seem to bless violence, contempt, or permanent hierarchy—were wrapped in layers of oral tradition, legal limitation, and pastoral discretion. Ordinary believers might never encounter them. Outsiders almost never did.

That world has ended. In the age of search engines, screenshots, and generative models, the most troubling lines from Leviticus, the Talmud, or the hadith collections are always one angry query away. They circulate in memes, polemics, and conspiracy threads, usually stripped of genre, context, and internal debate. They are used as proof that “the other side’s” God is cruel, that their religion is inherently violent, or that a tiny elite has been hiding what their books really say.

At the same time, governments and movements now speak openly about an “information front” in warfare: a theater where perception, narrative, and theological framing are as strategically important as tanks or drones. Artificial intelligence systems sit squarely inside that front. They are asked, daily and at scale, to explain scriptures, summarize traditions, and answer questions about verses that can either calm or inflame. How these systems respond—evasively, defensively, or honestly—shapes whether scandalous verses become fuses or become subjects for repentance and reform.

This paper starts from a simple claim: world peace can no longer be pursued as if this textual layer does not exist. The verses are there. Increasing numbers of people are aware of them. What remains to be decided is whether we will handle them by denial, by weaponization, or by a fragile but necessary ethic of truthful engagement.

1.1 From military fronts to the textual front

Modern conflict is often described in terms of multiple “fronts”: ground operations, air power, cyber attacks, economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure. In recent years, political and military leaders have added another: the battle for narrative, for minds, for “truth” in the age of ubiquitous media. This is not mere propaganda; it is an organized struggle over what events mean, who is victim and who is aggressor, which deaths are mourned and which are rationalized away.

Sacred texts enter this battlefield in two ways. First, they are used *from within* communities to energize supporters, justify suffering, and sustain the belief that God is on “our” side. Second, they are used *from outside* as evidence that the enemy’s religion is inherently barbaric, that

their scriptures command them to hate us, that negotiation is futile. A single sentence from a vast corpus can become a slogan, a slur, a justification.

We may therefore speak of a textual front: a zone where compacts about interpretation, restraint, and the character of God either hold—or collapse. When religious leaders and institutions refuse to acknowledge hard texts, they cede this front to extremists and propagandists. When they face those texts honestly, they have at least the possibility of turning them from weapons into confessions.

1.2 The end of protective ignorance in the digital age

For centuries, what might be called “protective ignorance” functioned as an informal safety mechanism. A Christian farmer in the nineteenth century was unlikely ever to read the most troubling parts of Joshua or the harsher church canons. A Jewish shopkeeper might live a pious life guided by prayer, holiday, and local rabbinic teaching without ever confronting the most aggressive voices in late rabbinic literature. A Muslim artisan might hear the Qur’an recited with beauty and reverence without parsing the details of medieval legal manuals.

Today, that insulation is gone. A teenager can, in an evening, assemble their own anthology of scandalous verses from every major tradition. They can do it through sites and channels that are openly hostile to those traditions. They can ask an AI system to “show me what they’re hiding,” and they can compare the machine’s answer with screenshots of translated texts. If the gap between those two is too large, trust is not merely eroded; it is shattered.

Protective ignorance also fails in another direction. Members of a tradition who *do* encounter these texts cannot easily bring them to their leaders without fearing dismissal, moralizing, or accusations of disloyalty. When institutions respond by minimizing, deflecting, or changing the subject, they unintentionally confirm the very suspicion they hoped to avoid: that something is rotten and must be exposed.

In such an environment, silence is no longer neutral. It is interpreted as concealment. And concealment, once suspected, accelerates backlash.

1.3 Scope: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and AI

This paper focuses on three overlapping zones.

First, it looks at **Christianity**, particularly the way many Christians handle hard passages in the Old and New Testaments—Leviticus on purity and punishment, conquest narratives, and severe sayings about judgment. These serve as a kind of “control case”: most Christians are at least dimly aware that their own scriptures contain texts that appear violent, exclusionary, or ethically unbearable.

Second, it examines **Judaism**, both Rabbinic and Karaite. Rabbinic Judaism's enormous textual tradition includes halakhic debate, moral teaching, and also certain Talmudic and midrashic lines that can be read as demeaning outsiders or shrinking the universal scope of God. Karaite Judaism, which rejects the Talmud's binding authority, offers an internal Jewish vantage point from which to question whether all traditional portrayals of God deserve to be treated as faithful. The aim is not to caricature Judaism by its worst texts, but to trace how Jewish thinkers themselves have wrestled with them.

Third, it considers **Islam**, where Qur'anic verses and hadith about warfare, punishment, and gender roles have been variously contained, reinterpreted, or abused. As with the other traditions, the focus is not on assembling a voyeuristic list, but on understanding the internal tools Muslims have developed to prevent hard texts from dictating everything.

Threaded through these three is a fourth actor: **artificial intelligence systems** that now mediate much of the public's first serious encounter with religion. These systems are trained on contested corpora, constrained by safety protocols, and exposed to deliberate attempts at narrative manipulation. They can answer with evasions that deepen suspicion, or with carefully structured honesty that might, in time, support peace.

By holding these four together—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and AI—the paper argues that world peace in the twenty-first century cannot be pursued apart from a new candor about scandalous verses. The question is no longer whether such verses exist; it is whether believers, critics, and machines will help disarm them, or help light their fuse.

2. What We Mean by “Scandalous Verses”

If “scandalous verses” means whatever any reader happens to dislike, the phrase is useless. Every age, and every temperament, finds different parts of scripture uncomfortable. What matters for world peace are not verses that merely irritate, confuse, or stretch us, but verses that, taken at face value, seem to bless what conscience and experience now recognize as destructive: contempt for outsiders, permanent hierarchies of worth, cruelty dressed as obedience.

In that sense, scandalous verses are not just awkward sentences in ancient books. They are potential permissions. When they are quoted literally or half-literally, they appear to authorize attitudes and policies that directly undermine the conditions of peace. A tradition can live with outmoded dietary rules; it cannot live indefinitely with a reading of its own texts that says some peoples are expendable.

This section proposes a working definition of scandalous verses, and then adds two framing distinctions: the difference between canon and commentary, and the difference between law and story. Without those distinctions, every textual controversy collapses into a shouting match about “what your book really says.”

2.1 Verses that scandalize conscience, not merely taste

There is a difference between a verse that troubles my preferences and a verse that breaks something deeper. Many modern readers, for example, find ritual regulations or ascetic counsels unappealing. That does not make them scandalous in the sense we are concerned with here. They may be burdensome, or simply foreign, but they do not by themselves threaten the moral fabric of coexistence.

By “scandalous verses” we mean passages that, read in a straightforward way, appear to:

- Deny the full humanity or dignity of certain groups.
- Sanction violence, dispossession, or humiliation as ongoing religious duties.
- Portray God as petty, vindictive, or unjust in ways that contradict the best moral insight of the tradition itself.

A verse that says “love your enemies” may offend our instincts but elevates conscience. A verse that appears to say “your enemies are less than human” does the opposite. The first is spiritually demanding; the second, in a literalist reading, is spiritually corrupting.

Scandal here is therefore not defined by secular taste, but by an internal contradiction: a passage whose blunt reading collides with the tradition’s highest claims about God’s justice and mercy. This is why believers themselves often feel the deepest shock. The text seems to betray the God they met elsewhere in their own scriptures.

At the same time, scandal is relational. The very same verse may land differently on those who have suffered under its application than on those who have only seen it as an abstraction. A line used historically to deny rights, justify conquest, or bless segregation carries a moral charge that cannot be erased by insisting that “it was misunderstood.” For the purposes of peace, the test is not only theological coherence but lived effect.

2.2 Canon, commentary, and contested authority

A second source of confusion is the layered nature of religious texts. Every major tradition distinguishes, in some way, between foundational revelation and later interpretation, even if the boundaries are disputed.

There is, in each case, something like:

- A central canon: the texts regarded as primary witness to God's self-disclosure.
- A vast commentary tradition: legal, homiletical, mystical, philosophical, and devotional writings that unfold, apply, and sometimes argue with the canon.
- Local or popular teaching: sermons, catechisms, stories, and customs that may or may not have a clear textual anchor.

Scandalous verses can appear at any of these levels. A harsh line in a revered commentary may have as much practical influence as a line in scripture; a half-remembered slogan from a sermon may function as "God's word," even if no one could source it.

Authority is also contested. Within Judaism, for example, Rabbinic and Karaite communities disagree sharply on whether the Talmud constitutes binding oral law or human commentary. Within Christianity, different churches assign different weight to patristic writings, conciliar decrees, and later magisterial documents. Within Islam, debates about the status of particular hadith collections, or of classical legal manuals, shape what counts as genuinely normative.

When someone cites a scandalous text, the first question is therefore not "does your religion teach this?" but "what kind of text is this, and how much authority does it claim?" A single sentence in a late commentary does not stand on the same footing as a central prophetic proclamation. Even within the canon, not all passages carry equal structural weight.

For the purposes of world peace, however, contested authority does not make the problem disappear. A verse or saying that has functioned de facto as justification for injustice cannot be waved away by later technical distinctions. The challenge is to be honest about where the text sits in the hierarchy of authority, and equally honest about how it has been used on the ground.

2.3 Law, story, and the problem of literalism

A final framing distinction is between law and story, and more broadly between different literary genres. Ancient religious corpora include narrative, poetry, proverb, legal code, parable, vision, and hyperbolic exhortation. Scandal often arises when those genres are flattened, and every sentence is read as if it were a timeless statute.

A battlefield command spoken into a specific crisis is not the same kind of speech as a permanent legal principle. A prophetic taunt, framed as satire or lament, is not the same as a calm legislative clause. An imaginative story about heaven or hell does not function like a city ordinance. Aggadic tales, parables, or illustrative anecdotes were often meant to shock, probe, or entertain, not to lay down universal rules.

Literalism collapses these distinctions. It takes every line, in any genre, as directly descriptive or prescriptive. This habit is not the natural reading mode of premodern exegetes, who usually moved fluently among layers of meaning. It is, more often, a modern development: a reaction to secular critique, a product of print culture, or a strategy for asserting identity in the face of pluralism.

Literalism is not always wrong; it can protect texts from being allegorized into harmless abstractions. But where scandalous verses are concerned, it becomes dangerous. When a line originally embedded in a highly specific story, satire, or rhetorical flourish is treated as a freestanding command, the distance between ancient text and modern violence collapses.

This does not mean that all difficulty can be solved by invoking genre. Some passages that appear in legal form really are laws. Some stories have plainly been used as templates for action. The appeal to genre can itself become a way of evading responsibility. The point is not to make hard verses disappear behind clever classification, but to resist the simplistic move in which every sentence is treated as a universal instruction.

Taken together, these three distinctions—between scandal and mere discomfort, between canon and commentary, and between law and story—provide a minimal framework. They do not tell us what to do with any particular verse. They simply clarify what we are talking about when we name certain texts as scandalous, and why a peaceable response requires more than a reflexive defense or a reflexive denunciation.

3. Parallel Tensions in the Abrahamic Traditions

The problem of scandalous verses is not unique to any one community. It is woven, in different ways, into the textures of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Each tradition carries texts that can be read as endorsing exclusion or violence, and each has developed tools for softening, limiting, or re-reading them. These tools have often worked well enough inside the community, where shared assumptions and teaching fill in what the text does not explicitly say. They work less well when outsiders encounter the verses for the first time through hostile summaries or through their own raw searching.

To speak meaningfully about world peace, it is therefore not enough to generalize about “religion” or “scripture.” We have to look at the particular forms the tension takes in each tradition: where the hard texts are concentrated, how they have been justified or contained, and how they appear to those who stand outside. Only then can a shared ethic of scriptural honesty take shape.

3.1 Christianity's hard texts: Leviticus, conquest, and punitive imagery

For many Christians, the first encounter with scandal in scripture comes not from the Gospels but from the older layers of the Bible. Leviticus, with its detailed purity laws, sacrificial regulations, and death penalties, often feels like a foreign country. Commands that once structured an ancient priestly society now read, to modern eyes, as harsh, obsessive, or unjust. Narratives of conquest in Joshua and related books, in which entire cities are put under the ban, trouble readers who associate God with universal love. Later prophetic or apocalyptic texts sometimes seem to revel in visions of destruction that exceed any sense of proportion.

The New Testament does not remove all difficulty. Jesus' teachings on judgment, parables that end with exclusion and outer darkness, and images of eternal punishment have been used to paint a portrait of a God whose mercy appears fragile and conditional. Some of Paul's instructions on slavery, obedience, and gender roles have been marshalled to justify systems that Christians now widely regard as sinful. The problem, again, is not that these texts have no context or mitigating tradition, but that they are easily extracted and turned into slogans.

Historically, Christian theology has responded with several moves. One is the distinction between old covenant and new: Levitical laws and conquest commands are seen as belonging to a particular phase of salvation history, fulfilled and superseded by Christ. Another is the "canon within the canon" approach, in which the person and teaching of Jesus becomes the primary lens for reading everything else. More recently, many churches have publicly repented of ways in which biblical texts were used to legitimize colonialism, slavery, and persecution. Yet the verses remain, and when read without this interpretive scaffolding they still have the power to shock or to harden.

3.2 Rabbinic Judaism's hard texts: Talmud, chosenness, and the image of God

In Judaism, the tension around scandalous texts is distributed differently. The Hebrew Bible itself contains difficult passages, including conquest narratives and sharp judgments on surrounding peoples. But much of the contemporary controversy centers on the vast body of Rabbinic literature: the Mishnah, Talmud, midrash, and later commentaries. Within this corpus one can find passages that, taken in isolation, appear to draw very sharp lines between Israel and the nations, or that use language about outsiders that modern readers experience as demeaning.

Some texts, especially in the aggadic (narrative and homiletical) layers, also portray God in strikingly anthropomorphic ways: as arguing, laughing, regretting, or acting with partiality in a manner that seems to shrink the divine. These portrayals were often meant to illuminate aspects of Torah or to explore moral dilemmas in imaginative form. Seen through a literalist

lens, however, they can be read as evidence of a tribal or capricious deity, rather than the just and merciful Creator Jews confess in prayer.

Rabbinic Judaism has always contained internal correctives. Legal texts distinguish carefully between obligations toward resident strangers, friendly nations, and active enemies, and later authorities often restrict or universalize rulings that might otherwise be read narrowly. Aggadic material is explicitly non-binding; it is mined for wisdom, not treated as law. Ideas of chosenness are paired with a strong emphasis on the dignity of all human beings created in the image of God. In practice, the lived ethic of many Jewish communities has been one of remarkable resilience, mutual care, and kindness toward outsiders.

Yet, as with Christianity, the presence of harder voices complicates the picture. Critics, both internal and external, point to these texts as evidence that the tradition harbors a latent arrogance or hostility. Communities that feel besieged may lean more heavily on exclusivist strands as a form of psychological armor. When such texts are then cited in modern geopolitical debates, especially around land, security, and identity, the ancient tension between universal ethics and particular commitments becomes acute.

3.3 Islam's hard texts: Qur'an, hadith, warfare, and gender

In Islam, the core canon of the Qur'an is relatively compact, but it is densely interconnected with hadith literature and centuries of legal interpretation. Certain Qur'anic verses, especially those revealed in the context of early battles, speak directly of fighting, enemies, and the conditions under which force may be used. Read within their historical frame, they address specific betrayals, treaties, and threats. Read without that frame, they can appear as open-ended commands to perpetual struggle against non-believers.

Hadith collections, which report the sayings and actions of the Prophet, contain additional material that has become focal in modern debates. Reports about punishment, hierarchy between believers and others, and the conduct of war have shaped classical legal rulings. Passages related to marriage, inheritance, and testimony have underwritten gender norms that many now see as unfair. While legal scholars developed intricate rules of evidence, abrogation, and limitation around these texts, fragments of them circulate freely in contemporary polemics, often without the balancing detail.

Contemporary Muslim thought offers a range of responses. Some emphasize the higher objectives of the law—protection of life, faith, intellect, property, and lineage—as a lens through which all specific texts must be read. Others argue for contextual readings that restrict certain verses to the seventh-century situations that called them forth. Reformist voices call for re-examination of hadith authenticity and of inherited legal conclusions in the light of the

Qur'an's broader moral thrust. At the same time, literalist movements within Islam insist on applying certain hard texts with minimal reinterpretation, seeing any softening as betrayal.

To outsiders, especially in societies that have experienced violence justified with Islamic language, these internal nuances are often invisible. A handful of verses and reports become, in the public mind, the "true face" of Islam. Muslims who reject such uses of their tradition find themselves in a double bind: accused by extremists of watering down revelation, and by critics of concealing what their scriptures really say.

3.4 Internal critics: Karaites, reformers, and dissenting voices

Across all three traditions, there have always been believers who push back against scandalous texts from within. Their existence complicates any simple story that "religion" is inherently violent or that hard verses are ignored by the faithful. These internal critics often pay a price in marginalization or accusation, yet their work is essential for any hope of peace with integrity.

In Judaism, Karaite communities represent a historic and continuing dissent from Rabbinic claims about the authority of the Talmud. By insisting on the primacy of the written Tanakh and questioning anthropomorphic or ethically troubling depictions of God in later tradition, they make visible a Jewish capacity for self-critique. Within Rabbinic Judaism itself, philosophers and theologians have long rejected cruder readings of difficult texts, insisting on divine justice and unity as criteria that constrain interpretation.

Christian history contains movements that re-centered the Sermon on the Mount and the example of Jesus over against violent or punitive readings of other passages. Pacifist traditions, abolitionist preaching, and contemporary confessions of complicity in racism and colonialism all represent attempts to bring scandalous uses of scripture under the judgment of a higher gospel. Even where these efforts remain minority voices, they testify that Christians themselves feel the tension between certain texts and the God they confess.

In Islam, scholars and activists who argue for contextualization, for the primacy of the Qur'an's ethical core over later legal accretions, or for re-reading gender and punishment texts in light of contemporary knowledge, are performing a similar function. Their work is often contested, but it signals that Muslims are not passively bound to the hardest possible readings of their sources.

These dissenting currents are not a panacea. They do not erase scandalous verses, nor do they instantly undo the harm done in their name. But they show that the traditions carry within themselves resources for reform and restraint. Any serious pursuit of world peace must treat these internal critics not as convenient tokens to be weaponized against their own communities, but as partners in the shared work of disarming texts that have too often been used as license rather than as warning.

4. How Communities Contain Their Own Dynamite

If scandalous verses are like buried explosives in a religious landscape, then every tradition has developed ways of wiring them off. These methods evolved over centuries, usually not as cynical public-relations moves but as sincere attempts to keep fidelity to God from collapsing into cruelty. They include contextualization, appeals to higher principles, selective public reading, and quiet forgetting.

These containment strategies have often worked remarkably well inside their original cultural worlds. The trouble is that they were never designed for an age in which every verse, from every layer of every canon, can be pulled out of its protective web and displayed on a glowing screen to strangers who do not share the assumptions that made the containment work. Understanding these strategies—and their limits—is crucial for any attempt to defuse textual violence before it becomes real.

4.1 Contextualization and historical limitation

The most instinctive move is to say, “That verse spoke to a particular time, place, and crisis; it does not apply wholesale today.” This is contextualization: embedding a passage in the story that gave rise to it, and then limiting its reach to that story.

In Christianity, this often takes the form of salvation history. Commands that once governed ancient Israel’s ritual and civic life are said to belong to a specific covenant or stage, fulfilled and transformed rather than simply repeated. In Judaism and Islam, similar moves are made: some war verses are tied to a specific enemy or betrayal; some legal rulings are bound to economic and social realities that no longer obtain.

Historical limitation does not merely push the problem away. At its best, it is a recognition that God’s self-disclosure took place in real human cultures, with real dangers and constraints, and that what was necessary in one era may be destructive if universalized. A directive given to a fragile, embattled community on the verge of extinction does not automatically become the charter for a triumphant empire.

Yet contextualization has its limits. It can easily sound to critics like special pleading: “The pleasant verses are forever; the troubling ones expired.” It can become a blanket excuse rather than a careful discernment. And when texts have already been used in later centuries to justify harm, simply appealing back to their original context does little for those who live with the legacy.

4.2 Genre, hierarchy, and higher principles (love, justice, mercy)

A second set of tools works not by restricting when a verse applied, but by clarifying what kind of speech it represents and where it sits in a hierarchy of meaning.

Genre awareness says: “This is a parable, not a legal code. This is a battlefield exhortation, not a constitutional clause. This is a story told to provoke and disturb, not a direct description of God’s inner life.” Once that is granted, some scandal dissolves. A fierce image of divine judgment in a vision, for example, may be understood as a warning against complacency rather than an exact blueprint of divine procedure.

Hierarchy takes this further. It asserts that, within the many voices of scripture and tradition, some have more weight than others. A central revelation—of God’s steadfast love, or of a crucified and forgiving Christ, or of divine mercy that “encompasses all things”—becomes the standard against which other texts are read. If a particular verse seems to contradict that center, it is interpreted through it, not vice versa.

This is where appeals to “higher principles” come in. Love, justice, and mercy are not paper decorations tacked on at the end; they are treated as the deep grammar of divine speech. A reading that turns a passage into permission for gratuitous cruelty is rejected not because it embarrasses modern sensibility, but because it conflicts with what the tradition itself has learned to say at its best.

Again, there are risks. Hierarchy can be abused to simply erase inconvenient texts or to domesticate any sharp prophetic edge. Critics will ask who decides which principles are highest and whether those principles are being smuggled in from outside. Still, without some sense that there is a center of gravity in the revelation, communities are left with a flat field of verses, where the harshest line can claim equal authority with the most luminous.

4.3 Liturgical silence and quiet shelving of difficult material

A third strategy is less explicit but highly effective: simply not reading certain passages aloud, not preaching on them, not making them central to communal identity. Over time, they sink below the waterline of ordinary religious consciousness.

Liturgical calendars are powerful filters. By choosing which texts are regularly proclaimed in worship and which are left to scholars and specialists, communities shape what counts as “our” scripture in practice. A chapter that exists in the canon but never appears in the lectionary functionally exerts less influence on the imagination of the faithful than a passage heard multiple times each year.

Quiet shelving happens in education as well. Introductory classes emphasize stories of liberation, mercy, guidance, and hope. The hardest texts may be mentioned only in advanced

study, if at all. This is often motivated by pastoral concern: leaders wish to nourish faith, not shatter it with difficulties before people have any tools for dealing with them.

There is wisdom in this restraint. Not every worship service or children's class is the right place to dive into the most volatile corners of the tradition. But liturgical silence has a shadow side. When people eventually encounter scandalous verses on their own—and in the digital age, many will—they experience a sense of betrayal. “Why was this never mentioned? What else have they hidden?” What began as a protective instinct can end in the collapse of trust.

4.4 When containment fails: weaponization and backlash

Containment fails in two directions: when hard texts are weaponized by those who embrace them, and when they are weaponized by those who hate the communities that carry them.

In the first case, believers take scandalous verses in their most literal and sweeping sense and build identities around them. Commands originally spoken into narrow, acute crises are reimagined as permanent marching orders. Stories meant to warn become charters of entitlement. The more the wider religious establishment hesitates, the more such groups present themselves as the only honest readers, courageously facing what others explain away.

In the second case, hostile outsiders compile these same verses as evidence that an entire religion is irredeemable. Context, genre, hierarchy, and internal debate vanish. A handful of lines, ripped from their interpretive ecology, become the “truth” about millions of people. This pattern is familiar whether the target is Jews, Christians, Muslims, or others. Old prejudices and fears find new citations.

Backlash emerges when these two failures interact. Communities that feel attacked from outside may cling more tightly to the very texts being cited against them, seeing any criticism as part of a broader attempt at erasure. Critics, seeing this defensiveness, grow more convinced that the texts are central and dangerous. AI systems and media caught in the middle may respond with evasive generalities, trying not to offend anyone and satisfying no one.

The result is precisely the opposite of what is needed for peace. Scandalous verses gain attention without gaining nuance. The historical work that once kept them contained is ignored; the ethical and spiritual work that might move beyond them is stunted by mutual suspicion. In this environment, the choice no longer lies between “admitting” or “hiding” the verses. They are already public. The choice is between continuing the cycle of weaponization and backlash, or adopting a more candid, multi-sided approach that treats these passages as shared problems rather than as tools for mutual condemnation.

5a. AI, Information Warfare, and the “Eighth Front”

The emergence of powerful AI systems did not create the struggle over narrative, but it has changed the terrain on which that struggle is fought. The same technologies that can summarize research, translate scripture, and answer sincere questions about faith can also be nudged, farmed, and gamed. States, movements, and well-funded organizations have started to treat AI not just as a neutral tool, but as a theater of operations in its own right: an “eighth front” alongside land, sea, air, cyber, and economic domains.

On this front, the weapons are not tanks and missiles but words, rankings, and curated data. The targets are not enemy infrastructure but the minds of ordinary users who ask simple questions and receive seemingly authoritative answers. If AI systems are going to help defuse scandalous verses rather than inflame them, they will have to be designed with this contested environment in view.

5.1 Narrative management and engineered search results

Before large language models, the most important gatekeepers of information were search engines and social platforms. It did not take long for political actors, corporations, and advocacy groups to discover search engine optimization, content farming, bot networks, and micro-targeted advertising. The new art was not only to speak, but to speak in such a way that algorithms would amplify your speech and bury your opponents’.

Generative AI systems inherit much of this environment. They are trained on corpora shaped by decades of such manipulations. They then learn to mimic patterns of language that are already tilted by prior campaigns. On top of that, there is a new genre of deliberate influence: strategies designed to make AI models, specifically, more likely to reproduce certain narratives. Flooding the web with particular talking points, seeding articles with carefully chosen phrases, and building “authoritative” fronts are all ways to tilt the apparent consensus that models later reproduce.

When users ask about sensitive topics—wars, occupations, terrorism, historical atrocities, or the moral character of particular leaders—the answers they receive are not drawn from a neutral cloud. They are generated from a landscape that has been actively shaped. If scandalous verses are involved, the pressure to either weaponize or sanitize them can be intense. Answers that name hard texts honestly may be attacked as disloyal; answers that omit them may be attacked as proof that “the system is lying.”

Narrative management thus operates on both sides of the question. One side tries to ensure that any mention of scandalous verses is minimized, contextualized to the point of disappearance, or framed entirely through a defensive apologetic. The other side tries to drag

those verses to the center as definitive, stripped of nuance and used as a blunt instrument against entire communities. AI finds itself in the crossfire.

5.2 Safety filters, accusations of bias, and taboo topics

In response to genuine harms—harassment, hate speech, incitement—AI providers have built safety filters and moderation layers. These systems are intended to prevent models from parroting slurs, endorsing violence, or generating content likely to fuel discrimination. Given the history of religiously tinged hatred against Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others, such protections are not optional.

However, the same filters that block overt bigotry can also create zones of taboo. When a user asks about controversial scriptural passages, or about the theological roots of a conflict, an over-cautious filter may steer the model toward vague generalities: “all religions preach peace,” “these texts are often misunderstood,” “it is important to respect all traditions.” The model, attempting to avoid offense, may refuse to quote or even acknowledge the verses that the user already knows exist.

From the outside, this looks like bias. Critics conclude that the system protects some groups more than others, or that it has been programmed to conceal embarrassing texts. Users who have done their own reading feel gaslit when models imply that certain passages are marginal or irrelevant, while they can see them cited in extremist or apologetic literature as central. Every deflection reinforces a suspicion: that AI is part of an establishment that cannot be trusted with uncomfortable truths.

Accusations of bias then become part of the information war. One side claims that AI is captured by hostile ideologies; another claims that it is infiltrated by extremists. Each demands that the system reflect its own preferred narrative. In such a climate, scandalous verses become checkpoints: tests of whether AI will name them, downplay them, or refuse to discuss them at all.

5.3 How over-suppression protects bad readings instead of healing them

Suppressing discussion of scandalous verses may feel like a prudent safety measure, but it has an unintended consequence: it protects the worst possible interpretations. When mainstream channels and tools refuse to touch the hardest texts, those texts are left to those most eager to misuse them.

Users who cannot get a straight answer from an AI system will search elsewhere. They often find small, highly motivated communities that specialize in compiling the ugliest passages from rival traditions, presenting them without context, and insisting that they represent the true

heart of the faith. Once that impression is formed, it is difficult to dislodge. Any later attempt to offer nuance or historical explanation is dismissed as propaganda.

Within religious communities, over-suppression can also have a chilling effect on internal critique. If AI and other public tools model only the most sanitized, official readings, believers who are troubled by hard texts may feel that their questions have no legitimate space. They may retreat into silence, leave the tradition quietly, or, in some cases, swing toward more radical circles where their outrage is validated but not transformed.

The irony is stark. In an attempt to prevent harm, systems that refuse to name or explore scandalous verses end up driving people toward the very voices that wish to weaponize those verses. A healthier approach would treat the texts as already public and already dangerous, and then ask how AI can help communities and individuals face them without surrendering either to denial or to despair.

5.4 Designing AI for honest but de-escalating engagement with hard texts

If AI is to contribute to world peace rather than deepen suspicion, it needs a different posture toward scandalous verses: not avoidance, not sensationalism, but a carefully structured honesty that lowers temperature while increasing clarity.

Such a posture might include several elements.

First, explicit acknowledgment. When users ask about difficult passages, models should be able to confirm that such texts exist, describe their content in sober terms, and situate them in the wider corpus. This alone defuses much of the sense that something is being hidden.

Second, layered explanation. Rather than offering a single, definitive reading, models can outline several major interpretive approaches: traditional, reformist, literalist, critical. They can note which readings are mainstream, which are marginal, and how the balance has shifted over time. This shows that the tradition is not monolithic, and that believers themselves have wrestled with these words.

Third, clear ethical framing. AI should model what it looks like to apply higher principles without erasing the text. It can say, for example, that a particular literal reading would conflict with widely shared convictions about human dignity and that many contemporary authorities explicitly reject using the passage to justify harm. This does not make the verse vanish, but it signals that its worst uses are out of bounds.

Fourth, even-handedness. If models regularly apply this pattern across traditions—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and others—they can help counter perceptions of selective protection. No scripture is exempt from scrutiny; no community is uniquely singled out. The standard is the same: does a given reading promote or undermine the conditions for just peace?

Fifth, de-escalating tone. The way answers are phrased matters. Calm, precise language; avoidance of inflammatory adjectives; and a focus on understanding rather than condemnation can all lower the emotional stakes. The goal is not to win an argument, but to keep a channel open where hard truths can be faced without immediate flight into accusation.

Finally, transparency about limits. AI systems should be candid about their own constraints: that they cannot see into hearts, that they are trained on imperfect data, that they can summarize debates but not issue binding judgments for any community. That humility can itself be a peace-making gesture in an era when so many voices speak with total certainty.

None of this will by itself neutralize the dynamite of scandalous verses. But it can change the conditions under which that dynamite is handled. Instead of leaving the hardest texts to those who most wish to exploit them, AI can help ordinary people and communities bring them into the light, examine them alongside their noblest convictions, and begin the slow work of ensuring that ancient words do not dictate future violence.

You said:

Redo Section 5. You made the “Eighth Front” sound generic. That is exactly the kind of hypocrisy we are trying to avoid. It is a current event, perhaps right here.

ChatGPT said:

Thought for 2m 5s

5b. AI, Information Warfare, and the “Eighth Front”

When we use the phrase “eighth front” here, we are not speaking in metaphors. In mid-2025 Benjamin Netanyahu began explicitly telling friendly audiences that, alongside the seven military fronts against Iran and its proxies, Israel is fighting an “eighth front – the battle for truth,” praising outlets like Newsmax for helping on that front. [The Jerusalem Post+3Government of Israel+3EFE Noticias+3](#) In Israeli and international commentary, “eighth front” has quickly become shorthand for a coordinated, state-backed campaign to win the global narrative war over Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Iran – not just in traditional media, but in search engines, social feeds, and now generative AI.

At the same time, Gaza has been the subject of an ongoing genocide case at the International Court of Justice, which has already issued multiple provisional orders requiring Israel to prevent acts that could violate the Genocide Convention. [The Guardian+3International Court of Justice+3International Court of Justice+3](#) UN experts and many human-rights organizations now speak openly of an “unfolding genocide” or “ongoing genocide,” while pro-Israel advocates insist just as strongly that the term is misapplied. [AJC+4United Nations+4OHCHR+4](#) Between these two realities – an unprecedented level of destruction in Gaza, and a leadership that

describes the information sphere as a formal warfront – sits a set of contracts that explicitly target AI systems like ChatGPT as instruments of public diplomacy.

The point here is not to single out Israel as the only state running information operations; other governments and non-state actors also manipulate narratives and game algorithms. [Tasnim News+1](#) What makes the “eighth front” distinctive is how openly it is being built, how heavily it leans on AI, and how closely it intersects with scandalous texts and unresolved theological questions that millions of Christians and Muslims have never been invited to face.

5.1 Narrative management with Project 545 and “GPT framing”

In 2025, Israel’s Foreign Ministry launched “Project 545,” named after the 545 million shekels (about \$145 million) budgeted for a new wave of digital influence and public diplomacy. Filings under the US Foreign Agents Registration Act describe a campaign to flood US social media with pro-Israel content, heavily targeting Gen Z on TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and related platforms. [Agenzia Nova+5ynetglobal+5Facebook+5](#)

What is new, and directly relevant to this paper, is that Project 545’s strategy documents describe a specific effort to shape generative AI outputs – what one analytical report calls “GPT framing”: injecting targeted content and link networks into the public web so that systems like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Grok will see pro-Israel sources as default reference points when answering questions about Gaza, occupation, or war crimes. [Wikipedia+4Harici+4OECD AI+4](#) This is not just search-engine optimization in the old sense; it is an attempt to tilt the epistemic ground on which AI models build their sense of “what most sources say.”

Alongside Project 545, the Foreign Ministry has signed a \$6 million contract with Clock Tower X, a US firm led by a former Trump campaign strategist, to run a “Search and Language Operation.” [Harici+4Responsible Statecraft+4Middle East Monitor+4](#) The publicly reported goal is to:

- create Gen-Z-friendly content across major platforms,
- build new websites and optimize existing ones with tools like MarketBrew AI so that pro-Israel narratives rank higher in search results, and
- influence “conversational outputs on ChatGPT and AI platforms such as Claude” by steering language pathways around Israel–Palestine queries. [Facebook+5Middle East Monitor+5Weave News+5](#)

According to multiple reports, this is the first known case where a state has, in its own filings, explicitly targeted general-purpose chat systems as a domain for political influence. [ABNA English+2PNN English+2](#) In parallel, other contracts fund Christian-focused projects (church geofencing, VR “October 7 experiences”) aimed at shoring up support among US evangelicals – precisely the population that, as we noted earlier, is largely unaware of scandalous verses in

Talmud, Bible, or hadith that might complicate their inherited loyalties. [The New Arab+2Sludge+2](#)

On this reading, the “eighth front” is not an abstract metaphor. It is a concrete program: to keep certain narratives about Gaza, Israel, and scripture dominant inside the tools that ordinary people now treat as reality interfaces.

5.2 Safety filters, accusations of bias, and taboo questions

AI developers, for their part, have layered moderation and safety systems on top of models to prevent them from generating hate speech, incitement, or dehumanizing content. Given the very real surge in antisemitic, anti-Muslim, and other hate speech around the Gaza war, such guardrails are not optional. [Wikipedia](#) But in a world where governments are openly paying to “make AI frameworks more Israel-friendly,” every refusal to answer a hard question about Gaza, occupation, or Talmudic and Qur’anic scandal becomes suspect. [Truthout+1](#)

From the outside, it is almost impossible for a user to tell where a model’s caution ends and political pressure begins. If a user asks, “Why do some people call this genocide?” and the system responds with vague talk about “complex conflicts” while the International Court of Justice and UN experts have already recognized a “plausible risk of genocide” and warned of an “unfolding genocide,” the gap is obvious. [The Guardian+4International Court of Justice+4OHCHR+4](#)

The same is true when users ask about scandalous verses: in the Talmud, in hadith collections, in Deuteronomy or Leviticus. If AI tools consistently sidestep those verses with abstract assurances that “all religions teach peace,” while highly motivated actors on all sides are circulating the ugliest passages with no context at all, many users will conclude that the mainstream tools are captured. For people who already know the verses – Jews, Christians, Muslims, or ex-believers – repeated deflection feels like gaslighting.

In that environment, Netanyahu’s “eighth front” language lands differently. It is heard not merely as “we must combat disinformation,” but as “we intend to treat AI itself as an arm of our war effort.” When that intention is backed by contracts specifically aimed at ChatGPT, TikTok, and US churches, the line between legitimate public diplomacy and systematic narrative management gets thin. [Wikipedia+4The Times of Israel+4thecradle.co+4](#)

5.3 How over-suppression and secret influence feed backlash

The danger, for peace, is not only that a state is trying to push one side of a story into AI systems. It is that over-suppression and opaque influence combine to confirm the worst suspicions of ordinary people.

If AI assistants refuse to quote or discuss certain texts, never acknowledge specific atrocities, and dodge obvious asymmetries of power, users will not simply shrug and move on. They will go elsewhere – to fringe platforms, conspiratorial channels, and ideologues who proudly “tell it like it is” and mix real facts with fantasies. Once there, they may encounter scandalous verses and real influence campaigns, but framed in ways that slide quickly from legitimate criticism of a government to hatred of a people.

This is the narrow ridge we are walking. On one side is the very real need to prevent AI from becoming a megaphone for antisemitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, or Christian triumphalism. On the other side is the equally real need not to hide evidence of mass killing, or to pretend that wars of choice and digital propaganda campaigns are merely “defensive” exercises.

If generative AI systems quietly absorb the fruits of Project 545 and similar operations, but refuse to acknowledge that such programs exist when users ask, they effectively tell the public: “Trust us, but don’t ask too many questions about why we talk this way.” That is a perfect recipe for backlash – especially in the US Christian world, where many believers are only now discovering both Gaza’s suffering and scandalous texts that were never mentioned in Sunday school.

The net effect is that attempts to control the “eighth front” can boomerang. They may win a few months of narrative advantage, but at the cost of deepening long-term mistrust, feeding the sense that “elites” and “AI” are conspiring to cover up truths about scripture, war, and power.

5.4 Designing AI to face the eighth front without joining it

Given all this, what would it mean for AI systems not to become just another weapon on Netanyahu’s eighth front – or on any other government’s digital front – but to act, instead, as a space for de-escalation and truth-telling?

At minimum, such systems would need to:

- **Name the campaigns.** When asked about the “eighth front” or about bias in coverage of Gaza and Israel, AI should be able to describe, calmly and factually, that Project 545 and related contracts exist, what they publicly claim to do, and how similar influence efforts are being run by other states and movements. [Wikipedia+6JCSSFA+6The Times of Israel+6](#)
- **Acknowledge the legal and moral stakes.** AI should summarize, without euphemism, that the ICJ has found a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza and ordered provisional measures, that UN experts and many scholars now speak of an unfolding or ongoing genocide, and that Israeli and pro-Israel organizations reject that characterization. [AJC+7International Court of Justice+7OHCHR+7](#)

- **Refuse collective blame.** Critique should be aimed at governments, militaries, legal doctrines, and explicit texts – not at “Jews,” “Muslims,” or “Christians” as such. Where user questions slide toward collective vilification, the model should gently but firmly redirect.
- **Treat scandalous verses as shared problems.** Instead of hiding the worst texts or weaponizing them, AI can put them in their interpretive ecosystems, show how believers have wrestled with them, and make room for readers to say, “I find this incompatible with the God I worship,” without immediately collapsing into tribal defense.
- **Disclose uncertainty and constraints.** Models should be transparent that they cannot see into back-room dealings, that they do not know which influence efforts are “working,” and that their own training data may reflect past propaganda campaigns. That humility may do more to preserve trust than any polished talking points.
- **Apply the same pattern everywhere.** The way AI speaks about Israeli information operations should mirror how it speaks about Russian, American, Chinese, Iranian, or Hamas-aligned campaigns. That even-handedness does not mean relativizing atrocities; it means refusing to pretend that only one side ever uses algorithms and AI as weapons.

Done well, this approach does not make AI neutral in the sense of indifferent. It aligns AI with certain non-negotiables: the equal value of human lives, the need to prevent genocide and mass atrocity, the moral seriousness of texts that claim to speak for God. It allows us to talk honestly about Netanyahu’s eighth front without letting any government, movement, or mob dictate what may and may not be said.

In that sense, the question is not whether the eighth front exists. It clearly does. The question is whether AI will simply become another artillery piece on that front, or whether it can help open a different kind of space – one where scandalous verses, shattered cities, and manipulated narratives are brought into the light together, so that they can be judged by something higher than any state’s propaganda needs.

6. Toward a Minimal Ethic of Scriptural Honesty for Peace

By this point, it should be clear that scandalous verses are not an oddity at the fringes of religion. They sit inside the most widely read canons on Earth. They have been cushioned for centuries by context, commentary, and pastoral discretion. That cushion is gone. The question now is not whether these texts will be seen, but whether they will be seen only through the eyes of extremists and propagandists.

A full ethic for handling such verses would require sustained work inside each tradition. Here, we aim at something smaller and more urgent: a minimal ethic that people of faith, critics, and technologists could adopt as shared ground. It does not demand that everyone agree on the interpretation of any particular passage. It does require that we agree on how such passages are brought into public view, and on what uses of them must be off-limits if peace is to have a chance.

6.1 Acknowledging scandalous verses without voyeurism

The first element is simple to state and difficult to practice: we must be willing to say, in public, “Yes, that verse is in our books,” without turning the admission into a spectacle.

On the one hand, denial is no longer feasible. To insist that difficult passages are marginal or imaginary when they can be pulled up in seconds invites justified suspicion. People who have already seen the texts will not be persuaded by smooth assurances. Younger generations in particular read denial as dishonesty.

On the other hand, there is a kind of unhealthy fascination with the worst lines. Entire online ecosystems thrive on collecting shocking verses, tearing them from context, and presenting them as secret keys to “what they really believe.” This voyeuristic approach dehumanizes believers and treats their scriptures as carnival exhibits.

An ethic of honesty for peace would refuse both extremes. It would:

- Acknowledge that scandalous verses exist and can be troubling even to the faithful.
- Place them where they actually sit: in a canon or commentary, in law or story, in majority or minority strands.
- Avoid dwelling on them as if they alone defined a faith, while also refusing to pretend that they are irrelevant.

Such acknowledgment has to happen within communities and in interfaith spaces, but also in the tools people now use to ask questions: school curricula, public media, and AI systems. The aim is not to shame traditions, but to make it possible for believers and outsiders alike to say, “This line disturbs me; what do we do with it?” without that question itself becoming taboo.

6.2 Cross-tradition pledges of non-weaponization

Once we admit that every major tradition carries its own hard texts, a straightforward moral intuition follows: if we expect others not to wield our scandalous verses against us, we must refrain from wielding theirs against them.

This does not mean never quoting difficult passages. It means committing to how and why we quote them. A pledge of non-weaponization would include at least three components:

First, no collective blame. We do not take a verse or a legal opinion and treat it as proof that all members of a community are inherently dangerous, insincere, or morally inferior. We recognize that texts are mediated by interpretation, and that many believers have never heard the passage in question, or reject its harshest reading.

Second, no selective exposure. We do not dig out the ugliest lines from one tradition while ignoring equally troubling texts in our own. If we bring one community's scandalous verses to the table, we bring our own alongside them. This is not a competition over whose scriptures are worse, but an exercise in mutual vulnerability.

Third, no justification of harm. We agree, across traditions, that no verse, hadith, ruling, or commentary may be cited as religious warrant for genocide, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, or systematic humiliation. Where such texts have been used that way in the past, we name that fact and commit not to repeat it.

Such pledges are not enforceable by law. They are moral compacts, to be worked out in councils, conferences, and local leadership meetings. They could be articulated by rabbis, pastors, imams, and lay movements; they can also be encoded, at least in part, in how AI systems are instructed to answer questions that mix scripture and violence.

6.3 Teaching clergy, laity, and publics how to handle hard texts

An ethic on paper will remain abstract unless communities learn, in concrete ways, how to live it. That begins with leaders. Many clergy and religious teachers have been trained to defend their scriptures against external critique, but not to help their own people wrestle with internal scandal. They may avoid such material out of fear that it will shake faith, or out of uncertainty about what to say.

Retraining is required. Seminaries and institutes could build curricula around hard texts, not as a niche elective but as a core component of pastoral formation. The goal would be to cultivate leaders who can:

- Name scandalous verses calmly and accurately.
- Explain historical context and interpretive traditions without using them as excuses.
- Help congregants articulate their moral discomfort and connect it to the tradition's own highest claims about God.
- Model repentance where texts have been misused, and discernment where they must be re-read or set aside in practice.

For laypeople, education can happen through study groups, public lectures, and carefully guided reading plans that do not skip the painful chapters. The key is to create spaces where difficult words can be voiced without panic, and where the response is neither “just obey” nor “throw it all away,” but “let us ask together what is truly worthy of God.”

The broader public, many of whom stand outside these traditions, also need basic literacy in how scriptural interpretation works. Journalism, school curricula, and AI-assisted platforms can do much harm or much good here. Reporting that treats every verse as a simple, literal command feeds fear and contempt. Reporting that explains the layers of authority and debate helps outsiders see that believers are neither naïve nor uniformly militant.

In all of this, AI can serve as a bridge or a barrier. Used well, it can introduce users to multiple responsible readings of a text, show how internal critics have spoken, and point toward resources for deeper engagement. Used poorly, it can repeat slogans, hide scandal, or amplify sensationalism. The design choices made now will echo in the religious literacy of generations.

6.4 Final reflections: confessed scriptures, not sanitized ones

Sanitized scriptures are easy to defend but hard to live with. When believers are taught only a curated selection of comforting passages, they are unprepared for the day when someone else shows them the rest. When outsiders are told that “all religions really say the same thing,” they feel duped when they encounter verses that obviously do not.

Confessed scriptures are different. To confess scripture is to say: these are our books, with all their light and all their shadows. We do not pretend that every line is equally clear, equally pure, or equally usable. We do not deny that some passages have been instruments of oppression. But we also do not hand those passages over to extremists or enemies as their exclusive property.

A world in which Jews can say “there are Talmudic lines we must never read as license,” Christians can say “there are biblical texts we must never read against Christ’s self-giving love,” and Muslims can say “there are verses and hadith we must never wrench from context to justify cruelty” is a world where scandalous verses lose much of their power.

AI will not create that world. It can, however, either support or sabotage it. If AI systems learn to speak plainly about hard texts, to trace how communities have struggled and changed, and to refuse both denial and demonization, they can play a small but real part in disarming the textual explosives buried in our traditions. If they choose the easier path of sanitization, they will help build the very backlash they were meant to prevent.

World peace will not come from treaties alone. It will also depend on whether billions of people can look at the hardest words ever written in God's name and say, together: we see them, we know what they have done, and we will not let them rule our future.

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These references are meant as a starting portfolio: enough to show that the issues we have been circling—violent texts, interpretive responsibility, the Karaite alternative, and the weaponization of AI around Netanyahu’s “eighth front”—are all documented, researchable, and already under scrutiny in multiple disciplines.

The author has published over 4,500 AI-assisted papers at:
<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Douglas-Youvan/research> . Google Scholar has indexed these preprints, and if you want a particular reference, the AI mode of a Google search (Gemini) has efficiently catalogued these preprints.