

# Living Oracles

“. . . and he received living oracles to pass on to you” (Acts 7:38)

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## Radical Islam or Just Plain Islam?

*Kerry Duke*

I attended an interesting conference recently at a nearby university. The featured speaker, who referred to himself as a “committed Christian,” spoke of the common ground Christians and Muslims share and urged them to be tolerant and respectful of each other. A Muslim scholar followed him and proceeded to preach a short sermon on the beauty and love of Islam. One of the verses he quoted from the Koran is a favorite of Muslims when they address a Western audience: “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (2:256). He tried to leave the same impression that the media leaves: that Islam is a religion, a peaceable religion, and one that has been hijacked by radicals and extremists who have given it a bad name. Fortunately, there was a question and answer session after the speeches, and his true colors began to show when he was pounded with questions from the audience about the real nature of his religion.

### **Not Just A Religion**

Those who think Islam is just another religion like Hinduism or Buddhism are not seeing this movement for what it really is. Islam is not just a religion. It is not even pri-

marily a religion. It is a system of government, a political ideology which aims to control not only the expression of religion but every phase of human life. In Islamic teaching, there is no such thing as separation of church and state, or, in their case, mosque and state. “Islam” means submission. Its goal is to bring the world into subjection to its teaching. Contrary to Muslim claims that true Islam does not use force, the basic texts of Islam show that it promotes hate-filled, brutal violence toward unbelievers.

Shariah is the comprehensive term for the Islamic legal system that extends to every part of a Muslim’s life. It is derived from the Koran and the sunna, the words and deeds of Muhammed. These sunna are found in the hadith or traditions of Muhammed and the sira or life of Muhammed. When you talk to someone who says Islam is a peaceful religion that is being misrepresented, ask him if he has read any of these sources. You might even ask if he has even heard of them. Before a man defends a religion like Islam, he should know what he is talking about. Tragically, a frightening number of Americans believe Islam is peaceable, not dangerous. In Cookeville, Tennessee a film warning of the threat of shariah law was shown at the courthouse. Over 50 protestors, many of whom were young, stood outside chanting

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**Living Oracles** refuses to be politically oriented or motivated and fully intends to declare and defend the truth of God's Word regardless of the opposition.

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Our only aim is to help our fellowman know the Lord's way so that he may believe and obey the truth and be happy here and in the hereafter.

"Time is filled with swift transition—Naught of earth unmoved can stand—Build your hopes on things eternal, Hold to God's unchanging hand."

**MALCOLM L. HILL,  
EDITOR**

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"Peace" and holding signs reading "Stop the Hate!" One girl who was protesting was asked, "Do you know what shariah is?" Her not-so-surprising answer was "No." How this reminds us of the conspiracy of Absalom! "And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything" (II Sam. 15:11). Thousands died because they defended something they did not understand, and thousands more will die in America if people continue to listen to talk show hosts, reporters, and politicians who do not understand what Islam really is.

**The Koran**

The teaching of the Koran alone should be enough to convince anyone that Islam is not the tolerant religion some try to make it out to be. The following verses are only a few examples.

"Fighting is prescribed upon you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing that is good for you..." (2:216)

"Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil: so fight ye against the friends of Satan..." (4:76)

"The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land." (5:33)

"Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides..." (8:60)

"But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, and beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every strategem (of war)..." (9:5)

"Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the last day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, from among the people of the Book, until they pay the jizyah with willing submission and feel themselves subdued." (9:29)

"Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; at length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a

bond firmly (on them)...” (47:4)

“You’re taking those verses out of context!” That is the common retort made by Muslims and their sympathizers. The proper response to this charge is: what context? The Koran is not a historical account. It is not a logically written case for Islam. It has no order of thought. This book is simply the bombastic threats and empty promises of the fanatical followers of a vicious warlord who called himself a prophet. There is little context to anything in the Koran—historical, logical, or conceptual.

### The Life of Muhammed

There is, however, a broader context of these passages, and that setting is even more incriminating than the Koranic verses themselves. The backdrop to the Koran is found in the hadith and the sira of Muhammed. There we find the real context of the Koran and the true nature of the militaristic movement that masquerades as a religion. The life of Muhammed as a leader can be divided into two periods. The first period was his life in Mecca. There he claimed the angel Gabriel spoke to him and commissioned him to be a prophet (although at first Muhammed didn’t know if the message was from God or from demons). In Mecca he was a largely unsuccessful religious leader of a new sect. He was persecuted for his teaching and had only 150 followers after 13 years of effort. Opposition against him grew until he had to flee the city. He travelled to Medina where he had been asked to unite factions in the city. There he was welcomed with open arms. There he became not just a religious icon but also a successful political and military leader. From his newfound base he launched relentless raids on caravans traveling to his Meccan home, plundering and killing to avenge himself of the ill treatment the people of Mecca had shown him.

One of the recognized Islamic sources on Muhammed’s life was written by Ibn Ishaq who was born about 85 years after Muhammed fled Mecca to go to Medina.<sup>1</sup> His book *The Life of Muhammed* is 800 pages long (I am referring to Alfred Guillaume’s English translation). A little over 100 pages are devoted to his



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early life before he became a “prophet.” About the same space is given to describe his 13 years of preaching and work in Mecca. The third part discusses what he did in Medina, and this section is almost 600 pages long. It is in this last section that we read jihad in all its original horror. Ishaq says Muhammed took part personally in 27 raids. Obviously, he was more of a warlord in Medina than he was a religious figure. In one particularly gruesome scene from this period, Ishaq describes Muhammed’s campaign against the last Jewish tribe in Medina, the Bin Qurayza. Claiming that the angel Gabriel had appeared to him and told him to attack, Muhammed gathered his forces and beseiged them for 25 days “until they were sore pressed and God cast terror into their hearts.” When his enemies surrendered, he brought them out to the marketplace of Medina and dug trenches. “Then he sent for them and struck off their heads in those trenches as they were brought out to him in batches...There were 600 or 700 in all, though some put the figure as high as 800 or 900.”<sup>2</sup>

To Muslims Muhammed is the model of human behavior, the perfect example to follow. They are taught not just to listen to what he said but also to imitate what he did. It should not surprise us that Muslims spread Islam through terrorism. Their founder was a terrorist.

### Islamic Traditions

In the hadith we find the same theme of violence against unbelievers in the name of Allah. The following examples are from Al-Bukhari, a famous Islamic historian who was

born less than two centuries after Muhammed’s flight to Medina.<sup>3</sup> The heading of this first set of hadith is entitled “The Book of Jihad (Fighting for Allah’s Cause).” The numbers indicate the particular tradition about Muhammed in Bukhari’s work:

“The Prophet said...‘I would love to be martyred in Allah’s cause and then come back and then get martyred, and then come back to life again and then get martyred and then come back to life again and then get martyred.’” (2797)

“The Prophet said, ‘He who fights that Allah’s Word (i.e., Allah’s religion of Islamic monotheism) be superior, is in Allah’s cause.’” (2810)

“Allah’s Messenger said, ‘Anyone whose both feet get covered with dust in Allah’s cause will not be touched by the (hell) fire.’” (2811)

“Allah’s Messenger said, ‘Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords (Jihad in Allah’s cause).’” (2818)

“The Prophet said...‘When you are called (by the Muslim ruler) for Jihad (holy fighting in Allah’s cause) go forth immediately.’” (2825)

“Allah’s Messenger said, ‘You (muslims) will fight against the Jews till some of them hide behind stones. The stones will (betray them) saying, O Abdullah (i.e., slave of Allah)! There is a Jew hiding behind me; so kill him.’” (2925)

“Allah’s Messenger said, ‘O Allah! Fill their (i.e., the infidels’) houses and graves with fire as they busied us so much that we did not perform the middle salat (prayer).’” (2931)

The following set of traditions is taken from “The Book of Obliging”:

"...Allah's Messenger said, 'I have been ordered to fight the people till they say: La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah)...'" (6924)

"The Prophet stood up and addressed them, 'O assembly of Jews! Embrace Islam and you will be safe!...You should know that the earth belongs to Allah and His Messenger...'" (6944)

These are but a few of the statements from the Koran, the sira of Muhammed, and the hadith which clearly show that the aim of Islam is to impose its system of government upon the world by means of force. These three sources are the primary authorities in sharia law. Sadly, this information is unknown to many Americans.

### Verses on Tolerance

But are there not verses in the Koran that teach peace and tolerance? How are those verses to be reconciled with those which command Muslims to fight and kill?

In the first place, why should anyone be surprised if the Koran contradicts itself? It is not an inspired book. Muhammed himself was full of contradictions. How could a man who lied and murdered be expected to be consistent in his doctrine? Of course there are contradictions in the Koran. This is just one example.

We need to understand that "peace" in the Muslim sense is not the same as tolerance and freedom in the democratic sense. Muslims can truly say they believe in peace, but peace to them means that non-Muslims submit to their domination. Their concept of peace is freedom from war but not freedom of life and religion.

Thus in sura 8:61 the Koran says, "But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace." The previous verse tells Muslims to "strike terror into the hearts of the enemies" (8:60). This peace is then the absence of fighting on the part of unbelievers because they have been forced to surrender. "Peace" in Muslim theology means that Islam has conquered and the non-Muslims who remain live in fear of sharia law.

Islam seeks to dominate the world, and it offers three alternatives to unbelievers: (1) convert to Islam; (2) die; (3) become *dhimmi* or second-class citizens who pay the *jizyah* or tax on unbelievers and who live in Muslim countries in subjection to Islamic law. A Muslim can truly say, "We don't force people to become Muslims." Of course they don't. You don't have to become a Muslim. You can die or become a *dhimmi*.

It is vital to remember that Muslim theology has a rule of interpretation known as abrogation. This means that a later revelation given to Muhammed can cancel out or annul a previous one. The Koran says that Allah substitutes new revelations that are "better or similar" to those given earlier (2:106). Bukhari mentions this procedure: "Later on this Quranic verse was abrogated (cancelled)" (2801); "There was revealed about those who were killed at Bir Mauna a Quranic verse we used to recite, but it was cancelled later on" (2814). Khan, the translator of the hadith of Bukhari cited earlier, said,

"As it is now obvious, at first 'the fighting' was forbidden, then it was permitted and after that it was made obligatory..."<sup>4</sup>

The doctrine of abrogation is the rationale for calling sura 9:5 the “Verse of the Sword.” Sections of the Koran that are silent on jihad and seem to recommend tolerance toward unbelievers were largely delivered while Muhammed was in Mecca. The parts of the Koran that urge fighting were delivered after he arrived in Medina and began to assert himself as a cruel dictator. But what is not apparent in translations of the Koran is that the suras are not given in chronological order. Though it occurs early in the Koran, sura 9 is among the last if not the last sura of Muhammed (I am of course referring to the teaching Muhammed presented orally; the Koran was written after his death). Sura 9, especially 9:5, trumps other verses that seem to teach tolerance.

### What Muslims Say

“But many Muslims say Islam does not teach violence.” Regrettably, for many Americans this ends the discussion. What they do not realize is that Islam teaches Muslims to deceive unbelievers. The doctrine is known as *taqiyya*. The Koran tells Muslims not to be friends with unbelievers “except by way of precaution” (3:28). This religion tells Muslims to act like unbelievers are their friends when they really are not. The Koran also allows Muslims to deny their Muslim faith when they are “under compulsion” (16:106). Compare this spirit with the courageous Old Testament saints who refused to renounce God to be delivered (Heb. 11:35) and with the true faith of martyrdom in early Christians! Ishaq tells of Muhammed approving of lying. When one of his men was unsuccessful at murdering an enemy,

“The apostle said, ‘All that is incumbent upon you is that you should try.’ He said, ‘O apostle of God, we shall have to tell lies.’ He answered, ‘Say what you like, for you are free in the matter.’”<sup>5</sup>

In Bukhari’s hadith, chapter 158 is entitled, “Telling Lies in War.” It also confirms the above story (3031). Thus, the doctrine of *taqiyya* is not merely withholding information or using covert strategies in war.<sup>6</sup> It is not even limited to cases of a Muslim being coerced to renounce his belief while he is being tortured. *Taqiyya* gives Muslims the right to act lovingly toward unbelievers when they hate them. It gives them justification for behaving friendly, peaceful, and tolerant toward infidels while they are planning or hoping to kill them. It allows Muslims to say that Islam is something which it is not—a non-violent religion.

In addition to the literary and doctrinal contexts of passages in the Koran which recommend violence, there is the obvious historical and practical backdrop which is even more plain. Islam has followed a consistent path for almost 14 centuries. Wherever and whenever they have had opportunity, Muslims have tried to dominate as much of the world as possible through jihad. How many more centuries of this bloodshed are needed to convince a skeptical world? In addition, how many 9/11-style attacks are necessary to change the opinion of those who sympathize with Islamists? The question of former PLO terrorist Walid Shoebat goes to the heart of the naivety and stubbornness of such sympathizers. After presenting detailed evidence of the inherently violent nature of Islam and warning European and American listeners, he said his

question for the West is: "What part of killing do you not understand?"<sup>7</sup>

The truth is that Muslim tactics have not changed since the time of Muhammed. The pattern is the same. Like Muhammed, true Muslims conceal their intentions in a society where they are outnumbered. They blend in as much as possible. They present themselves as people who just happen to practice a different religion. All the while they are hoping and waiting for their numbers and power to rise. When that occurs, they show their true colors. That is when things become dangerous. Muslims may appear to be friendly and peaceable, but if they are true to their religion they will drop that act as soon as they have the upper hand. If they are in a culture they consider to be what Mecca was to Muhammed, they will acquiesce, but if they feel they are in a modern-day Medina, they will unleash their hatred of infidelity in the most barbaric ways. A man from India once told me about the experiences his family had been through with Islamic jihad. He said, "My people have suffered at the hands of Muslims for 1400 years. When they are in the minority, they talk of peace; but when they are in the majority, they will crush you." So it was with Muhammed, and so it is today.

There was a time in American history when our leaders understood the true nature of this religion. In addition to being President of the United States, John Quincy Adams served as Ambassador to Russia from 1809-1814. Through his experience and his reading he learned firsthand the aggressive and violent nature of Islam:

"In the seventh century of the Christian era,

a wandering Arab of the lineage of Hagar, the Egyptian, combining the powers of transcendent genius, with the preternatural energy of a fanatic, and the fraudulent spirit of an impostor, proclaimed himself as a messenger from Heaven, and spread desolation and delusion over an extensive portion of the earth. Adopting from the sublime conception of the Mosaic law, the doctrine of one omnipotent God; he connected indissolubly with it, the audacious falsehood, that he was himself his prophet and apostle. Adopting from the new Revelation of Jesus, the faith and hope of immortal life, and of future retribution, he humbled it to the dust, by adapting all the rewards and sanctions of his religion to the gratification of the sexual passion. He poisoned the sources of human felicity at the fountain, by degrading the condition of the female sex, and the allowance of polygamy; and he declared undistinguishing and exterminating war, as a part of his religion, against all the rest of mankind. The essence of his doctrine was violence and lust: To exalt the brutal over the spiritual part of human nature.

Between these two religions, thus contrasted in their characters, a war of twelve hundred years has already raged. That war is yet flagrant; nor can it cease but by the extinction of that imposture, which has been permitted by Providence to prolong the degeneracy of man. While the merciless and dissolute dogmas of the false prophet shall furnish motives to human action, there can never be peace upon earth, and good will towards men. The hand of Ishmael will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."<sup>8</sup>

"The precept of the koran is, perpetual war against all who deny, that Mahomet is the prophet of God. The vanquished may purchase their lives, by the payment of tribute; the victorious may be appeased by a false and delusive promise of peace; and the faithful follower of the prophet, may submit to the imperious necessities of defeat: but the command to propagate the Moslem creed by the sword is always obligatory,

when it can be made effective. The commands of the prophet may be performed alike, by fraud, or by force."<sup>9</sup>

## Islamic Jihad and Biblical Fighting

Muslims tell us that jihad means struggle and that it refers to the inner spiritual battle against evil.

Do the Koran's words "Fight those who believe not in Allah" (Surah 9:29) describe a spiritual conflict similar to Paul's command "Fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12)?

Paul said nothing about using physical coercion against unbelievers for the simple reason that they are unbelievers. In fact, when he warned Timothy earlier in this chapter of perverse and unreasonable men, he didn't tell the younger preacher to cut off their heads; he told him "from such withdraw thyself" (I Tim. 6:5). The "good fight of faith" is a struggle against the love of money and other evils (I Tim. 6:6-11).

The Bible clarifies the nature of this fight by denying that it is a physical battle. Paul explained, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5). When he said to put on the armor of God, he added, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

Jesus denied that His kingdom is to be ex-

tended by the sword. "My kingdom is not of this world," He told Pilate, adding, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Kingdoms of the earth use physical force to enforce their laws and protect their land. But what these kingdoms do is the very thing the kingdom of Christ is not to do.

Does this mean that Jesus taught pacifism? Does the New Testament forbid self-defense? Can a Christian serve as a policeman or a soldier?

Christian responses to the viciousness of Islamic jihad can go too far in the opposite direction. While the good fight of faith is a spiritual conflict and the gospel converts men by persuasion instead of force, it is a misconception to say that Jesus forbids all physical force.

Jesus told the disciples, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (Luke 22:36). This is like telling someone today to sell enough clothes to buy a gun. Why would his disciples need swords? For self-protection. The ancient world had dangerous places and some very mean people. A sword had a definite purpose: to kill. The pacifist view cannot be harmonized with Jesus' words. The Lord did tell Peter later, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). There are legitimate times to use the sword, but this was not one of them. Jesus cannot mean that all uses of the sword are wrong, else why would He tell the disciples to buy one, and why would Peter even be carrying one?

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is greatly misused to teach pacifism, especially Matthew 5:38-42. In this section (Matthew 5:21-48), Jesus is not contrasting the Old Testament with the New Testament; He is contrasting God's original will about these matters with what the scribes and Pharisees taught. The scribes and Pharisees taught those parts of the law that benefited them and ignored passages that condemned them. They taught against murder (and rightly so – Exod. 20:13), but they ignored verses against hate (e.g., Lev. 19:17-18) – Matthew 5:21-26. They forbade adultery (and rightly so – Exod. 20:14), but they ignored verses on lust (Prov. 6:25; Job 31:1) – Matthew 5:27-28. In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus continues this contrast. The scribes and Pharisees taught civil justice (Exod. 21:23; Lev. 24:20), but they did not practice mercy, which was also taught in the Old Testament (Hos. 6:6). In fact, one of the themes of Matthew is mercy (Matt. 5:6, 5:38-42; 9:10-13; 12:1-8; 18:23-35; 23:23; 25:31-46). The Jews were often unmerciful in their dealings with each other. If anyone owed them or wronged them in the slightest way – regardless of intention or mitigating circumstances – the Jews went “for blood.” And they would cite Exodus 21:23 or Leviticus 24:20 for justification.

Matthew 5:38-42 contains some figurative expressions. Specifically, it contains hyperbole – an exaggerated statement for emphasis. Jesus had already used this figure just verses earlier (Matt. 5:29-30). Jesus Himself did not literally turn the other cheek in John 18:22-23. He rebuked the man who struck Him, as Paul rebuked the high priest in Acts 23:1-3. To read Jesus' words without

the qualifications placed upon them by other passages leads to absurdity. For instance, what if someone wrongfully sues you? Does Matthew 5:40 apply? What if a drunkard asks you for money to buy liquor? Does Matthew 5:42 demand that you “give to him that asketh thee”? Jesus is talking to people who were extreme in their misapplication of the words quoted in Matthew 5:38, and He uses extreme language (hyperbole) to pull them back to the center, so to speak, that is, to the real meaning of these passages in the Old Testament.

What about the Israelite wars in the Old Testament? Did God command the killing of men, women, and children, and is it true that some of these wars were unprovoked?

Muslims and their liberal friends in the media love to bring up the subject of war in the Old Testament. Radio and television interviews only give a few seconds to answer questions like these, and hosts know this is not enough time. A scriptural response can be made, but some questions, like these, take more than ten seconds to explain.

It is true that God commanded the Israelites to kill “the men, women, and children” of numerous heathen nations (Deut. 3:6). When the army of Israel went into Jericho, “they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword” (Josh. 6:21). The Israelites fought against these cities until “there was not any left to breathe” (Josh. 11:11).

Before the Israelites entered Canaan, God told them why they were to put these people to death: “for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee” (Deut. 9:6). How bad was the wicked-

ness of the Canaanites? Leviticus 18-20 tells us. The land was full of abominations: human sacrifice, incest, homosexuality, and bestiality were some of the perversions common in Canaan. In this section of Leviticus God warns the Israelites that if they commit these sins, they are to be executed themselves. To show them how serious He was, God ordered the Israelites to put the Canaanites to death for these very things. The wars in Joshua were a wide scale case of capital punishment.

The extent of the killing in these wars has sometimes shocked readers of the Old Testament. We can see the execution of adult perpetrators of these vile acts better than we can understand why the children were killed. This difficulty has been leveraged by atheists and skeptics for centuries. Robert Ingersoll and other enemies of the Bible have asked, "If God was the commander of these wars, what would the devil have done if he had been in charge?"

Ultimately this question is a matter of addressing more fundamental questions: does the God of the Bible exist, and, is the Bible the inspired Word of God? If God exists, and if the Bible is true, then the Christian religion stands and Islam is false. I cannot offer evidence for these truths here. However, I do want to make a few observations on this alleged moral problem in the Old Testament.

God has the right to take life as well as to give it. Babies as well as adults died in the flood. If God can take innocent lives without human intervention, then He has the right to take those lives through human instruments. But only God can exercise that right by a direct act or by a command. So the whole question gets back to whether the Bible is in-

spired of God or the Koran is inspired of God.

The nation of Israel was unique. The Israelite nation was a theocracy, a kingdom with no separation of civil and religious rule. This nation had a privileged status which no other nation before or since has ever enjoyed. Israel was the chosen nation of God, and the whole world has benefited from God's protection and preservation of this nation because the Messiah came through Israel. But that preservation was made possible in part by war.

The Israelite people forfeited this chosen position as God's people when they rejected Jesus (Matt. 21:43). They lost God's favor as a nation because of their sins. Today the true Israel is the church of Christ, a spiritual kingdom made up of Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 6:16).

Muslims prove nothing by attempting to draw a parallel between jihad and Israelite wars in the Old Testament. Their god is different from the God of the Bible. Their book is different from the Bible. And their motivation and tactics of bloodshed are certainly not the same as those we read in Scripture.

### **Freedom of Religion**

But what about freedom of religion? Does not the First Amendment grant citizens of this country the right to practice the religion of their choice, including Islam? If a person has the liberty to be a Christian, a Hindu, or an atheist, then are we discriminating against Muslims when we criticize their religion?

The real question is not: Do we have freedom of religion? The First Amendment is clear on that point. The question is this: Are there limits to that freedom? Consider the case of Reynolds versus the United States in 1878 tried

by the United States Supreme Court. George Reynolds, a Utah Mormon, was charged with violating the state law against bigamy. In his defense Reynolds' attorneys maintained that the practice of polygamy was given to Mormons by God through Joseph Smith and that it was the duty of Mormon men to follow it. This raised a question that is still being debated: What is meant by freedom of religion? Since the word "religion" is not defined in the Constitution, what meaning are we to attach to it? The Supreme Court Justices wisely said in their decision that there was no more appropriate place to go to answer this question than "to the history of the times in the midst of which the provision was adopted." It is in this interesting discussion that we find the Justices using common sense that is sorely lacking today. As to the argument that one's religious practices are protected by the First Amendment regardless of what they are, they asked

"Suppose one believed that human sacrifices were a necessary part of religious worship, would it be seriously contended that the civil government under which he lived could not interfere to prevent a sacrifice? Or if a wife religiously believed it was her duty to burn herself upon the funeral pile of her dead husband, would it be beyond the power of the civil government to prevent her carrying her belief into practice?"<sup>10</sup>

In its decision, the Court did not tell Mormons they were forbidden to worship or to teach their doctrine. But they did maintain that the statute prohibiting polygamy was binding regardless of what a particular religion may say to the contrary, thereby showing that there are limits to freedom of religion. It

is also interesting that the Court held that the government has the right to take preventive action in cases where the beliefs of a particular religion actually encourage a crime by teaching its followers that the activity is a necessary part of belonging to the religious group and that this teaching supersedes the law of man.

"Jihad is an obligatory duty in Islam, on every Muslim."<sup>11</sup> Muslims are trying to hide this aim by invoking *taqiyya* and by appealing to the First Amendment. They are using freedom of religion to take away freedom of religion. But the sooner our officials are informed about the nature of this religion the safer we will all be. Since Islamic doctrine holds that Muslims must overthrow governments that do not submit to shariah law, and since it instructs them to use violence to do so, I believe our government has right and reason to monitor every mosque in the country and intervene to prevent terrorist acts when necessary.

### **Time to Act**

The problem is that many are unaware of this dark side of Islam. There are two things that make educating people about it difficult. One is the practice of *taqiyya* by Muslims. The other is that many Americans have never read the Koran or even heard of the hadith or sira of Muhammed. These works are long, tedious, and confusing, and this means it takes time to understand the issue of Islamic jihad. The truth is clear when you look into these sources, but it is obscured by media misrepresentation and ignorance.

It is Islam itself, not the abuse of Islam by

radicals and extremists, that promotes violence against non-Muslims. All the talk about “radical Islam” and “Muslim extremists” needs to end. The problem is Islam, pure and simple.

Our elected officials from the local level to the federal level need this information. Our law enforcement officers and military personnel need to know what Islam is. Preachers need to inform congregations. One of the most educational videos on this subject is *Islam: What the West Needs to Know*. I would urge you to watch this documentary yourself and share it with others, especially those in positions of leadership. I would also recommend books like *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran* by Robert Spencer and *Shariah Law for Unbelievers* by Bill Warner. These works will help you find your way though the maze of the basic texts of Islam.

Are there moderate Muslims? There may be some who are ignorant about the real nature of their religion. There are others, as we have shown, who lie about it. There may be others who are progressive and want to change orthodox Islam. And there are some who can be converted to Christianity. As I write these words, I am looking at a tract exposing the contradictions within the Koran. It was written by a former Muslim who is now

a brother in Christ. Let us remember to love others and seek to save them. Alexander Campbell once said that the difference between Islam and Christianity is that one has the spirit of the sword and the other has the sword of the Spirit. May we take that sword in hand and fight the good fight of faith.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Another major ancient history of Islam is *The History of Al-Tabari*. He was born about 225 years after Muhammed's flight to Medina.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammed: A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah* (Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 464.

<sup>3</sup>The particular version of Bukhari used here is *The Translation and the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan and published by Darussalam in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1997 in a nine-volume set.

<sup>4</sup>Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation and the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam Publishers, 1997), vol. 9, p. 462.

<sup>5</sup>Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammed*, p. 367.

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of questions regarding a moral distinction between lying and some forms of deception and biblical examples of alleged justified lying, see my book *Ox in the Ditch*, pp. 111-118.

<sup>7</sup>"What the West Needs to Know," video, Quixotic Media, 2006.

<sup>8</sup>*The American Annual Register for the Years 1827-8-9* (New York: Published by E. and G. W. Blunt, 1830), p. 269.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>10</sup>*Reynolds v. United States* 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

<sup>11</sup>Khan, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, p. 44, footnote 1.

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