

Is it Possible to Successfully Combat Corruption by Scanning Old Rosaries?¹

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ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to the International Day against Corruption, which is celebrated annually on December 9. Corruption as a complex socio-economic phenomenon is generated by a variety of reasons, most of which have already been identified and subjected to comprehensive analysis. But in Russia, corruption has become monstrous, extremely corrupt local, regional and federal officials mock openly over helpless legislation, the consequences of which are seen in the flight of capital from the country, and in the recession / stagnation of the national economy, and in the tragic events of recent times. In the end, corruption undermines the basis for the economic security of the Russian state and undermines the emerging clusters of the national idea. The author of the material continues to understand the causes of corruption and considers the vital issues of this so far insufficiently successful struggle and inefficient counteraction to corruption phenomena that are found in various areas of life and not only our society but also many other countries. The author also tries to find out how corruption is interpreted in the views of the main world religions — Christianity (partly), Islam and national religion — Judaism. The article gives historical reminiscences and authorial comments on the text fragments of the main written sources of these religions. Judgments about the origins, roots and main causes, of course, of an immoral, harmful and destructive phenomenon — corruption, which deeply impressed the national economies of many developed and most developing countries of the planet, are being voiced. The author cites episodes of corruption from the Scriptures of the world religions, gives his own, sometimes controversial or controversial interpretation. At the end of the article, the author expresses his opinion on measures to combat corruption in the form of three independent conclusions. The author's attempt to express his attitude to the accumulated experience of the sacred struggle against corruption, which is very contradictory in its quality, boils down to the following: instead of solving a concrete, fixed and described problem, it is attempted to reformulate and belittle its danger through sophisticated connotations.

Keywords: corruption, bribery, embezzlement of budgetary funds, money laundering, world religions, apostles, prophets, saints, shepherds, corruptionism, confessions

Можно ли успешно бороться с коррупцией, перебирая старые четки?

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РЕФЕРАТ

Статья посвящена Международному дню борьбы с коррупцией, который отмечается ежегодно 9 декабря. Коррупция как сложное социально-экономическое явление порождается множеством причин, большинство которых уже выявлено и подверглось всестороннему анализу. Но в России коррупция приобрела чудовищные масштабы, предельно коррумпированные чиновники местного, регионального и федерального уровней глумятся открыто над беспомощным законодательством, последствия чего просматриваются и в бегстве капиталов из страны, и в рецессии/стагнации нацио-

¹ Continuation of the article; start see in N 3 2018 of our magazine.

нальной экономики, и в трагических событиях последнего времени. В конце концов, коррупция подрывает основы экономической безопасности российской державы и подтачивает намечающиеся скрепы национальной идеи. Автор материала продолжает разбираться в причинах коррупции и рассматривает жизненно важные вопросы этой пока недостаточно успешной борьбы и неэффективного противодействия коррупционным явлениям, которые обнаруживаются в различных областях жизни и не только нашего общества, но и многих других стран. Автор пытается также выяснить, как коррупция трактуется в воззрениях основных мировых религий — христианства (частично), ислама и национальной религии — иудаизма. В статье даются исторические реминисценции и авторские комментарии к текстовым фрагментам главных письменных источников названных религий. Высказываются суждения об истоках, корнях и главных причинах, безусловно, аморального, вредоносного и разрушительного явления — коррупции, которое глубоко поразило национальные экономики многих развитых и большинства развивающихся стран планеты. Автор приводит эпизоды коррупции из Священных писаний мировых религий, дает свое, подчас спорное или дискуссионное толкование. В завершение статьи автор высказывает свое мнение о мерах борьбы с коррупцией в виде трех самостоятельных выводов. Попытка же автора выразить свое отношение к накопленному отечественному, весьма противоречивого по своему качеству, опыту священной борьбы с коррупцией сводится к следующему: вместо решения конкретной, зафиксированной и описанной проблемы, ее пытаются переформулировать и принизить ее опасность с помощью изощренных коннотаций.

Ключевые слова: коррупция, взятки, хищение бюджетных средств, отмыwanie коррупционных доходов, мировые религии, апостолы, пророки, святые, пастыри, коррупционность, конфессии

Religious roots of counteraction to corruption

Judaism. But how is the Jewish religion, the oldest religion, related to the problem of corruption? The Jewish bible is The Talmud and The Torah, and the ten Mosaic commandments have become the foundations of other, younger and dynamically developing world religions. In addition to the commandments, Christianity and Islam borrowed many of the moral principles of Judaism from the Torah (the Pentateuch of Moses), for example, “do not hurt others”. In Judaism, homosexuality and bestiality are still forbidden, even if they do no harm to the rest of the people who are not involved in these processes. Intuitively, without special analysis of details it is clear that such a ban is justified in many respects.

The fact is that, being detached from the rest of the moral requirements, the principle of “do no wrong” is at the core of idolatry. Your relationship with the idol does not concern anyone. The main thing is that you do not cross the boundaries of someone else’s personal autonomy; then everything will be fine. But for some reason, sooner or later all idolatrous systems fall apart, causing untold suffering to people. The history simply does not know other examples [5].

Require legislators to introduce laws against brutality does not make sense. There are always many ways to offend a person. And the very system of legislation does not eradicate indifference, rudeness, impudence, etc., but is occupied with a completely different matter: the laws are on the protection of order, i. e. are directed against bad deeds, and do not initiate the good deeds of citizens. Maybe, therefore, there is a general decline in morals. Morality degrades even in the showcase of legitimacy — in the US.

The American legal system is trying to strengthen every year, and morality, on the contrary, is falling. But since the system of legality is inextricably linked with the moral climate of the country, the force of legality also goes down. For there is no such event, that the corrosion of morality and ethics does not affect those, who stand on the protection of order and moral standards. Judges, who judge people for bribes, then them-

selves, start feverishly taking bribes. The police and other law enforcement agencies, fighting crime, themselves acquire recognizable criminal traits and coloring.

Thus, the consciousness of *personal gain* underscores all the advantages of the possible drawing up of a *social contract*¹. It is for this reason that in all countries without exception the level of serious offenses is growing from year to year. Studying the dynamics of this process, it is theoretically possible to forecast for some societies the date when all their citizens will move to more or less permanent residence in prison cells and camps. If of course exclude sincerely religious people as well as those, who are principally honest initially and / or *a priori*.

The level of perception of the Jews, received and prescribed on the sacred mountain of Sinai, is defined as the level of *The Written Torah*, which was really offered to the Almighty by all the nations in the form of the Protected Tablets (through the mediation of the brothers — Moses and Aaron). In the Torah, adopted for various reasons by Jews alone more than 3,3 thousand years ago, 613 moral principles, attitudes and ideas were found: do not kill, do not steal, do not perjure, do not offend, do not put a stone in front of the blind and so on.

All settings, the so-called “shelters” are direct instructions — what to do and what can't be done in any case. Direct instructions “do” are necessary to ensure that a person in this world was well. Prohibitions “do not do” are necessary so that it is not bad there. However, not all the human pain that is inflicted on each other is subject to the Law. But in the Commandments is also prescribed the institution of curses, which can be subjected to those, for example, “who wrongly judges an alien, an orphan and a widow”, “who takes bribes to kill a soul and shed innocent blood”, etc.

In general, Judaism refers to Christianity as its “derivative”, “subsidiary religion”, designed to carry the basic elements of the system of Judaism views to the peoples of the world. The leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church tries to emphasize the cultural and religious community with the Jews. Many elements of Christianity are directly borrowed from Judaism:

- So, the church ritual (i. e. the gathering of believers for prayer, reading the Scriptures and preaching) is borrowed from the schemes of synagogue worship;
- Some Christian prayers are essentially the processing of Jewish originals, for example, “Our Father” (Kaddish);
- Prayer formulas have a Jewish origin — Amen (Amen), Alleluia (Galilia), Hosanna (Hoshana);
- Some Christian rites are converted from Jewish, for example, the sacrament of baptism (circumcision and mikve);
- the main sacred book of the Jews of The Tanah (Tanah — the Jewish Bible) Christians consider as their sacred book, they call it the Old Testament, and adding the text with the New Testament, composed their Bible²;
- Yahweh is the name of the God of the Bible. But since to use the name of God is forbidden, in Judaism the name Hashem, Adonai, Elohim³, etc., is accepted, and in Christianity the Lord, i. e. Lord, Creator (Creator — Catholic), Creator, Jehovah, etc. But let's go back to the Covenants. If a Jew at the service of the state / people does

¹ Currently, the main problems, identified in the relationship between the state authorities and civil society, are analyzed by the Public Chamber, which has been the highest official representative of civil society in Russia for 13 years. It was at the Public Chamber, at its creation, that hopes were laid for assistance in the fight against corruption and in strengthening the interethnic peace through the preparation of an annual report on the effectiveness of anti-corruption work.

² Tanah [Electronic resource]. URL:/http://www.moshiach.ru/sait/projets/5074.html/ (date of the address: 26.12.2017). (In rus)

³ Biblical names are given in the mass reading of the Holy Scripture in Sephardic pronunciation [2, p. 274]. Judaism recognizes in the Holy Scriptures 39 books of the Old Testament.

“badly” to his neighbor, for his own selfish reasons, causes harm to his neighbor consciously, is seen in his deceit, overcomes and violates the prohibitions, then for the sinful souls of corrupt officials who have transgressed the law, the Talmud paints the flours of hell in advance and colorfully *Gehenna fiery* (Ereb., 19) [2, p. 531–532]. Especially frightening scenes with a detailed description of intolerable physical suffering are foreseen for dishonest judges and corrupt secretaries who have sinned for certain in the field. In this sense, the gloomy installations of the triptych H. Bosch, more precisely his right wing “Musical Hell”, in comparison with the real, chilling soul of infernal agony from the Talmud, illustrate only comics for readers with an age mark of 12*.

Christianity / Orthodoxy. The last 27 years of economic and political freedoms have once again become a test for the Russian people. The bureaucratic system of governing the country that developed during the Bolshevik years of hard labor in the next 74 years has been steadily producing a noticeable corruption component that, in the post-Soviet period, towards the end of the second decade of the 21st century has become the dominant mechanism of the state machine of public administration and the quasi-market mode of conducting economic operations. Particularly critical was the public attitude towards federal, regional, local, including national, elites, who today have formed around themselves vicious economic clans, often associated with organized crime, possessed by a greed for profit and demonstratively reveling in their impunity.

State and municipal service, and even the system of local self-government, today in the eyes of the public almost always act as a marker of dishonesty, money-grubbing, extremely close integration with shadow markets, money laundering, near and far offshore policies, accelerated export of capital, etc. Popular for all kinds of analyzes in the media and in the studies of relevant narrow specialists, a kind of corruption triad has become: “cutting, skidding, rolling back”. Drawing on the historical parallels that naturally arise here, it is interesting to recall the tremendous quantitative growth of the bureaucratic apparatus in the Roman Empire in the late periods of its existence, when Christianity began to leave the catacombs and acquire decisive influence.

This rampant growth led, after all, to the fact that state offices in Rome were viewed as part of a personal property that can be exploited. It is no coincidence, as a historically parallel place, in the draft Code of Ethics and Service Behavior of a Ministry of Internal Affairs worker approved by the former minister of this department, R. G. Nurgaliev (2004–2012), a bribe was delicately termed an administrative-status rent. True, the Roman emperor Octavian Augustus tried to counteract this trend and distributed to voters their personal funds so that they already did not demand anything from candidates for public office, but to no avail. The devastating effect of corruption was one of the main causes of the collapse of ancient Rome.

Deprived of the inner Christian truth, such an internal state policy, as a rule, leads to the spiritual, and then to the social impoverishment and necrosis of society. As the great Russian prelate Tikhon Zadonsky (1724–1783) wrote, “... where there is no spiritual life, there is spiritual death, just as where there is no bodily life, there is bodily death. After the death of the spiritual follows eternal death, if the soul does not rise with true repentance” [3].

The first known fact of corruption was the act of the Christian Apostle Judas Iscariot, who betrayed (or simply sold out, or committed a corruption act) for 30 pieces of silver of his teacher Jesus Christ (Matthew 27: 4). Although the history of this issue today is far from obvious, and the received “bloody” money was very small. On them in New Testament times it was possible to acquire only a small piece of land of doubtful quality (about one hectare) in a mountainous area near ancient Jerusalem.

The author of this article has made refining currency calculations for exchange rate ratios for different periods of time and epochs, arguing the above considerations: 30 pieces of silver (initial base) = 120 silver Roman denarii = 30 tetradrahm =

120 drachmas (in exchange for the time of currency exchange — the Tyrian stator ≈ Jerusalem Sicle (Judea — Southern Kingdom) ≈ Shekel of Israel (Northern Kingdom) = 400 sesterces = 4.8 gold aureus = 1,200 Assam = \$ 5,000 [7]. By the way, the tax system of ancient Israel was the most thoughtful, sophisticated and orderly better organized, than in most of the Roman metropolis A shekels carried out in the capital all taxes; it is this currency was the goal of most foreign exchange operations near the portico of the temple, which, incidentally, strictly regulated and controlled by the Sanhedrin.

Note that the proper physical form was needed by the first Christian clerics (so to speak, volunteers of the first convocation) when catching “humans.” So, almost all the apostles of Jesus Christ were quite athletic people, moving 50 km a day in search of a new flock and food. Especially distinguished was Judas Ismonio Iscariot — a person who was certainly controversial, but he was the beloved disciple of the Savior, His confidant and conscientious employee, was a reliable treasurer of the first convocation of the Apostles, wore a heavy box with cash, procured all that was necessary for the apostolic ministry. But some witnesses claimed that Judas was stealing official money.

Prior to working with Jesus (apostolic ministry), he was seen as a dagger-zealot, a prominent participant in the liberation struggle against Roman rule in Judea¹. Was the most physically strong of the apostles. Thus, in the throwing of the heaviest stones to a distance, according to the information of the writer L. N. Andreev, the famous strong man, the most powerful of the disciples, the apostle Peter (in Greek, *a stone*), won.

The end of Judah was terrible: whether he betrayed Christ because of his disappointment in his teaching, or the so-called betrayal was initiated by the Savior himself, let the clerical researchers such as Etienne Casset or secular writers who create their works in the spirit of the literary essay of the same L. N. Andreev [1]. In any case, the scrolls of the fifth apocryphal Gospel “From Judas” [4] and the Qumran manuscripts, which could shed light on this intricate story, do not inspire any confidence to professional historians-researchers and orientalists.

But now, let the reader imagine with imagination a flimsy tree (according to different sources — it is birch, aspen, alder and even rowan) at the edge of the abyss, the branch on which the rope loop leans out, stretches directly above the abyss. And there are no stools for you, as out of place will be a comparison with the bathroom B. A. Berezovsky, or, with the sorrowful death of Robbin Williams, or with the former minister of press and ex-head of Gazprommedia M. Yu. Lesin (according to some information, he was a real corruptor)². Here’s how without a unique physical training, even being a strong enough man, you can commit suicide in such unseemly conditions of the ritual? It is difficult to imagine; for such an action, quick assistants are needed.

Another episode from other apocryphal editions also describes acts of a corrupt nature proper. For example, Simon, seeing that “when the hands of the apostles are laid on the Holy Spirit”, brought the apostles money, that is, in essence, a bribe with the request: “Give me this power also,” to which the apostle Peter answered him: “Silver your destruction will bring you, because you thought to receive the gift of God for

¹ The Zealots in Roman Judea were a closed society of terrorists, and for carrying out subversive activities on this imperial outskirts, money was needed, like our time. The Zealots earned their terror, the “roof” of selling sacrificial animals during the Passover feast at the Jerusalem Temple. Whipping the merchants in the Temple of God, the Savior of the world drove out the robbers who turned the House of God into a den, and not in general persons (individual entrepreneurs without registration of a legal entity) who sold goods, works and services accompanying temple rituals.

² The report of the police reveals the circumstances of the death of Mikhail Lesin // Inopressa [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://echo.msk.ru/blog/echomsk/2105468-echo/> (date of the address: 07.12.2017). (In rus)

money". This is evidenced by the text of the New Testament in the Book of Acts of the Holy Apostles (Acts Ch. 8: 18–24)¹.

Then, during the millennium of the European, already Christian Middle Ages, the notion of "corruption" acquires exclusively church, canonical significance as temptation, seduction, diabolical temptation. Corruption in the interpretation and connotation of Catholic theology is a manifestation of unconditional sinfulness, because, according to the apostle John, "... sin is lawlessness".

Islam. The second most important world religion also strictly prohibits giving and receiving bribes; surahs and ayahs of the canonical version of the Quran — the holy book of Muslims — are unequivocal, in the Muslim tradition these provisions are interpreted. The Qur'an is a collection of utterances made in the name of Allah by the Prophet Muhámmad (Mohammed, or Magomed, or Mohámmad, or Muhámmad) and, according to Islamic dogmatics, this book is the divine guide for humanity, the last Holy Scripture sent down by Allah himself². The texts of The Quran exhort the reader to lead a pure and pious life.

Muslims accept this mercy, adhere to divine guidance, follow His injunctions, obey His commands, avoid His prohibitions and transgress His limitations. Following the Koranic path, according to the adherents of Islam, serves as a guarantee of happiness and prosperity, whereas, on the contrary, distance from it generates the causes of numerous adversities and misfortunes (Surah 4.6: 155 Ayat). The divine leadership educates Muslims in the spirit of righteousness, piety, kindness, sincerity, high morality and honesty.

The Prophet Mohammed uses the story from the Old Testament about the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in order to warn his enemies of sinfulness, licentiousness and bribery and at the same time clarifies: "...Islam is nothing but the renewal of *"The Avramova religion"*, the faith of this true "friend of God" (Surah 4, 124 Ayat). The prophet expressed in his first speeches an attitude toward those who professed Judaism, from which he borrowed essential elements for his own teaching.

And although the text of the Koran is, according to philologists, steep, its canonical content does not contain any tangible contradictions. So, the Prophet Muhámmad said: "The curse from the Most High will fall on the one who gives a bribe, and on the one who takes it" (Ibn Majah). Another version of this hadith says that the curse will fall on the mediator between them (Ahmad ibn Hanbal). On the prohibition of corruption in the Koran, the following is said: "Do not misappropriate each other's property and do not bribe the judges with this property to deliberately assign a part of the property of {other} people to a sinful path" (Surah 2 al-Bakar, 188 ayat).

Political journalist V. R. Soloviev in his book [6] cites a curious example of the specialization of judges in Russian arbitration courts for specific spatial and territorial players (Yukos, Lukoil, Bashneft, etc.), with the outcome of the trial being tied to the commodity markets overseen by the oligarchs: "And of course, the percentage of victories in these commercial structures was surprisingly high". In the context of the term *zuhd* (the ethical concept of Islam, conceptually close to the philosophy of asceticism, which implies a complete rejection of earthly pleasures and pleasures), the faithful Muslim ascetic is strongly recommended extreme caution in distinguishing what is permitted and forbidden by religious law.

However, with individual provisions of Islam, believers need to scrupulously understand, and not just blindly believe the prevailing connotation of some dogmas. It is important

¹ New Testament. The Book of Acts of the Holy Apostles [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.biblioteka3.ru/bib-lioteka/biblija/dejanija/txt08.html> (date of the address: 02.04.2018). (In rus)

² The Quran [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://koran.su/2:188/> (date of the address: 07.12.2017). (In rus)

to determine what is right and where to place the emphasis: strictly ritual execution of religious rites or thoughtful study of the laws of the Scriptures by the law.

Conclusions

1. In conclusion, it should be noted that the main world religions without exception, as well as one of the most interesting Afro-Caribbean religions of limited circulation — *voodoo*, which is an eclectic combination of the creeds of other religions¹, unanimously condemn, among all, the representatives of the judiciary branches of state power, i. e. the corruptness of the judicial body itself — the servants of the law, and then, by rank, representatives of the bureaucratic apparatus of various spheres of government at all levels and territories.
2. The author of the article shares the opinion of specialists who argue that in principle corruption is impossible in the absence of the so-called *discretionary power*, i. e. granting an exclusive right to a particular state body or a certain official to act (inactive) in accordance with his inner conviction, understanding and discretion, but ostensibly within the framework of the law, which he interprets, of course, in his own way. Thus, in this case, we can talk not about the domestic corruption, but about the quality of the bureaucracy and the existence of the last mentioned above corruption “triad”, i. e. simply the existence of a multi-faceted institution of bribes. And a common thesis is not a figure of speech — a bribe-taking official provokes a certain suspicion. Already, almost officially, the annual average bribe size and its dynamics are calculated in Russia. Naturally, the taxation of legalized bribes, as suggested by the charismatic leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) at the time, will not improve the situation and will not reduce corruption risks in any way. Or, the ideas discussed, the stimulation through the system of one-time rewards for filing allegations of corruption / conflicts of interest following the example of ancient Rome as the epoch of polytheism (with the pantheon of narrowly specialized gods) and already the Christian period, are very dangerous precisely for our society. But to conduct a proper analysis (in the spirit of accepting *activity comparativistics* [7]), the comparative effectiveness of the “carrot vs gingerbread” method in fighting corruptionism is still to be faced by the Russian Legislator.
3. In connection with the above, it is impossible to destroy corruption as a phenomenon, as long as the possibility of making subjective decisions remains public or official, even deeply religious, and, moreover, in church, bypassing the secular law and / or God’s Law. But the fragmented, sensational and, undoubtedly, significant events of a corrupt nature in the outgoing year, in which it is useless to seek conspiracy marks, are nevertheless united by the will of the old bitch of the “lady-history” (not to be confused with the historical science and the very notorious Englishwoman) who observes one’s own laws.

Russia, while it follows in the wake of its own legislation on fighting corruption, is not in a hurry to implement and join the Council of Europe Convention on Civil Liability for Corruption² for various reasons. Thus, the time lag since the signing of this Convention

¹ Parallels between the confessions of Voodoo and Christianity are so strong that there is no enmity between the two religions, and in many areas they coexist peacefully. Today, the priests of both religions work hand in hand to help bring peace and prosperity to Africa, home to voodoo. Moreover, the pontiff of the Catholic Church Pope John Paul II spoke of the respect with which he treated the practicing voodoo priests, recognizing the “fundamental virtue” inherent in the study and belief of voodoo. Pope even attended the sacred Voodoo ceremony in 1993, helping to cement the good coexistence of these two seemingly opposing religions.

² Convention on Civil Liability for Corruption (ETS № 174) (rus., english) [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901858911/> (date of the address: 25.12.2017).

on January 27, 1999 until its ratification in 2006 turned out to be unusually significant. And in some cases, the Lawmaker even lowers the quality of the normative act, as it happened, according to the appraisal of the author of the article, meeting the interests of elected affiliated structures and supplementing the disputable amendments with Art. 65 FZ-N 44 "Procedure for providing documentation on an electronic auction, clarifying its provisions and making changes to it"¹.

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¹ Federal Law N 44-FZ of 05.04.2013 (as amended on December 29, 2017) "On the contract system in the sphere of procurement of goods, works and services to ensure state and municipal needs" (with amendments and additions that came into force on 01/01/2018) [Electronic resource]. URL:/http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_144624/573e 8d 1b7bfb3e86383b42db5a387aa3644cb676 / (date of the address: 01/01/2018).