

Islam 101

by Gregory M. Davis

author, Religion of Peace? Islam's War Against the World

producer/director, Islam: What the West Needs to Know — An Examination of Islam, Violence, and the Fate of the Non-Muslim World

Islam 101 is meant to help people become better educated about the fundamentals of Islam and to help the more knowledgeable better convey the facts to others. Similarly, my book and documentary are meant to serve as concise explanations of the major moving parts of Islam and their implications for Western society. Islam 101 is a condensation of the book and documentary with the aim of lending clarity to the public understanding of Islam and of exposing the inadequacy of prevailing views. All should feel free to distribute and/or reproduce it.

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1. The Basics

a. The Five Pillars of Islam

The five pillars of Islam constitute the most basic tenets of the religion. They are:

1. Faith (iman) in the oneness of Allah and the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (indicated by the declaration [the Shahadah] that, “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah”).

2. Keeping of the five scheduled daily prayers (salah).
3. Almsgiving (zakat).
4. Fasting (sawm).
5. Pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca for those who are able.

The five pillars in and of themselves do not tell us a lot about the faith or what a Muslim is supposed to believe or how he should act. The second through fifth pillars — prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage — are aspects shared by many religions. The finality of the prophethood of Muhammad, however, is unique to Islam. To understand Islam and what it means to be a Muslim, we must come to understand Muhammad as well as the revelations given through him by Allah, which make up the Quran.

b. The Quran — the Book of Allah

According to Islamic teaching, the Quran came down as a series of revelations from Allah through the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad, who then dictated it to his followers. Muhammad's companions memorized fragments of the Quran and wrote them down on whatever was at hand, which were later compiled into book form under the rule of the third Caliph, Uthman, some years after Muhammad's death.

The Quran is about as long as the Christian New Testament. It comprises 114 suras (not to be confused with the Sira, which refers to the life of the Prophet) of varying lengths, which may be considered chapters. According to Islamic doctrine, it was around 610 AD in a cave near the city of Mecca (now in southwest Saudi Arabia) that Muhammad received the first revelation from Allah by way of the Archangel Gabriel. The revelation merely commanded Muhammad to "recite" or "read" (Sura 96); the words he was instructed to utter were not his own but Allah's. Over the next twelve or so years in Mecca, other revelations came to Muhammad that constituted a message to the inhabitants of the city to forsake their pagan ways and turn in worship to the one Allah.

While in Mecca, though he condemned paganism (for the most part), Muhammad showed great respect for the monotheism of the Christian and Jewish inhabitants. Indeed, the Allah of the Quran claimed to be the same God worshipped by Jews and Christians, who now revealed himself to the Arab

people through his chosen messenger, Muhammad. It is the Quranic revelations that came later in Muhammad's career, after he and the first Muslims left Mecca for the city of Medina, that transformed Islam from a relatively benign form of monotheism into an expansionary, military-political ideology that persists to this day.

Orthodox Islam does not accept that a rendering of the Quran into another language is a "translation" in the way that, say, the King James Bible is a translation of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. A point often made by Islamic apologists to defang criticism is that only Arabic readers may understand the Quran. But Arabic is a language like any other and fully capable of translation. Indeed, most Muslims are not Arabic readers. In the below analysis, we use a translation of the Quran by two Muslim scholars, which may be found here. All parenthetical explanations in the text are those of the translators save for my interjections in braces, { }.

Those Westerners who manage to pick up a translation of the Quran are often left bewildered as to its meaning thanks to ignorance of a critically important principle of Quranic interpretation known as "abrogation." The principle of abrogation — *al-naskh wa al-mansukh* (the abrogating and the abrogated) — directs that verses revealed later in Muhammad's career "abrogate" — i.e., cancel and replace — earlier ones whose instructions they may contradict. Thus, passages revealed later in Muhammad's career, in Medina, overrule passages revealed earlier, in Mecca. The Quran itself lays out the principle of abrogation:

2:106. Whatever a Verse (revelation) do We {Allah} abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring a better one or similar to it. Know you not that Allah is able to do all things?

It seems that 2:106 was revealed in response to skepticism directed at Muhammad that Allah's revelations were not entirely consistent over time. Muhammad's rebuttal was that "Allah is able to do all things" — even change his mind. To confuse matters further, though the Quran was revealed to Muhammad sequentially over some twenty years' time, it was not compiled in chronological order. When the Quran was finally collated into book form under Caliph Uthman, the suras were ordered from longest to shortest with no connection whatever to the order in which they were revealed or to their thematic content. In order to find

out what the Quran says on a given topic, it is necessary to examine the other Islamic sources that give clues as to when in Muhammad's lifetime the revelations occurred. Upon such examination, one discovers that the Meccan suras, revealed at a time when the Muslims were vulnerable, are generally benign; the later Medinan suras, revealed after Muhammad had made himself the head of an army, are bellicose.

Let us take, for example, 50:45 and Sura 109, both revealed in Mecca:

50:45. We know of best what they say; and you (O Muhammad) are not a tyrant over them (to force them to Belief). But warn by the Qur'an, him who fears My Threat. 109:1. Say (O Muhammad to these Mushrikun and Kafirun): "O Al-Kafirun (disbelievers in Allah, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in Al-Qadar {divine foreordainment and sustaining of all things}, etc.)!

109:2. "I worship not that which you worship,

109:3. "Nor will you worship that which I worship.

109:4. "And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping.

109:5. "Nor will you worship that which I worship.

109:6. "To you be your religion, and to me my religion (Islamic Monotheism)."

Then there is this passage revealed just after the Muslims reached Medina and were still vulnerable:

2:256. There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Taghut {idolatry} and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.

In contrast, take 9:5, commonly referred to as the "Verse of the Sword", revealed toward the end of Muhammad's life:

9:5. Then when the Sacred Months (the 1st, 7th, 11th, and 12th months of the Islamic calendar) have passed, then kill the Mushrikun {unbelievers} wherever you find them, and capture them and besiege them, and prepare for them each and every ambush. But if they repent and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat {the

Islamic ritual prayers}), and give Zakat {alms}, then leave their way free. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Having been revealed later in Muhammad's life than 50:45, 109, and 2:256, the Verse of the Sword abrogates their peaceful injunctions in accordance with 2:106. Sura 8, revealed shortly before Sura 9, reveals a similar theme:

8:39. And fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and polytheism: i.e. worshipping others besides Allah) and the religion (worship) will all be for Allah Alone [in the whole of the world]. But if they cease (worshipping others besides Allah), then certainly, Allah is All-Seer of what they do.8:67. It is not for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war (and free them with ransom) until he had made a great slaughter (among his enemies) in the land. You desire the good of this world (i.e. the money of ransom for freeing the captives), but Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

9:29. Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.

9:33. It is He {Allah} Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religions even though the Mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) hate (it).

The Quran's commandments to Muslims to wage war in the name of Allah against non-Muslims are unmistakable. They are, furthermore, absolutely authoritative as they were revealed late in the Prophet's career and so cancel and replace earlier instructions to act peaceably. Without knowledge of the principle of abrogation, Westerners will continue to misread the Quran and misdiagnose Islam as a "religion of peace."

c. The Sunnah — the "Way" of the Prophet Muhammad

In Islam, Muhammad is considered *al-insan al-kamil* (the “ideal man”). Muhammad is in no way considered divine, nor is he worshipped (no image of Muhammad is permitted lest it encourage idolatry), but he is the model par excellence for all Muslims in how they should conduct themselves. It is through Muhammad’s personal teachings and actions — which make up the “way of the Prophet,” the Sunnah — that Muslims discern what is a good and holy life. Details about the Prophet — how he lived, what he did, his non-Quranic utterances, his personal habits — are indispensable knowledge for any faithful Muslim.

Knowledge of the Sunnah comes primarily from the hadiths (“reports”) about Muhammad’s life, which were passed down orally until codified in the eighth century AD, some hundred years after Muhammad’s death. The hadiths comprise the most important body of Islamic texts after the Quran; they are basically a collection of anecdotes about Muhammad’s life believed to have originated with those who knew him personally. There are thousands upon thousands of hadiths, some running to multiple pages, some barely a few lines in length. When the hadiths were first compiled in the eighth century AD, it became obvious that many were inauthentic. The early Muslim scholars of hadith spent tremendous labor trying to determine which hadiths were authoritative and which were suspect.

The hadiths here come exclusively from the most reliable and authoritative collection, Sahih Al-Bukhari, recognized as sound by all schools of Islamic scholarship, translated by a Muslim scholar and which may be found here. Different translations of hadiths can vary in their breakdown of volume, book, and number, but the content is the same. For each hadith, the classifying information is listed first, then the name of the originator of the hadith (generally someone who knew Muhammad personally), and then the content itself. While the absolute authenticity of even a sound hadith is hardly assured, they are nonetheless accepted as authoritative within an Islamic context.

Because Muhammad is himself the measuring stick of morality, his actions are not judged according to an independent moral standard but rather establish what the standard for Muslims properly is.

Volume 7, Book 62, Number 88; Narrated Ursa: The Prophet wrote the (marriage contract) with Aisha while she was six years old and consummated his marriage with her while she was nine years old and she remained with him for nine years (i.e. till his death). Volume 8, Book 82, Number 795; Narrated Anas: The Prophet cut off the hands and feet of the men belonging to the tribe of Uraina and did not cauterise (their bleeding limbs) till they died.

Volume 2, Book 23, Number 413; Narrated Abdullah bin Umar: The Jews {of Medina} brought to the Prophet a man and a woman from amongst them who have committed (adultery) illegal sexual intercourse. He ordered both of them to be stoned (to death), near the place of offering the funeral prayers beside the mosque.

Volume 9, Book 84, Number 57; Narrated Ikrima: Some Zanadiqa (atheists) were brought to Ali {the fourth Caliph} and he burnt them. The news of this event, reached Ibn 'Abbas who said, "If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah's Apostle forbade it, saying, "Do not punish anybody with Allah's punishment (fire)." I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah's Apostle, "Whoever changes his Islamic religion, then kill him."

Volume 1, Book 2, Number 25; Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle was asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle (Muhammad). The questioner then asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To participate in Jihad (religious fighting) in Allah's Cause."

In Islam, there is no "natural" sense of morality or justice that transcends the specific examples and injunctions outlined in the Quran and the Sunnah. Because Muhammad is considered Allah's final prophet and the Quran the eternal, unalterable words of Allah himself, there is also no evolving morality that permits the modification or integration of Islamic morality with that from other sources. The entire Islamic moral universe devolves solely from the life and teachings of Muhammad.

Along with the reliable hadiths, a further source of accepted knowledge about Muhammad comes from the Sira (life) of the Prophet, composed by one of Islam's great scholars, Muhammad bin Ishaq, in the eighth century AD.

Muhammad's prophetic career is meaningfully divided into two segments: the first in Mecca, where he labored for fourteen years to make converts to Islam; and later in the city of Medina (The City of the Apostle of God), where he became a powerful political and military leader. In Mecca, we see a quasi-Biblical figure, preaching repentance and charity, harassed and rejected by those around him; later, in Medina, we see an able commander and strategist who systematically conquered and killed those who opposed him. It is the later years of Muhammad's life, from 622 AD to his death in 632, that are rarely broached in polite company. In 622, when the Prophet was better than fifty years old, he and his followers made the Hijra (emigration or flight), from Mecca to the oasis of Yathrib — later renamed Medina — some 200 miles to the north. Muhammad's new monotheism had angered the pagan leaders of Mecca, and the flight to Medina was precipitated by a probable attempt on Muhammad's life. Muhammad had sent emissaries to Medina to ensure his welcome. He was accepted by the Medinan tribes as the leader of the Muslims and as arbiter of inter-tribal disputes.

Shortly before Muhammad fled the hostility of Mecca, a new batch of Muslim converts pledged their loyalty to him on a hill outside Mecca called Aqaba. Ishaq here conveys in the *Sira* the significance of this event:

Sira, p208: When God gave permission to his Apostle to fight, the second {oath of allegiance at} Aqaba contained conditions involving war which were not in the first act of fealty. Now they {Muhammad's followers} bound themselves to war against all and sundry for God and his Apostle, while he promised them for faithful service thus the reward of paradise.

That Muhammad's nascent religion underwent a significant change at this point is plain. The scholarly Ishaq clearly intends to impress on his (Muslim) readers that, while in its early years, Islam was a relatively tolerant creed that would "endure insult and forgive the ignorant," Allah soon required Muslims "to war against all and sundry for God and his Apostle." The Islamic calendar testifies to the paramouncy of the Hijra by setting year one from the date of its occurrence. The year of the Hijra, 622 AD, is considered more significant than the year of Muhammad's birth or death or that of the first Quranic revelation because Islam is first and foremost a political-military enterprise. It was only when Muhammad left Mecca with his paramilitary band that Islam achieved its proper political-

military articulation. The years of the Islamic calendar (which employs lunar months) are designated in English “AH” or “After Hijra.”

i. The Battle of Badr

The Battle of Badr was the first significant engagement fought by the Prophet. Upon establishing himself in Medina following the Hijra, Muhammad began a series of razzias (raids) on caravans of the Meccan Quraish tribe on the route to Syria.

Volume 5, Book 59, Number 287; Narrated Kab bin Malik: The Apostle had gone out to meet the caravans of Quraish, but Allah caused them (i.e. Muslims) to meet their enemy unexpectedly (with no previous intention). Volume 5, Book 59, Number 289; Narrated Ibn Abbas: On the day of the battle of Badr, the Prophet said, “O Allah! I appeal to You (to fulfill) Your Covenant and Promise. O Allah! If Your Will is that none should worship You (then give victory to the pagans).” Then Abu Bakr took hold of him by the hand and said, “This is sufficient for you.” The Prophet came out saying, “Their multitude will be put to flight and they will show their backs.” (54:45)

Having returned to Medina after the battle, Muhammad admonished the resident Jewish tribe of Qaynuqa to accept Islam or face a similar fate as the Quraish (3:12-13). The Qaynuqa agreed to leave Medina if they could retain their property, which Muhammad granted. Following the exile of the Bani Qaynuqa, Muhammad turned to individuals in Medina he considered to have acted treacherously. The Prophet particularly seems to have disliked the many poets who ridiculed his new religion and his claim to prophethood — a theme evident today in the violent reactions of Muslims to any perceived mockery of Islam. In taking action against his opponents, “the ideal man” set precedents for all time as to how Muslims should deal with detractors of their religion.

Sira, p367: Then he {Kab bin al-Ashraf} composed amatory verses of an insulting nature about the Muslim women. The Apostle said: “Who will rid me of Ibnul-Ashraf?” Muhammad bin Maslama, brother of the Bani Abdu’l-Ashhal, said, “I will deal with him for you, O Apostle of God, I will kill him.” He said, “Do so if you can.” “All that is incumbent upon you is that you should try” {said the Prophet to Muhammad bin Maslama}. He said, “O Apostle of God, we shall have to tell lies.”

He {the Prophet} answered, "Say what you like, for you are free in the matter." Volume 4, Book 52, Number 270; Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah: The Prophet said, "Who is ready to kill Kab bin Al-Ashraf who has really hurt Allah and His Apostle?" Muhammad bin Maslama said, "O Allah's Apostle! Do you like me to kill him?" He replied in the affirmative. So, Muhammad bin Maslama went to him (i.e. Kab) and said, "This person (i.e. the Prophet) has put us to task and asked us for charity." Kab replied, "By Allah, you will get tired of him." Muhammad said to him, "We have followed him, so we dislike to leave him till we see the end of his affair." Muhammad bin Maslama went on talking to him in this way till he got the chance to kill him.

A significant portion of the Sira is devoted to poetry composed by Muhammad's followers and his enemies in rhetorical duels that mirrored those in the field. There seems to have been an informal competition in aggrandizing oneself, one's tribe, and one's God while ridiculing one's adversary in eloquent and memorable ways. Kab bin Malik, one of the assassins of his brother, Kab bin al-Ashraf, composed the following:

Sira, p368: Kab bin Malik said: Of them Kab was left prostrate there (After his fall {the Jewish tribe of} al-Nadir were brought low). Sword in hand we cut him down By Muhammad's order when he sent secretly by night Kab's brother to go to Kab. He beguiled him and brought him down with guile Mahmud was trustworthy, bold.

ii. The Battle of Uhud

The Meccan Quraish regrouped for an attack on the Muslims at Medina. Muhammad got wind of the Meccan force coming to attack him and encamped his forces on a small hillock north of Medina named Uhud, where the ensuing battle took place.

Volume 5, Book 59, Number 377; Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah: On the day of the battle of Uhud, a man came to the Prophet and said, "Can you tell me where I will be if I should get martyred?" The Prophet replied, "In Paradise." The man threw away some dates he was carrying in his hand, and fought till he was martyred. Volume 5, Book 59, Number 375; Narrated Al-Bara: when we faced the enemy, they took to their heel till I saw their women running towards the mountain, lifting up their clothes from their legs, revealing their leg-bangles. The

Muslims started saying, “The booty, the booty!” Abdullah bin Jubair said, “The Prophet had taken a firm promise from me not to leave this place.” But his companions refused (to stay). So when they refused (to stay there), (Allah) confused them so that they could not know where to go, and they suffered seventy casualties.

Though deprived of victory at Uhud, Muhammad was by no means vanquished. He continued making raids that made being a Muslim not only virtuous in the eyes of Allah but lucrative as well. In an Islamic worldview, there is no incompatibility between wealth, power, and holiness. Indeed, as a member of the true faith, it is only logical that one should also enjoy the material bounty of Allah — even if that means plundering it from infidels.

As Muhammad had neutralized the Jewish tribe of Bani Qaynuqa after Badr, he now turned to the Bani Nadir after Uhud. According to the Sira, Allah warned Muhammad of an attempt to assassinate him, and the Prophet ordered the Muslims to prepare for war against the Bani Nadir. The Bani Nadir agreed to go into exile if Muhammad permitted them to retain their movable property. Muhammad agreed to these terms save that they leave behind their armor.

iii. The Battle of Medina

In 627 AD, Muhammad faced the greatest challenge to his new community. In that year, the Quraish of Mecca made their most determined attack on the Muslims at Medina itself. Muhammad thought it advisable not to engage them in a pitched battle as at Uhud but took shelter in Medina, protected as it was by lava flows on three sides. The Meccans would have to attack from the northwest in a valley between the flows, and it was there that Muhammad ordered a trench dug for the city’s defense.

Volume 4, Book 52, Number 208; Narrated Anas: On the day (of the battle) of the Trench, the Ansar {new converts to Islam} were saying, “We are those who have sworn allegiance to Muhammad for Jihad (for ever) as long as we live.” The Prophet replied to them, “O Allah! There is no life except the life of the Hereafter. So honor the Ansar and emigrants {from Mecca} with Your Generosity.” And Narrated Mujashi: My brother and I came to the Prophet and I requested him to take the pledge of allegiance from us for migration. He said, “Migration has

passed away with its people.” I asked, “For what will you take the pledge of allegiance from us then?” He said, “I will take (the pledge) for Islam and Jihad.”

The Meccans were foiled by the trench and only able to send small raiding parties across it. After several days, they turned back for Mecca. Following his victory, Muhammad turned to the third Jewish tribe at Medina, the Bani Quraiza. While the Bani Qaynuqa and Bani Nadir had suffered exile, the fate of the Bani Quraiza would be considerably more dire.

Sira, p463-4: Then they {the tribe of Quraiza} surrendered, and the apostle confined them in Medina in the quarter of d. al-Harith, a woman of Bani al-Najjar. Then the apostle went out to the market of Medina and dug trenches in it. Then he sent for them and struck off their heads in those trenches as they were brought out to him in batches. Among them was the enemy of Allah Huyayy bin Akhtab and Kab bin Asad their chief. There were 600 or 700 in all, though some put the figure as high as 800 or 900. As they were being taken out in batches to the Apostle they asked Kab what he thought would be done with them. He replied, “Will you never understand? Don’t you see that the summoner never stops and those who are taken away do not return? By Allah it is death!” This went on until the Apostle made an end of them.

Thus do we find the clear precedent that explains the peculiar penchant of Islamic terrorists to behead their victims: it is merely another precedent bestowed by their Prophet.

Following yet another of the Muslims’ raids, this time on a place called Khaibar, “The women of Khaibar were distributed among the Muslims” as was usual practice. (Sira, p511) The raid at Khaibar had been against the Bani Nadir, whom Muhammad had earlier exiled from Medina.

Sira, p515: Kinana bin al-Rabi, who had the custody of the treasure of Bani al-Nadir, was brought to the Apostle who asked him about it. He denied that he knew where it was. A Jew came to the Apostle and said that he had seen Kinana going round a certain ruin every morning early. When the Apostle said to Kinana, “Do you know that if we find you have it I shall kill you?” he said, Yes. The Apostle gave orders that the ruin was to be excavated and some of the treasure was found. When he asked him about the rest he refused to produce it, so the

Apostle gave orders to al-Zubayr bin al-Awwam, "Torture him until you extract what he has," so he kindled a fire with flint and steel on his chest until he was nearly dead. Then the Apostle delivered him to Muhammad bin Maslama and he struck off his head, in revenge for his brother Mahmud.

iv. The Conquest of Mecca

Muhammad's greatest victory came in 632 AD, ten years after he and his followers had been forced to flee to Medina. In that year, he assembled a force of some ten thousand Muslims and allied tribes and descended on Mecca. "The Apostle had instructed his commanders when they entered Mecca only to fight those who resisted them, except a small number who were to be killed even if they were found beneath the curtains of the Kaba." (Sira, p550)

Volume 3, Book 29, Number 72; Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah's Apostle entered Mecca in the year of its Conquest wearing an Arabian helmet on his head and when the Prophet took it off, a person came and said, "Ibn Khatal is holding the covering of the Kaba (taking refuge in the Kaba)." The Prophet said, "Kill him."

Following the conquest of Mecca, Muhammad outlined the future of his religion.

Volume 4, Book 52, Number 177; Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "The Hour {of the Last Judgment} will not be established until you fight with the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say, "O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him." Volume 1, Book 2, Number 24; Narrated Ibn Umar: Allah's Apostle said: "I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, and offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity, so if they perform that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islamic laws and then their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allah."

It is from such warlike pronouncements as these that Islamic scholarship divides the world into dar al-Islam (the House of Islam, i.e., those nations who have submitted to Allah) and dar al-harb (the House of War, i.e., those who have not). It is this dispensation that the world lived under in Muhammad's time and that it

lives under today. Then as now, Islam's message to the unbelieving world is the same: submit or be conquered.

d. Sharia Law

Unlike many religions, Islam includes a mandatory and highly specific legal and political plan for society called Sharia (pronounced "sha-rīʿ¹/₂e-uh"), which translates approximately as "way" or "path." The precepts of Sharia are derived from the commandments of the Quran and the Sunnah (the teachings and precedents of Muhammad as found in the reliable hadiths and the Sira). Together, the Quran and the Sunnah establish the dictates of Sharia, which is the blueprint for the good Islamic society. Because Sharia originates with the Quran and the Sunnah, it is not optional. Sharia is the legal code ordained by Allah for all mankind. To violate Sharia or not to accept its authority is to commit rebellion against Allah, which Allah's faithful are required to combat.

There is no separation between the religious and the political in Islam; rather Islam and Sharia constitute a comprehensive means of ordering society at every level. While it is in theory possible for an Islamic society to have different outward forms — an elective system of government, a hereditary monarchy, etc. — whatever the outward structure of the government, Sharia is the prescribed content. It is this fact that puts Sharia into conflict with forms of government based on anything other than the Quran and the Sunnah.

The precepts of Sharia may be divided into two parts:

1. Acts of worship (al-ibadat), which includes:
 - Ritual Purification (Wudu)
 - Prayers (Salah)
 - Fasts (Sawm and Ramadan)
 - Charity (Zakat)
 - Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)

2. Human interaction (al-muamalat), which includes:
 - Financial transactions
 - Endowments

Laws of inheritance
Marriage, divorce, and child care
Food and drink (including ritual slaughtering and hunting)
Penal punishments
War and peace
Judicial matters (including witnesses and forms of evidence)

As one may see, there are few aspects of life that Sharia does not specifically govern. Everything from washing one's hands to child-rearing to taxation to military policy fall under its dictates. Because Sharia is derivative of the Quran and the Sunnah, it affords some room for interpretation. But upon examination of the Islamic sources (see above), it is apparent that any meaningful application of Sharia is going to look very different from anything resembling a free or open society in the Western sense. The stoning of adulterers, execution of apostates and blasphemers, repression of other religions, and a mandatory hostility toward non-Islamic nations punctuated by regular warfare will be the norm. It seems fair then to classify Islam and its Sharia code as a form of totalitarianism.

2. Jihad and Dhimmitude

a. What does "jihad" mean?

Jihad literally translates as "struggle." Strictly speaking, jihad does not mean "holy war" as Muslim apologists often point out. However, the question remains as to what sort of "struggle" is meant: an inner, spiritual struggle against the passions, or an outward, physical struggle.

As in any case of trying to determine Islamic teaching on a particular matter, one must look to the Quran and the Sunnah. From those sources (see above) it is evident that a Muslim is required to struggle against a variety of things: laziness in prayer, neglecting to give zakat (alms), etc. But is it also plain that a Muslim is commanded to struggle in physical combat against the infidel as well. Muhammad's impressive military career attests to the central role that military action plays in Islam.

b. Hasan Al-Banna on jihad

Below are excerpts from Hasan Al-Banna's treatise, *Jihad*. In 1928, Al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood, which today is the most powerful organization in Egypt after the government itself. In this treatise, Al-Banna cogently argues that Muslims must take up arms against unbelievers. As he says, "The verses of the Qur'an and the Sunnah summon people in general (with the most eloquent expression and the clearest exposition) to jihad, to warfare, to the armed forces, and all means of land and sea fighting."

All Muslims Must Make Jihad
Jihad is an obligation from Allah on every Muslim and cannot be ignored nor evaded. Allah has ascribed great importance to jihad and has made the reward of the martyrs and the fighters in His way a splendid one. Only those who have acted similarly and who have modeled themselves upon the martyrs in their performance of jihad can join them in this reward. Furthermore, Allah has specifically honoured the Mujahideen {those who wage jihad} with certain exceptional qualities, both spiritual and practical, to benefit them in this world and the next. Their pure blood is a symbol of victory in this world and the mark of success and felicity in the world to come.

Those who can only find excuses, however, have been warned of extremely dreadful punishments and Allah has described them with the most unfortunate of names. He has reprimanded them for their cowardice and lack of spirit, and castigated them for their weakness and truancy. In this world, they will be surrounded by dishonour and in the next they will be surrounded by the fire from which they shall not escape though they may possess much wealth. The weaknesses of abstention and evasion of jihad are regarded by Allah as one of the major sins, and one of the seven sins that guarantee failure.

Islam is concerned with the question of jihad and the drafting and the mobilisation of the entire Umma {the global Muslim community} into one body to defend the right cause with all its strength than any other ancient or modern system of living, whether religious or civil. The verses of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Muhammad (PBUH {Peace Be Unto Him}) are overflowing with all these noble ideals and they summon people in general (with the most eloquent expression and the clearest exposition) to jihad, to warfare, to the armed forces, and all means of land and sea fighting.

Here Al-Banna offers citations from the Quran and the reliable hadiths that demonstrate the necessity of combat for Muslims. The citations are comparable to those included in Islam 101 section 1b and are here omitted.

The Scholars on Jihad¹ have just presented to you some verses from the Qur'an and the Noble Ahadith concerning the importance of jihad. Now I would like to present to you some of the opinions from jurisprudence of the Islamic Schools of Thought including some latter day authorities regarding the rules of jihad and the necessity for preparedness. From this we will come to realise how far the ummah has deviated in its practice of Islam as can be seen from the consensus of its scholars on the question of jihad.

The author of the 'Majma' al-Anhar fi Sharh Multaqal-Abhar', in describing the rules of jihad according to the Hanafi School, said: 'Jihad linguistically means to exert one's utmost effort in word and action; in the Sharee'ah {Sharia — Islamic law} it is the fighting of the unbelievers, and involves all possible efforts that are necessary to dismantle the power of the enemies of Islam including beating them, plundering their wealth, destroying their places of worship and smashing their idols. This means that jihad is to strive to the utmost to ensure the strength of Islam by such means as fighting those who fight you and the dhimmies {non-Muslims living under Islamic rule} (if they violate any of the terms of the treaty) and the apostates (who are the worst of unbelievers, for they disbelieved after they have affirmed their belief).

It is fard (obligatory) on us to fight with the enemies. The Imam must send a military expedition to the Dar-al-Harb {House of War — the non-Muslim world} every year at least once or twice, and the people must support him in this. If some of the people fulfill the obligation, the remainder are released from the obligation. If this fard kifayah (communal obligation) cannot be fulfilled by that group, then the responsibility lies with the closest adjacent group, and then the closest after that etc., and if the fard kifayah cannot be fulfilled except by all the people, it then becomes a fard 'ayn (individual obligation), like prayer on everyone of the people.

The scholarly people are of one opinion on this matter as should be evident and this is irrespective of whether these scholars were Mujtahideen or Muqalideen and it is irrespective of whether these scholars were salaf (early) or khalaf (late).

They all agreed unanimously that jihad is a fard kifayah imposed upon the Islamic ummah in order to spread the Da'wah of Islam, and that jihad is a fard 'ayn if an enemy attacks Muslim lands. Today, my brother, the Muslims as you know are forced to be subservient before others and are ruled by disbelievers. Our lands have been besieged, and our hurruma'at (personal possessions, respect, honour, dignity and privacy) violated. Our enemies are overlooking our affairs, and the rites of our din are under their jurisdiction. Yet still the Muslims fail to fulfill the responsibility of Da'wah that is on their shoulders. Hence in this situation it becomes the duty of each and every Muslim to make jihad. He should prepare himself mentally and physically such that when comes the decision of Allah, he will be ready.

I should not finish this discussion without mentioning to you that the Muslims, throughout every period of their history (before the present period of oppression in which their dignity has been lost) have never abandoned jihad nor did they ever become negligent in its performance, not even their religious authorities, mystics, craftsmen, etc. They were all always ready and prepared. For example, Abdullah ibn al Mubarak, a very learned and pious man, was a volunteer in jihad for most of his life, and 'Abdulwahid bin Zayd, a sufi and a devout man, was the same. And in his time, Shaqiq al Balkhi, the shaykh of the sufis encouraged his pupils towards jihad.

Associated Matters Concerning Jihad

Many Muslims today mistakenly believe that fighting the enemy is jihad asghar (a lesser jihad) and that fighting one's ego is jihad akbar (a greater jihad). The following narration [athar] is quoted as proof: "We have returned from the lesser jihad to embark on the greater jihad." They said: "What is the greater jihad?" He said: "The jihad of the heart, or the jihad against one's ego."

This narration is used by some to lessen the importance of fighting, to discourage any preparation for combat, and to deter any offering of jihad in Allah's way. This narration is not a saheeh (sound) tradition: The prominent muhaddith Al Hafiz ibn Hajar al-Asqalani said in the Tasdid al-Qaws:

'It is well known and often repeated, and was a saying of Ibrahim ibn 'Abla.'

Al Hafiz Al Iraqi said in the Takhrij Ahadith al-Ahya':

'Al Bayhaqi transmitted it with a weak chain of narrators on the authority of Jabir, and Al Khatib transmitted it in his history on the authority of Jabir.'

Nevertheless, even if it were a sound tradition, it would never warrant abandoning jihad or preparing for it in order to rescue the territories of the Muslims and repel the attacks of the disbelievers. Let it be known that this narration simply emphasises the importance of struggling against one's ego so that Allah will be the sole purpose of everyone of our actions.

Other associated matters concerning jihad include commanding the good and forbidding the evil. It is said in the Hadeeth: "One of the greatest forms of jihad is to utter a word of truth in the presence of a tyrannical ruler." But nothing compares to the honour of shahadah kubra (the supreme martyrdom) or the reward that is waiting for the Mujahideen.

Epilogue

My brothers! The ummah that knows how to die a noble and honourable death is granted an exalted life in this world and eternal felicity in the next. Degradation and dishonour are the results of the love of this world and the fear of death. Therefore prepare for jihad and be the lovers of death. Life itself shall come searching after you.

My brothers, you should know that one day you will face death and this ominous event can only occur once. If you suffer on this occasion in the way of Allah, it will be to your benefit in this world and your reward in the next. And remember brother that nothing can happen without the Will of Allah: ponder well what Allah, the Blessed, the Almighty, has said:

'Then after the distress, He sent down security for you. Slumber overtook a party of you, while another party was thinking about themselves (as to how to save themselves, ignoring the others and the Prophet) and thought wrongly of Allah – the thought of ignorance. They said, "Have we any part in the affair?" Say you (O Muhammad): "Indeed the affair belongs wholly to Allah." They hide within

themselves what they dare not reveal to you, saying: “If we had anything to do with the affair, none of us would have been killed here.” Say: “Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death: but that Allah might test what is in your hearts; and to purify that which was in your hearts (sins), and Allah is All-Knower of what is in (your) hearts.” {Sura 3:154}

c. Dar al-Islam and dar al-harb: the House of Islam and the House of War

The violent injunctions of the Quran and the violent precedents set by Muhammad set the tone for the Islamic view of politics and of world history. Islamic scholarship divides the world into two spheres of influence, the House of Islam (dar al-Islam) and the House of War (dar al-harb). Islam means submission, and so the House of Islam includes those nations that have submitted to Islamic rule, which is to say those nations ruled by Sharia law. The rest of the world, which has not accepted Sharia law and so is not in a state of submission, exists in a state of rebellion or war with the will of Allah. It is incumbent on dar al-Islam to make war upon dar al-harb until such time that all nations submit to the will of Allah and accept Sharia law. Islam’s message to the non-Muslim world is the same now as it was in the time of Muhammad and throughout history: submit or be conquered. The only times since Muhammad when dar al-Islam was not actively at war with dar al-harb were when the Muslim world was too weak or divided to make war effectively.

But the lulls in the ongoing war that the House of Islam has declared against the House of War do not indicate a forsaking of jihad as a principle but reflect a change in strategic factors. It is acceptable for Muslim nations to declare hudna, or truce, at times when the infidel nations are too powerful for open warfare to make sense. Jihad is not a collective suicide pact even while “killing and being killed” (Sura 9:111) is encouraged on an individual level. For the past few hundred years, the Muslim world has been too politically fragmented and technologically inferior to pose a major threat to the West. But that is changing.

i. Taqiyya — Religious Deception

Due to the state of war between dar al-Islam and dar al-harb, reuses de guerre, i.e., systematic lying to the infidel, must be considered part and parcel of Islamic

tactics. The parroting by Muslim organizations throughout dar al-harb that “Islam is a religion of peace,” or that the origins of Muslim violence lie in the unbalanced psyches of particular individual “fanatics,” must be considered as disinformation intended to induce the infidel world to let down its guard. Of course, individual Muslims may genuinely regard their religion as “peaceful” — but only insofar as they are ignorant of its true teachings, or in the sense of the Egyptian theorist Sayyid Qutb, who posited in his *Islam and Universal Peace* that true peace would prevail in the world just as soon as Islam had conquered it.

A telling point is that, while Muslims who present their religion as peaceful abound throughout dar al-harb, they are nearly non-existent in dar al-Islam. A Muslim apostate once suggested to me a litmus test for Westerners who believe that Islam is a religion of “peace” and “tolerance”: try making that point on a street corner in Ramallah, or Riyadh, or Islamabad, or anywhere in the Muslim world. He assured me you wouldn’t live five minutes.

{A} problem concerning law and order {with respect to Muslims in dar al-harb} arises from an ancient Islamic legal principle — that of *taqiyya*, a word the root meaning of which is “to remain faithful” but which in effect means “dissimulation.” It has full Quranic authority (3:28 and 16:106) and allows the Muslim to conform outwardly to the requirements of unislamic or non-Islamic government, while inwardly “remaining faithful” to whatever he conceives to be proper Islam, while waiting for the tide to turn. (Hiskett, *Some to Mecca Turn to Pray*, 101.) Volume 4, Book 52, Number 269; Narrated Jabir bin ‘Abdullah: The Prophet said, “War is deceit.”

Historically, examples of *taqiyya* include permission to renounce Islam itself in order to save one’s neck or ingratiate oneself with an enemy. It is not hard to see that the implications of *taqiyya* are insidious in the extreme: they essentially render negotiated settlement — and, indeed, all veracious communication between dar al-Islam and dar al-harb — impossible. It should not, however, be surprising that a party to a war should seek to mislead the other about its means and intentions. Jihad Watch’s own Hugh Fitzgerald sums up *taqiyya* and *kitman*, a related form of deception.

“*Taqiyya*” is the religiously-sanctioned doctrine, with its origins in Shi’a Islam but now practiced by non-Shi’a as well, of deliberate dissimulation about religious

matters that may be undertaken to protect Islam, and the Believers. A related term, of broader application, is “kitman,” which is defined as “mental reservation.” An example of “Taqiyya” would be the insistence of a Muslim apologist that “of course” there is freedom of conscience in Islam, and then quoting that Qur’anic verse — “There shall be no compulsion in religion.” {2:256} But the impression given will be false, for there has been no mention of the Muslim doctrine of abrogation, or naskh, whereby such an early verse as that about “no compulsion in religion” has been cancelled out by later, far more intolerant and malevolent verses. In any case, history shows that within Islam there is, and always has been, “compulsion in religion” for Muslims, and for non-Muslims.”Kitman” is close to “taqiyya,” but rather than outright dissimulation, it consists in telling only a part of the truth, with “mental reservation” justifying the omission of the rest. One example may suffice. When a Muslim maintains that “jihad” really means “a spiritual struggle,” and fails to add that this definition is a recent one in Islam (little more than a century old), he misleads by holding back, and is practicing “kitman.” When he adduces, in support of this doubtful proposition, the hadith in which Muhammad, returning home from one of his many battles, is reported to have said (as known from a chain of transmitters, or isnad), that he had returned from “the Lesser Jihad to the Greater Jihad” and does not add what he also knows to be true, that this is a “weak” hadith, regarded by the most-respected muhaddithin as of doubtful authenticity, he is further practicing “kitman.”

In times when the greater strength of dar al-harb necessitates that the jihad take an indirect approach, the natural attitude of a Muslim to the infidel world must be one of deception and omission. Revealing frankly the ultimate goal of dar al-Islam to conquer and plunder dar al-harb when the latter holds the military trump cards would be strategic idiocy. Fortunately for the jihadists, most infidels do not understand how one is to read the Quran, nor do they trouble themselves to find out what Muhammad actually did and taught, which makes it easy to give the impression through selective quotations and omissions that “Islam is a religion of peace.” Any infidel who wants to believe such fiction will happily persist in his mistake having been cited a handful of Meccan verses and told that Muhammad was a man of great piety and charity. Digging only slightly deeper is sufficient to dispel the falsehood.

d. Jihad Through History

In 622 AD (year one in the Islamic calendar, AH 1), Muhammad abandoned Mecca for the city of Medina (Yathrib) some 200 farther north in the Arabian peninsula. In Medina, Muhammad established a paramilitary organization that would spread his influence and that of his religion throughout Arabia. Because there has never been a separation of the political-military and the religious in Islam, this development was entirely natural by Islamic principles. By the time of his death in 632 AD, Muhammad had extended his control in a series of raids and battles over most of southern Arabia. The conquered populations of these areas either had to submit to Muslim rule and pay a protection tax or convert to Islam.

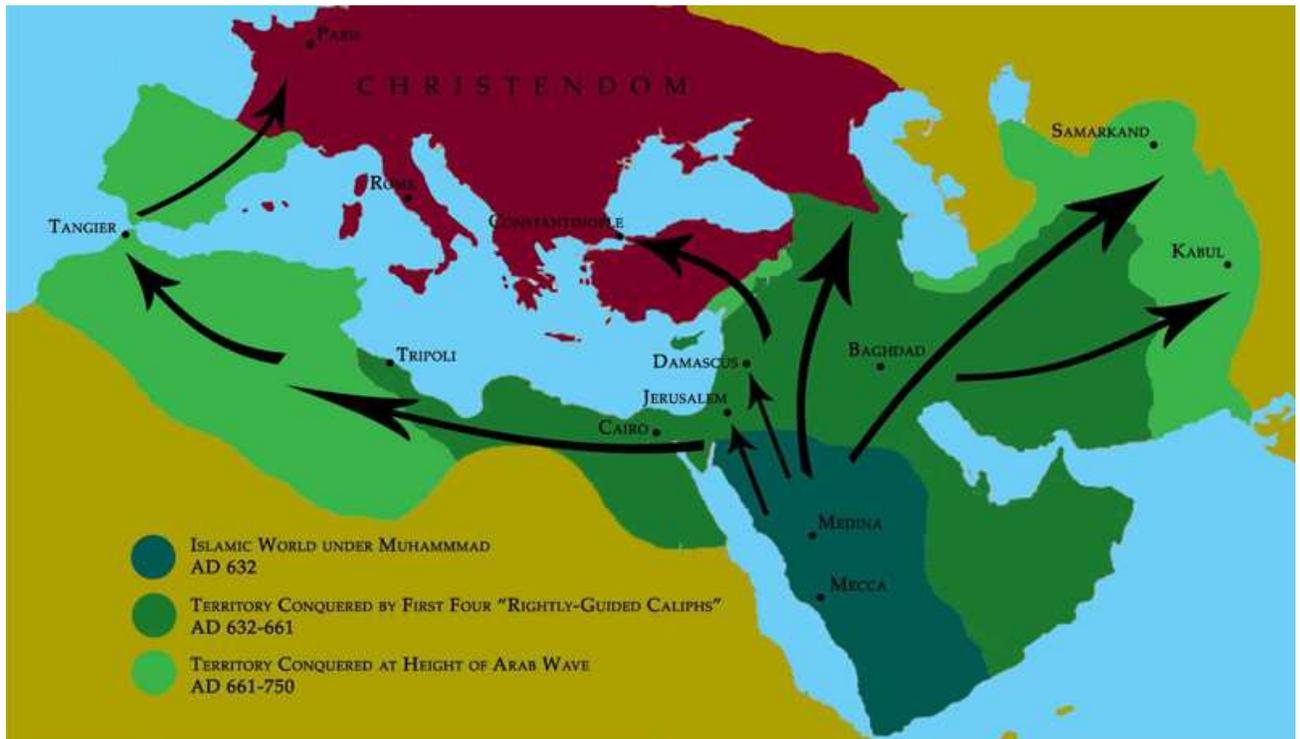
i. The First Major Wave of Jihad: the Arabs, 622-750 AD

Near the end of his life, Muhammad sent letters to the great empires of the Middle East demanding their submission to his authority. This dispels any notion that the Prophet intended Islam's expansion to stop with Arabia. Indeed, it is only logical that the one true religion, revealed by the final and fullest prophet, should have universal sway. Thus, as Muhammad had fought and subdued the peoples of the Arabian peninsula, his successors Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali (known as "the four rightly-guided Caliphs") and other Caliphs fought and subdued the people of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe in the name of Allah.

Volume 4, Book 53, Number 386; Narrated Jubair bin Haiya: Umar {the second Caliph} sent the Muslims to the great countries to fight the pagans. ? When we reached the land of the enemy, the representative of Khosrau {Persia} came out with forty-thousand warriors, and an interpreter got up saying, "Let one of you talk to me!" Al-Mughira replied, ? "Our Prophet, the Messenger of our Lord, has ordered us to fight you till you worship Allah Alone or give Jizya (i.e. tribute); and our Prophet has informed us that our Lord says: "Whoever amongst us is killed (i.e. martyred), shall go to Paradise to lead such a luxurious life as he has never seen, and whoever amongst us remain alive, shall become your master."

Unleashing upon the world the blitzkrieg of its day, Islam rapidly spread into the territories of Byzantium, Persia, and Western Europe in the decades after Muhammad's death. The creaking Byzantine and Persian powers, having battled each other into mutual decline, offered little resistance to this unanticipated

onslaught. The Arab Muslim armies charged into the Holy Land, conquered what is now Iraq and Iran, then swept west across North Africa, into Spain, and finally into France. The Muslim offensive was finally halted in the West at the Battle of Poitiers/Tours, not far from Paris, in 732 AD. In the east, the jihad penetrated deep into Central Asia.



As Muhammad had plundered his foes, so his successors also stripped the conquered areas — incomparably richer both materially and culturally than the desolate sands of Arabia — of their wealth and manpower. Almost overnight, the more advanced civilizations of the Middle East, North Africa, Persia, and Iberia saw their agriculture, native religions, and populations destroyed or plundered. Save for a handful of walled cities that managed to negotiate conditional surrenders, the catastrophes those lands suffered were very nearly complete.

Bat Ye'or, the leading scholar of Islam's expansion and its treatment of non-Muslims, has provided an inestimable service through the compilation and translation of numerous primary source documents describing centuries of Islamic conquest. She includes these documents in her works on Islamic history and the plight of non-Muslims under Islamic rule. In the history of jihad, the

slaughter of civilians, the desecration of churches, and the plundering of the countryside are commonplace. Here is Michael the Syrian's account of the Muslim invasion of Cappodocia (southern Turkey) in 650 AD under Caliph Umar:

... when Muawiya {the Muslim commander} arrived {in Euchaita in Armenia} he ordered all the inhabitants to be put to the sword; he placed guards so that no one escaped. After gathering up all the wealth of the town, they set to torturing the leaders to make them show them things [treasures] that had been hidden. The Taiyaye {Muslim Arabs} led everyone into slavery — men and women, boys and girls — and they committed much debauchery in that unfortunate town: they wickedly committed immoralities inside churches. They returned to their country rejoicing. (Michael the Syrian, quoted in Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam*, 276-7.)

The following description by the Muslim historian, Ibn al-Athir (1160-1233 AD), of razzias (raiding expeditions) in Northern Spain and France in the eighth and ninth centuries AD, conveys nothing but satisfaction at the extent of the destruction wrought upon the infidels, including noncombatants.

In 177 <17 April 793>, Hisham, prince of Spain, sent a large army commanded by Abd al-Malik b. Abd al-Wahid b. Mugith into enemy territory, and which made forays as far as Narbonne and Jaranda . This general first attacked Jaranda where there was an elite Frank garrison; he killed the bravest, destroyed the walls and towers of the town and almost managed to seize it. He then marched on to Narbonne, where he repeated the same actions, then, pushing forward, he trampled underfoot the land of the Cerdagne {near Andorra in the Pyrenees}. For several months he traversed this land in every direction, raping women, killing warriors, destroying fortresses, burning and pillaging everything, driving back the enemy who fled in disorder. He returned safe and sound, dragging behind him God alone knows how much booty. This is one of the most famous expeditions of the Muslims in Spain. In 223 <2 December 837>, Abd ar-Rahman b. al Hakam, sovereign of Spain, sent an army against Alava; it encamped near Hisn al-Gharat, which it besieged; it seized the booty that was found there, killed the inhabitants and withdrew, carrying off women and children as captives. In 231 <6 September 845>, a Muslim army advanced into Galicia on the territory of the infidels, where it pillaged and massacred everyone. In 246 <27 March 860>, Muhammad b. Abd ar-Rahman advanced with many troops and a large military

apparatus against the region of Pamplona. He reduced, ruined and ravaged this territory, where he pillaged and sowed death. (Ibn al-Athir, *Annals*, quoted in Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam*, 281-2.)

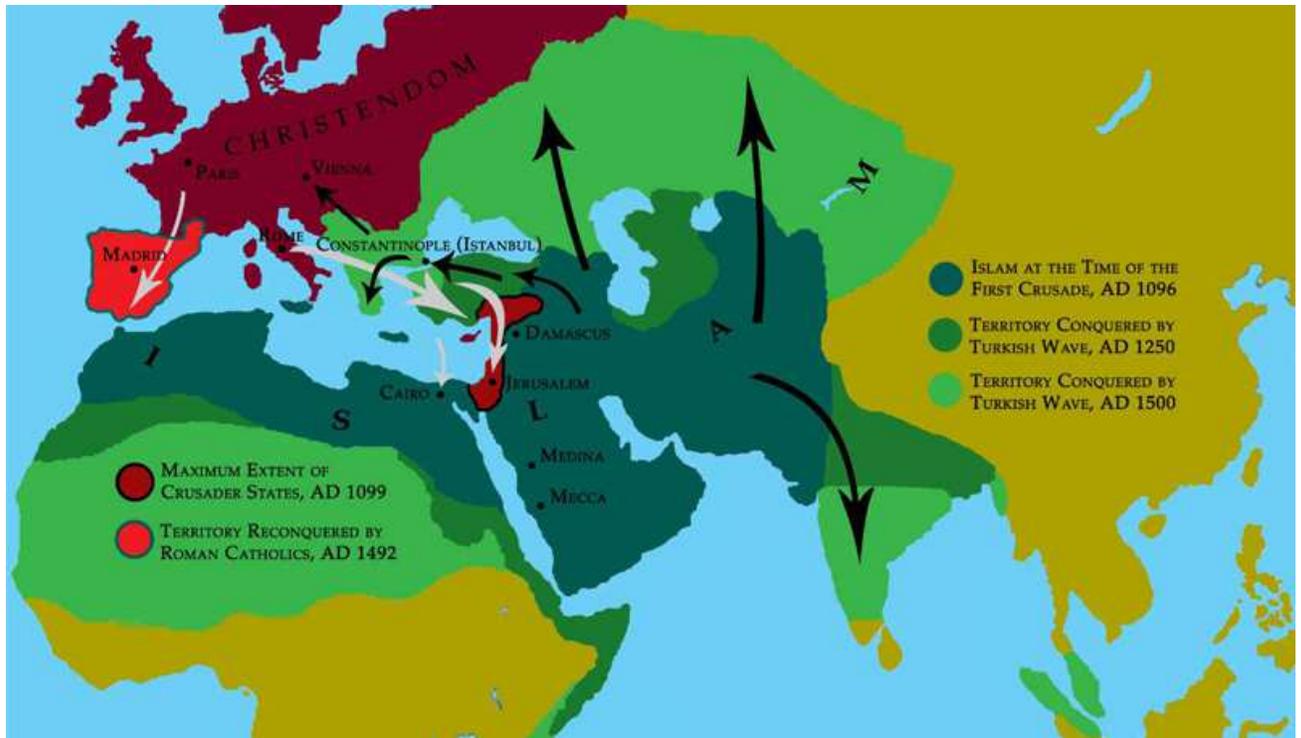
This first wave of jihad engulfed much of the Byzantine, Visigothic, Frankish, and Persian Empires and left the newborn Islamic Empire controlling territory from Southern France, south through Spain, east across North Africa to India, and north to Russia. Early in the second millennium AD, the Mongol invasion from the east greatly weakened the Islamic Empire and ended Arab predominance therein.

ii. The Second Major Wave of Jihad: the Turks, 1071-1683 AD

Some twenty-five years before the first Crusading army set out from central Europe for the Holy Land, the Turkish (Ottoman) armies began an assault on the Christian Byzantine Empire, which had ruled what is now Turkey since the Roman Empire's capital was moved to Constantinople in 325 AD. At the battle of Manzikert, in 1071, the Christian forces suffered a disastrous defeat, which left much of Anatolia (Turkey) open to invasion. This second wave of jihad was temporarily held up by the invading Latin Armies during the Crusades (see Islam 101 FAQs), but, by the beginning of the 14th century, the Turks were threatening Constantinople and Europe itself.

In the West, Roman Catholic armies were bit by bit forcing Muslim forces down the Iberian peninsula, until, in 1492, they were definitively expelled (the Reconquista). In Eastern Europe, however, Islam continued in the ascendant. One of the most significant engagements between the invading Muslims and the indigenous peoples of the region was the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, where the Turks annihilated a multinational army under the Serbian King, St. Lazar, though their progress into Europe was significantly slowed. After numerous attempts dating back to the seventh century, Constantinople, the jewel of Eastern Christendom, finally fell in 1453 to the armies of Sultan Mahomet II. Lest one ascribe the atrocities of the first wave of jihad to the "Arabness" of its perpetrators, the Turks showed they were fully capable of living up to the principles of the Quran and the Sunnah. Paul Fregosi in his book *Jihad* describes the scene following the final assault on Constantinople:

Several thousand of the survivors had taken refuge in the cathedral: nobles, servants, ordinary citizens, their wives and children, priests and nuns. They locked the huge doors, prayed, and waited. {Caliph} Mahomet {II} had given the troops free quarter. They raped, of course, the nuns being the first victims, and slaughtered. At least four thousand were killed before Mahomet stopped the massacre at noon. He ordered a muezzin {one who issues the call to prayer} to climb into the pulpit of St. Sophia and dedicate the building to Allah. It has remained a mosque ever since. Fifty thousand of the inhabitants, more than half the population, were rounded up and taken away as slaves. For months afterward, slaves were the cheapest commodity in the markets of Turkey. Mahomet asked that the body of the dead emperor be brought to him. Some Turkish soldiers found it in a pile of corpses and recognized Constantine {XI} by the golden eagles embroidered on his boots. The sultan ordered his head to be cut off and placed between the horse's legs under the equestrian bronze statue of the emperor Justinian. The head was later embalmed and sent around the chief cities of the Ottoman empire for the delectation of the citizens. Next, Mahomet ordered the Grand Duke Notaras, who had survived, be brought before him, asked him for the names and addresses of all the leading nobles, officials, and citizens, which Notaras gave him. He had them all arrested and decapitated. He sadistically bought from their owners {i.e., Muslim commanders} high-ranking prisoners who had been enslaved, for the pleasure of having them beheaded in front of him. (Fregosi, *Jihad*, 256-7.)



This second, Turkish wave of jihad reached its farthest extent at the failed sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1683, where in the latter instance the Muslim army under Kara Mustapha was thrown back by the Roman Catholics under the command of the Polish King, John Sobieski. In the decades that followed, the Ottomans were driven back down through the Balkans, though they were never ejected from the European continent entirely. Still, even while the imperial jihad faltered, Muslim land- and sea-borne razzias into Christian territory continued, and Christians were being abducted into slavery from as far away as Ireland into the 19th century.

e. Dhimmitude

Islam's persecution of non-Muslims is in no way limited to jihad, even though that is the basic relationship between the Muslim and non-Muslim world. After the jihad concludes in a given area with the conquest of infidel territory, the dhimma, or treaty of protection, may be granted to the conquered "People of the Book" — historically, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. The dhimma provides that the life and property of the infidel are exempted from jihad for as long as the Muslim rulers permit, which has generally meant for as long as the subject non-Muslims — the dhimmi — prove economically useful to the Islamic state. The Quran

spells out the payment of the jizya (poll- or head-tax; Sura 9:29), which is the most conspicuous means by which the Muslim overlords exploit the dhimmi. But the jizya is not merely economic in its function; it exists also to humiliate the dhimmi and impress on him the superiority of Islam. Al-Maghili, a fifteenth century Muslim theologian, explains:

On the day of payment {of the jizya} they {the dhimmi} shall be assembled in a public place like the suq {place of commerce}. They should be standing there waiting in the lowest and dirtiest place. The acting officials representing the Law shall be placed above them and shall adopt a threatening attitude so that it seems to them, as well as to others, that our object is to degrade them by pretending to take their possessions. They will realize that we are doing them a favor in accepting from them the jizya and letting them go free. (Al-Maghili, quoted in Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam*, 361.)

Islamic law codifies various other restrictions on the dhimmi, all of which derive from the Quran and the Sunnah. Several hundred years of Islamic thought on the right treatment of dhimmi peoples is summed up by Al-Damanhuri, a seventeenth century head of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the most prestigious center for learning in the Muslim world:

... just as the dhimmis are prohibited from building churches, other things also are prohibited to them. They must not assist an unbeliever against a Muslim ... raise the cross in an Islamic assemblage ... display banners on their own holidays; bear arms ... or keep them in their homes. Should they do anything of the sort, they must be punished, and the arms seized. ... The Companions [of the Prophet] agreed upon these points in order to demonstrate the abasement of the infidel and to protect the weak believer's faith. For if he sees them humbled, he will not be inclined toward their belief, which is not true if he sees them in power, pride, or luxury garb, as all this urges him to esteem them and incline toward them, in view of his own distress and poverty. Yet esteem for the unbeliever is unbelief. (Al-Damanhuri, quoted in Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam*, 382.)

The Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian peoples of the Middle East, North Africa, and much of Europe suffered under the oppressive strictures of the dhimma for centuries. The status of these dhimmi peoples is comparable in many ways to

that of former slaves in the post-bellum American South. Forbidden to construct houses of worship or repair extant ones, economically crippled by the jizya, socially humiliated, legally discriminated against, and generally kept in a permanent state of weakness and vulnerability by the Muslim overlords, it should not be surprising that their numbers dwindled, in many places to the point of extinction. The generally misunderstood decline of Islamic civilization over the past several centuries is easily explained by the demographic decline of the dhimmi populations, which had provided the principle engines of technical and administrative competence.

Should the dhimmi violate the conditions of the dhimma — perhaps through practicing his own religion indiscreetly or failing to show adequate deference to a Muslim — then the jihad resumes. At various times in Islamic history, dhimmi peoples rose above their subjected status, and this was often the occasion for violent reprisals by Muslim populations who believed them to have violated the terms of the dhimma. Medieval Andalusia (Moorish Spain) is often pointed out by Muslim apologists as a kind of multicultural wonderland, in which Jews and Christians were permitted by the Islamic government to rise through the ranks of learning and government administration. What we are not told, however, is that this relaxation of the disabilities resulted in widespread rioting on the part of the Muslim populace that killed hundreds of dhimmis, mainly Jews. By refusing to convert to Islam and straying from the traditional constraints of the dhimma (even at the behest of the Islamic government, which was in need of capable manpower), the dhimmi had implicitly chosen the only other option permitted by the Quran: death.

f. Jihad in the Modern Era

Following its defeat at the walls of Vienna in 1683, Islam entered a period of strategic decline in which it was increasingly dominated by the rising European colonial powers. Due to its material weakness vis-à-vis the West, dar al-Islam was unable to prosecute large-scale military campaigns into infidel territory. The Islamic Empire, then ruled by the Ottoman Turks, was reduced to fending off the increasingly predatory European powers.

In 1856, Western pressure compelled the Ottoman government to suspend the dhimma under which the Empire's non-Muslim subjects labored. This provided

hitherto unknown opportunities for social and personal improvement by the former dhimmis, but it also fomented resentment by orthodox Muslims who saw this as a violation of the Sharia and their Allah-given superiority over unbelievers.

By the late 19th century, tensions among the European subjects of the Empire broke out into the open when the Ottoman government massacred 30,000 Bulgarians in 1876 for allegedly rebelling against Ottoman rule. Following Western intervention that resulted in Bulgarian independence, the Ottoman government and its Muslim subjects were increasingly nervous about other non-Muslim groups seeking independence.

It was in this atmosphere that the first stage of the Armenian genocide took place in 1896 with the slaughter of some 250,000 Armenians. Both civilians and military personnel took place in the massacres. Peter Balakian, in his book, *The Burning Tigris*, documents the whole horrific story. But the massacres of the 1890s were only the prelude to the much larger holocaust of 1915, which claimed some 1.5 million lives. While various factors contributed to the slaughter, there is no mistaking that the massacres were nothing other than a jihad waged against the Armenians, no longer protected as they were by the dhimma. In 1914, as the Ottoman Empire entered World War I on the side of the central powers, an official anti-Christian jihad was proclaimed.

To promote the idea of jihad, the sheikh-ul-Islam's {the most senior religious leader in the Ottoman Empire} published proclamation summoned the Muslim world to arise and massacre its Christian oppressors. "Oh Moslems," the document read, "Ye who are smitten with happiness and are on the verge of sacrificing your life and your good for the cause of right, and of braving perils, gather now around the Imperial throne." In the *Ikdam*, the Turkish newspaper that had just passed into German ownership, the idea of jihad was underscored: "The deeds of our enemies have brought down the wrath of God. A gleam of hope has appeared. All Mohammedans, young and old, men, women, and children must fulfill their duty. ... If we do it, the deliverance of the subjected Mohammedan kingdoms is assured." ... "He who kills even one unbeliever," one pamphlet read, "of those who rule over us, whether he does it secretly or openly, shall be rewarded by God." (quoted in Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*, 169-70.)

The anti-Christian jihad culminated in 1922 at Smyrna, on the Mediterranean coast, where 150,000 Greek Christians were massacred by the Turkish army under the indifferent eye of Allied warships. All in, from 1896-1923, some 2.5 million Christians were killed, the first modern genocide, which to this day is denied by the Turkish government.

Since the breakup of the Islamic Empire following World War I, various jihads have been fought around the globe by the independent Muslim nations and sub-state jihadist groups. The most sustained effort has been directed against Israel, which has committed the unpardonable sin of rebuilding dar al-harb on land formerly a part of dar al-Islam. Other prominent jihads include that fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan, the Muslim Bosnians against the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, the Muslim Albanians against the Serbs in Kosovo, and the Chechens against the Russians in the Caucasus. Jihads have also been waged throughout northern Africa, the Philippines, Thailand, Kashmir, and a host of other places throughout the world. In addition, the overwhelming majority of terrorist attacks around the world have been committed by Muslims, including, of course, the spectacular attacks of 9/11/01 (USA), 3/11/04 (Spain), and 7/7/05 (UK). (For a more comprehensive list of Muslim attacks, visit www.thereligionofpeace.com.)

The fact is, the percentage of conflicts in the world today that do not include Islam is pretty small. Islam is making a comeback.

3. Conclusion

The chief barrier today to a better understanding of Islam — apart, perhaps, from outright fear — is sloppy language. Let us take, to start with, the much-vaunted “war on terror.” Upon scrutiny, the phrase “war on terror” makes as much sense as a war on “blitzkrieg,” “bullets,” or “strategic bombing.” The “war on terror” implies that it is perfectly fine if the enemy seeks to destroy us — and, indeed, succeeds in doing so — as long as he does not employ “terror” in the process.

“Terrorism,” it should be obvious, is a tactic or stratagem used to advance a goal; it is the goal of Islamic terrorism that we must come to understand, and this logically requires an understanding of Islam.

As we have seen, contrary to the widespread insistence that true Islam is pacific even if a handful of its adherents are violent, the Islamic sources make clear that engaging in violence against non-Muslims is a central and indispensable principle to Islam. Islam is less a personal faith than a political ideology that exists in a fundamental and permanent state of war with non-Islamic civilizations, cultures, and individuals. The Islamic holy texts outline a social, governmental, and economic system for all mankind. Those cultures and individuals who do not submit to Islamic governance exist in an ipso facto state of rebellion with Allah and must be forcibly brought into submission. The misbegotten term “Islamofascism” is wholly redundant: Islam itself is a kind of fascism that achieves its full and proper form only when it assumes the powers of the state.

The spectacular acts of Islamic terrorism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries are but the most recent manifestation of a global war of conquest that Islam has been waging since the days of the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th Century AD and that continues apace today. This is the simple, glaring truth that is staring the world today in the face — and which has stared it in the face numerous times in the past — but which it seems few today are willing to contemplate.

It is important to realize that we have been talking about Islam — not Islamic “fundamentalism,” “extremism,” “fanaticism,” “Islamofascism,” or “Islamism,” but Islam proper, Islam in its orthodox form as it has been understood and practiced by right-believing Muslims from the time of Muhammad to the present. The mounting episodes of Islamic terrorism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries are due largely to the geostrategic changes following the end of the Cold War and the growing technical options available to terrorists.

With the collapse of Soviet hegemony over much of the Muslim world, coupled with the burgeoning wealth of the Muslim oil-producing countries, the Muslim world increasingly possesses the freedom and means to support jihad around the globe. In short, the reason that Muslims are once again waging war against the non-Muslim world is because they can.

It is paramount to note, however, that, even if no major terrorist attack ever occurs on Western soil again, Islam still poses a mortal danger to the West. A halt to terrorism would simply mean a change in Islam’s tactics — perhaps indicating a longer-term approach that would allow Muslim immigration and

higher birth rates to bring Islam closer to victory before the next round of violence. It cannot be overemphasized that Muslim terrorism is a symptom of Islam that may increase or decrease in intensity while Islam proper remains permanently hostile.

Muhammad Taqi Partovi Samzevari, in his “Future of the Islamic Movement” (1986), sums up the Islamic worldview.

Our own Prophet ... was a general, a statesman, an administrator, an economist, a jurist and a first-class manager all in one. ... In the Qur’an’s historic vision Allah’s support and the revolutionary struggle of the people must come together, so that Satanic rulers are brought down and put to death. A people that is not prepared to kill and to die in order to create a just society cannot expect any support from Allah. The Almighty has promised us that the day will come when the whole of mankind will live united under the banner of Islam, when the sign of the Crescent, the symbol of Muhammad, will be supreme everywhere. ... But that day must be hastened through our Jihad, through our readiness to offer our lives and to shed the unclean blood of those who do not see the light brought from the Heavens by Muhammad in his mi’raj {“nocturnal voyages to the ‘court’ of Allah”}. ... It is Allah who puts the gun in our hand. But we cannot expect Him to pull the trigger as well simply because we are faint-hearted.

It must be emphasized that all of the analysis provided here derives from the Islamic sources themselves and is not the product of critical Western scholarship. (Indeed, most modern Western scholarship of Islam is hardly “critical” in any meaningful sense.) It is Islam’s self-interpretation that necessitates and glorifies violence, not any foreign interpretation of it.

4. Frequently Asked Questions

There are a handful of questions that invariably arise when the point is made that Islam is violent. These questions for the most part are misleading or irrelevant and do not contest the actual evidence or arguments that violence is inherent to Islam. Nonetheless, they have proven rhetorically effective in deflecting serious scrutiny from Islam, and so I deal with some of them here.

a. What about the Crusades?

The obvious response to this question is, “Well, what about them?” Violence committed in the name of other religions is logically unconnected to the question of whether Islam is violent. But, by mentioning the Crusades, the hope of the Islamic apologist is to draw attention away from Islamic violence and paint religions in general as morally equivalent.

In both the Western academia and media as well as in the Islamic world, the Crusades are viewed as wars of aggression fought by bloody-minded Christians against peaceful Muslims. While the Crusades were certainly bloody, they are more accurately understood as a belated Western response to centuries of jihad than as an unprovoked, unilateral attack. Muslim rule in the Holy Land began in the second half of the 7th century during the Arab wave of jihad with the conquests of Damascus and Jerusalem by the second “rightly-guided Caliph,” Umar. After the initial bloody jihad, Christian and Jewish life there was tolerated within the strictures of the dhimma and the Muslim Arabs generally permitted Christians abroad to continue to make pilgrimage to their holy sites, a practice which proved lucrative for the Muslim state. In the 11th century, the relatively benign Arab administration of the Holy Land was replaced with that of Seljuk Turks, due to civil war in the Islamic Empire. Throughout the latter half of the 11th century, the Turks waged war against the Christian Byzantine Empire and pushed it back from its strongholds in Antioch and Anatolia (now Turkey). In 1071, Byzantine forces suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Manzikert in what is now Eastern Turkey. The Turks resumed the jihad in the Holy Land, abusing, robbing, enslaving, and killing Christians there and throughout Asia Minor. They threatened to cut off Christendom from its holiest site, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, rebuilt under Byzantine stewardship after it was destroyed by Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah in 1009.

It was in this context of a renewed jihad in the Middle East that the Roman Pope, Urban II, issued a call in 1095 for Western Christians to come to the aid of their Eastern cousins (and seems to have harbored the hope of claiming Jerusalem for the Papacy after the Great Schism with Eastern Christianity in 1054). This “armed pilgrimage,” in which numerous civilians as well as soldiers took part, would eventually become known years later as the First Crusade. The idea of a “crusade” as we now understand that term, i.e., a Christian “holy war,” developed years later with the rise of such organizations as the Knights Templar that made “crusading” a way of life. It worth noting that the most ardent Crusaders, the

Franks, were exactly those who had faced jihad and razzias for centuries along the Franco-Spanish border and knew better than most the horrors to which Muslims subjected Christians. At the time of the First Crusade, the populations of Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine, though ruled by Muslims, were still overwhelmingly Christian. The “Crusading” campaigns of the Western Christian armies were justified at the time as a war liberating the Eastern Christians, whose population, lands, and culture had been devastated by centuries of jihad and dhimmitude. Conquering territory for God in the mode of jihad was an alien idea to Christianity and it should not be surprising that it eventually died out in the West and never gained ascendancy in the East.

Following the very bloody capture of Jerusalem in 1099 by the Latin armies and the establishment of the Crusader States in Edessa, Antioch, and Jerusalem, the Muslim and Christian forces fought a see-saw series of wars, in which both parties were guilty of the usual gamut of wartime immorality. Over time, even with reinforcing Crusades waged from Europe, the Crusader States, strung out on precarious lines of communication, slowly succumbed to superior Muslim power. In 1271, the last Christian citadel, Antioch, fell to the Muslims. No longer having to divert forces to subdue the Christian beachhead on the Eastern Mediterranean, the Muslims regrouped for a 400-year-long jihad against Southern and Eastern Europe, which twice reached as far as Vienna before it was halted. In geostrategic terms, the Crusades can be viewed as an attempt by the West to forestall its own destruction at the hands of Islamic jihad by carrying the fight to the enemy. It worked for a while.

Significantly, while the West has for some time now lamented the Crusades as mistaken, there has never been any mention from any serious Islamic authority of regret for the centuries and centuries of jihad and dhimmitude perpetrated against other societies. But this is hardly surprising: while religious violence contradicts the fundamentals of Christianity, religious violence is written into Islam’s DNA.

b. If Islam is violent, why are so many Muslims peaceful?

This question is a bit like asking, “If Christianity teaches humility, tolerance, and forgiveness, why are so many Christians arrogant, intolerant, and vindictive?” The answer in both cases is obvious: in any religion or ideology there will be

many who profess, but do not practice, its tenets. Just as it is often easier for a Christian to hit back, play holier-than-thou, or disdain others, so it is often easier for a Muslim to stay at home rather than embark on jihad. Hypocrites are everywhere.

Furthermore, there are also people who do not really understand their own faith and so act outside of its prescribed boundaries. In Islam, there are likely many Muslims who do not really understand their religion thanks to the importance of reciting the Quran in Arabic but not having to understand it. It is the words and sounds of the Quran that attract Allah's merciful attention rather than Quranic knowledge on the part of the supplicant. Especially in the West, Muslims here are more likely to be attracted by Western ways (which explains why they are here) and less likely to act violently against the society to which they may have fled from an Islamic tyranny abroad.

However, in any given social context, as Islam takes greater root — increasing numbers of followers, the construction of more mosques and “cultural centers,” etc. — the greater the likelihood that some number of its adherents will take its violent precepts seriously. This is the problem that the West faces today.

c. What about the violent passages in the Bible?

First, violent Biblical passages are irrelevant to the question of whether Islam is violent.

Second, the violent passages in the Bible certainly do not amount to a standing order to commit violence against the rest of the world. Unlike the Quran, the Bible is a huge collection of documents written by different people at different times in different contexts, which allows for much greater interpretative freedom. The Quran, on the other hand, comes exclusively from one source: Muhammad. It is through the life of Muhammad that the Quran must be understood, as the Quran itself says. His wars and killings both reflect and inform the meaning of the Quran. Furthermore, the strict literalism of the Quran means that there is no room for interpretation when it comes to its violent injunctions. As it is through the example of Christ, the “Prince of Peace,” that Christianity interprets its scriptures, so it is through the example of the warlord and despot Muhammad that Muslims understand the Quran.

d. Could an Islamic “Reformation” pacify Islam?

As should be plain to anyone who has examined the Islamic sources, to take the violence out of Islam would require it to jettison two things: the Quran as the word of Allah and Muhammad as Allah’s prophet. In other words, to pacify Islam would require its transformation into something that it is not. The Western Christian Reformation, that is often used as an example, was an attempt (successful or not) to recover the essence of Christianity, namely, the example and teachings of Christ and the Apostles. Trying to get back to the example of Muhammad would have very different consequences. Indeed, one may say that Islam is today going through its “Reformation” with the increasing jihadist activity around the globe. Today, Muslims of the Salafi (“early generations”) school are doing exactly that in focusing on the life of Muhammad and his early successors. These reformers are known to their detractors by the derogative term Wahhabi. Drawing their inspiration from Muhammad and the Quran, they are invariably disposed to violence. The unhappy fact is that Islam today is what it has been fourteen centuries: violent, intolerant, and expansionary. It is folly to think that we, in the course of a few years or decades, are going to be able to change the basic world outlook of a foreign civilization. Islam’s violent nature must be accepted as given; only then will we be able to come up with appropriate policy responses that can improve our chances of survival.

e. What about the history of Western colonialism in the Islamic world?

Following the defeat of the Ottoman army outside Vienna on September 11, 1683 by Polish forces, Islam went into a period of strategic decline in which it was overwhelmingly dominated by the European powers. Much of dar al-Islam was colonized by the European powers who employed their superior technology and exploited the rivalries within the Muslim world to establish colonial rule.

While many of the practices of the Western imperial powers in the governance of their colonies were clearly unjust, it is utterly unwarranted to regard Western imperialism — as it often is — as an endemic criminal enterprise that is the basis of modern resentment against the West. It was only due to the assertive role of the Western powers that modern nation-states such as India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa, Zimbabwe, etc. came to exist in the first place. Without Western

organization, these areas would have likely remained chaotic and tribal as they had existed for centuries.

When one looks at the post-colonial world, it is apparent that the most successful post-colonial nations have a common attribute: they are not Muslim. The United States, Australia, Hong Kong, Israel, India, and the South American nations clearly outshine their Muslim-majority post-colonial counterparts — Iraq, Algeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, etc. — by just about any standard.

f. How can a violent political ideology be the second-largest and fastest-growing religion on earth?

It should not be surprising that a violent political ideology is proving so attractive to much of the world. The attractive power of fascist ideas has been proven through history. Islam combines the interior comfort provided by religious faith with the outward power of a world-transforming political ideology. Like the revolutionary violence of Communism, jihad offers an altruistic justification for waging death and destruction. Such an ideology will naturally draw to it violent-minded people while encouraging the non-violent to take up arms themselves or support violence indirectly. Because something is popular hardly makes it benign.

Furthermore, the areas in which Islam is growing most rapidly, such as Western Europe, have been largely denuded of their religious and cultural heritage, which leaves Islam as the only vibrant ideology available to those in search of meaning.

g. Is it fair to paint all Islamic schools of thought as violent?

Islamic apologists often point out that Islam is not a monolith and that there are differences of opinion among the different Islamic schools of thought. That is true, but, while there are differences, there are also common elements. Just as Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Christians differ on many aspects of Christianity, still they accept important common elements. So it is with Islam. One of the common elements to all Islamic schools of thought is jihad, understood as the obligation of the Ummah to conquer and subdue the world in the name of Allah and rule it under Sharia law. The four Sunni Madhhabs (schools of fiqh [Islamic religious jurisprudence]) — Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali — all

agree that there is a collective obligation on Muslims to make war on the rest of the world. Furthermore, even the schools of thought outside Sunni orthodoxy, including Sufism and the Jafari (Shia) school, agree on the necessity of jihad. When it comes to matters of jihad, the different schools disagree on such questions as whether infidels must first be asked to convert to Islam before hostilities may begin (Osama bin Laden asked America to convert before Al-Qaeda's attacks); how plunder should be distributed among victorious jihadists; whether a long-term Fabian strategy against dar al-harb is preferable to an all-out frontal attack; etc.

h. What about the great achievements of Islamic civilization through history?

Islamic achievements in the fields of art, literature, science, medicine, etc. in no way refute the fact that Islam is intrinsically violent. Roman and Greek civilizations produced many great achievements in these fields as well, but also cultivated powerful traditions of violence. While giving the world the brilliance of Virgil and Horace, Rome was also a home to gladiatorial combat, the slaughter of Christians, and, at times, rampant militarism.

Furthermore, the achievements of Islamic civilization are pretty modest given its 1300 year history when compared to Western, Hindu, or Confucian civilizations. Many Islamic achievements were in fact the result of non-Muslims living within the Islamic Empire or of recent converts to Islam. One of the greatest Islamic thinkers, Averroes, ran afoul of Islamic orthodoxy through his study of non-Islamic (Greek) philosophy and his preference for Western modes of thought. Once the dhimmi populations of the Empire dwindled toward the middle of the second millennium AD, Islam began its social and cultural "decline."

5. Glossary of Terms

Allah: "God"; Arabic Christians also worship "Allah," but an Allah of a very different sort. Allahu Akhbar: "God is Great (-est)"; term of praise; war cry of Muslims.

AH: "after Hijra"; the Islamic calendar's system of dating; employs lunar rather than solar years; as of January 2007, we are in AH 1428.

Ansar: “aiders” or “helpers”; Arabian tribesmen allied with Muhammad and the early Muslims.

Badr: first significant battle fought by Muhammad and the Muslims against the Quraish tribe of Mecca.

Caliph: title of the ruler or leader of the Umma (global Muslim community); the head of the former Islamic Empire; the title was abolished by Kemal Attaturk in 1924 following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the founding of modern Turkey.

dar al-Islam: “House (Realm) of Islam”; Islamic territory ruled by Sharia law

dar al-harb: “House (Realm) of War”: territory ruled by infidels

dar al-sulh: “House (Realm) of Truce”: territory ruled by infidels but allied with Islam; territory ruled by Muslims but not under Sharia law

Dhimma: the pact of protection extended to non-slave “People of the Book”, usually Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, which permitted them to remain nominally free under Muslim rule.

dhimmi: “protected”; people under the protection of the dhimma.

dhimmitude: word coined by historian Bat Ye’or to describe the status of dhimmi peoples

hadith: “report”; any of thousands of episodes from the life of Muhammad transmitted orally until written down in the eighth century AD; sahih (reliable or sound) hadiths are second only to the Quran in authority.

Hijra: “emigration”; Muhammad’s flight from Mecca to Medina (Yathrib) in AD 622.

Islam: “submission” or “surrender.”

jizya: the poll or head tax prescribed by Sura 9:29 of the Quran to be paid by Christians and Jews in Muslim-held territory.

Kaba: “cube”; the Meccan temple in which numerous pagan idols were housed before Muhammad’s conquest of Mecca in AD 632, which is still the most venerated object in Islam; the Kaba’s cornerstone, which is believed to have fallen from heaven, is the stone on which Abraham was to sacrifice his son, Ishmael (not Isaac).

Mecca: holiest city of Islam; place of Muhammad’s birth in AD 570; its Great Mosque contains the Kaba stone; early period in Muhammad’s life where more peaceful verses of the Quran were revealed; site of Muhammad’s victory over the Quraish in AD 630.

Medina: “city,” short for “city of the Prophet”; second holiest city of Islam; destination of Muhammad’s Hijra (emigration) in AD 622; later period in Muhammad’s life where more violent verses of the Quran were revealed; site of third major battle fought by Muhammad against the Quraish tribe from Mecca; formerly called Yathrib.

Muhammad: “the praised one.”

Muslim: one who submits.

Quran (Kuran, Qur'an, etc.): “recitation”; according to Islam, the compiled verbatim words of Allah as dictated by Muhammad.

razzia: “raid”; acts of piracy on land or sea by Muslims against infidels

Sira: “life”; abbreviation of Sirat Rasul Allah, or “Life of the Prophet of God”; the canonical biography of the Prophet Muhammad written in the eighth century by Ibn Ishaq and later edited by Ibn Hisham; modern translation by Alfred Guillaume.

Sunnah: the “Way” of the Prophet Muhammad; includes his teachings, traditions, and example.

Sura: a chapter of the Quran; Quranic passages are cited as Sura number:verse number, e.g., 9:5.

Uhud: second major battle fought by Muhammad against the Quraish tribe of Mecca.

Umar: second “rightly-guided” Caliph; ruled AD 634–44, succeeded Abu Bakr; conquered the Holy Land.

Umma (ummah): the global Muslim community; the body of Muslim faithful.

Uthman: third “rightly-guided” Caliph; ruled AD 644–56, succeeded Umar; compiled the Quran in book form.

Yathrib: city to which Muhammad made the Hijra (emigration) in AD 622/AH 1; renamed Medina.

6. Further Resources

Online

Center for the Study of Political Islam

Chronicles Magazine

Dhimmi.org

FaithFreedom.org

HistoryofJihad.com

U Michigan’s searchable online version of the Quran translated by Shakir.

USC’s Muslim Students Association’s website with multiple searchable translations of the Quran and hadiths.

Islam: What the West Needs to Know homepage.

Canadian Muslim website with various writings on Islamic doctrine and events in the Muslim world.

