

My God, or Else

In my high school in Akron, Ohio, we were all required to take a class called Senior Problems. I don't know what exactly the problems were, but the course contained a comparative religion element. In it, we were introduced to many of the world's religions. In classes filled with children of many beliefs, teachers would talk about how a particular faith developed and how it spread.

Somehow, that seems so long ago. Today, the faithful in one religion are inevitably taking potshots at believers in another religion. Somehow, we have forgotten how life was in past eras. People of different faiths used to live and work side by side with little concern.

At one time, Jews served as advisors and heads of state in Muslim countries. Christians and Jews worked together in Catholic Spain. Christians lived in harmony with Muslims in the Middle East.

Once, Jewish and Christian icons were included with the Ka'baa, the holiest religious object in Islam, located in Mecca, the holiest city in Islam. Even today, Jerusalem hosts the Dome on the Rock, a sacred Islamic mosque, side by side with the Wailing Wall, the last surviving piece of the great Jewish Temple that once existed there.

Visitors to Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, can see religious Jews, wrapped in prayer shawls, trudging along ancient streets along side Moslems and Christians. Overhead, the cry of the Islamic muezzin, calling the faithful to prayer, rings out along with the tolling bells of Christian churches. The flag of Israel with the Star of David in its center flutters in the same breeze.