



Whither Islam? Religion of Peace or Religion of War?

“I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them.”

— *Koran (8:15)*



Every holy book contains some very unholy words, they say. If you presented certain select verses from the Bible in isolation, it would seem equally violent, they say. The problem with Islam is a few misled miscreants and misinterpretation, they say.

The question is, do misinterpretations of the Islamic canon explain the extremist Muslims?

Or do they explain the “moderate Muslims”?

Turkish journalist Uzay Bulut certainly has a very definite opinion. Writing a piece entitled “Islamic Terrorism: The Taboo Topic” at the Gatestone Institute recently, she [states](#) bluntly, “Why should anyone be afraid of a ‘religion of peace’? Because some of its supporters threaten to kill you, and often do.”

In response, the less politically correct but optimistic may say that Islam needs a reformation, a new understanding of old texts. Much as with the manipulation of our Constitution, it seems they want the Islamic canon to become “living documents.” But also as with our Constitution, that canon had authors who meant to say something. And since original intent — the truth of a thing, whether or not that thing expresses Truth — will always have power, it behooves us to understand what that intent is.

Bulut maintains that “violence and domination” are “deeply rooted ... and sanctioned with promises of rewards” in Islam, and, consequently, “fundamentalists will always find people to excite and people to persecute.” She continues, “It is a magnificent ready-made outlet for people who wish to be violent and dominate, or identify with a cause bigger than themselves. That is why Islamic theology, ideology and goals desperately need to be discussed. They deeply affect the life choices most Muslims make.” But are Islamic texts really more violent than Judaic and Christian ones?

According to Bill Warner, director of the Center for the Study of Political Islam, the answer is a resounding yes. Writing at *American Thinker* in 2009, he [provided](#) some hard statistics on the amount of text devoted to jihad and political violence in the Islamic canon, and contrasted it with the Bible.

In the Koran, nine percent of the text is devoted to jihad. Yet the Koran is only 16 percent of the Islamic canon, which also comprises the Sira and Hadith. Known together as the Sunna, these two books record what Mohammed did and said and, as Warner writes, form “the perfect pattern of all Islamic behavior.”

And what is that pattern? In the Hadith, 21 percent of the text is devoted to jihad. And Sira?

A whopping 67 percent.

In all three books (known as the “Trilogy”) taken together, 31 percent of the words are devoted to jihad.

And what of the “equally violent” Bible? Warner tells us that 5.6 percent of the Old Testament and 0 percent of the New Testament are devoted to political violence. In terms of word count, this works out



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 3, 2015

to 0 in the latter and 34,039 in the Hebrew Bible. And the Islamic Trilogy?

It comes in at 327,547 — 9.6 times greater than the Old Testament.

Yet even this doesn't tell the whole tale. As Warner writes:

The real problem goes far beyond the quantitative measurement of ten times as much violent material; there is also the qualitative measurement. The political violence of the Koran is eternal and universal. The political violence of the Bible was for that particular historical time and place. This is the vast difference between Islam and other ideologies. The violence remains a constant threat to all non-Islamic cultures, now and into the future. Islam is not analogous to Christianity and Judaism in any practical way. Beyond the one-god doctrine, Islam is unique unto itself.

Warner sums up this uniqueness, writing, "The Koran gives the great vision of jihad — world conquest by the political process. The Sira is a strategic manual, and the Hadith is a tactical manual, of jihad."

One thing Islam does share with Christianity is the provision of the ultimate role model. Christians call Jesus Lord and Savior while Muslims have the Prophet Mohammed, whom they often exalt as "the Perfect Man." As Warner reported, "The Koran says 91 different times that Mohammed is the perfect pattern of life. It is much more important to know Mohammed than the Koran." And how do you know Mohammed? Through the books recording what he "did and said," the Sira and Hadith.

The books that constitute 84 percent of the Islamic canon.

The books that contain the vast majority of the jihadist material.

So mirroring Christians, Muslims might ask "What would Mohammed do"? But his triumphs were very different from those of Jesus, whose kingdom is "not of this world." As Warner tells us, "Mohammed averaged an event of violence every six weeks for the last nine years of his life." Mohammed ordered 100 military campaigns and violent acts, more than 20 of which he participated in himself.

Despite containing only a small minority of the jihadist content, the Koran, writes Bulut, contains "at least 109 verses calling on Muslims to wage war with nonbelievers for the sake of Islam." She elaborates:

Such teachings in Islam sanction slaughter against three groups:

Muslims who refuse to "fight in the way of Allah" are hypocrites and they are to be massacred (3:167)

People with "diseased hearts" — including Jews and Christians (5:51-52; 33:61-62).

"Alarmists," those who speak out against Islam, should also be slain (33:62).

This martial mentality helps explain the Muslims' rapid conquests, initiated by Mohammed. At the time of Islam's birth, 622 A.D., Christianity was the dominant religion in the Middle East and North Africa; in fact, the latter at the sixth-century's turn had more Christians than Europe. This would soon change. In 630 already, the Muslim hordes began conquering the old Christian lands. And a little more than a century later, they were approximately 120 miles from Paris, having seized much of Iberia (present-day Spain and Portugal) and part of Gaul (now France), at which point they were roundly defeated by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours in 732. But there would be other conquests, some of which would spark, in 1095, that great defense of Western civilization [known as the Crusades](#). And the Muslims would twice, in 1529 and 1683, reach the [gates of Vienna](#).



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But perhaps the biggest impediment precluding moderns from an honest comparison of religions isn't a lack of historical or statistical information, but dogma. There is this idea, thoroughly ingrained, that we should view all religions as equally valid — or, as moderns are wont to say, equally invalid. What they don't realize is that if Islam is morally equal to Christianity, libertarianism is morally equal to communism. This doesn't mean what you think.

What makes ideologies morally different? It's that they espouse different values. Different religions, however, also espouse different values; therefore, not all religions can be morally equal unless all values are so. This is the notion known as "moral relativism." But if all values are equal, then ideologies' espousal of different values is not a moral difference at all. And then no ism can be better than any other ism, no matter what precedes it.

Applying this relativism consistently, we'd have to conclude that even the Islamic State (ISIL) — the eighth-century moral atavists now brutalizing and beheading their way through Iraq and Syria — can be neither better nor worse than we are. But if we're not moral relativists and can judge moral atavists, then we might ask, was Barack Obama correct in saying, "ISIL is not Islamic"?

Or is ISIL correct in thinking it represents true Islam?



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