

A Religion of Peace?
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Recently, Osama bin Laden, the self-proclaimed leader of al-Qaeda and self-confessed mastermind of the 9/11 attacks on America, released a video tape in which he offered a solution for the end of his declaration of war against democracy and Western civilization. Near the end of his 25-minute anti-US diatribe, bin Laden states, "It has now become clear to you and the entire world the impotence of the democratic system and how it plays with the interests of the peoples and their blood by sacrificing soldiers and populations to achieve the interests of the major corporations." So besides doing away with the American democratic system of government, what else must we do? "I invite you to embrace Islam.", he goes on to say. "There are no taxes in Islam, but rather there is a limited Zakaat [alms] totaling 2.5 percent." Actually, bin Laden's solution comes straight from the Q'uran. The prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, asserted that there were only three options available to those who were non-believers of Islam (infidels). First, they could accept Islam and pay homage to Muhammad. Alternatively, non-believers could accept rule by Muslim masters under very strict conditions called "dhimmitude" (similar to serfdom) and pay a "jizya", or poll tax. This is what bin Laden is proposing. If neither of these alternatives is accepted, then the infidels must be annihilated through "jihad" (holy war). Bin Laden assumes, correctly so, that Western civilization will not accept either of the first two options so he has declared holy war on all "non-believers". In fact, there is very little tolerance for other religions by Islam. *"And fight with them until there is no more persecution and religion should be only for Allah"* (Sura 8:39). The Q'uran does not allow for peaceful co-existence and warns Muslims to never befriend Jews and Christians in particular: *"...may Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!"* (Sura 9:30).

Bin Laden neglected to mention that under Islamic law (Shari'a), once one becomes a Muslim one can never convert to another religion under penalty of death. The penalty for theft? Amputation of one's hands. Any woman who commits adultery is stoned to death. There is virtually no adultery committed by men since a woman is worth only ½ of a man and must produce two female witnesses to equal the testimony of every male witness. It is nearly unheard of for a man to testify on behalf of a woman against another man. In most cases, women who are raped are stoned to death for committing "adultery". If they are not executed according to Shari'a, they are murdered by "honor killings" carried out by their own relatives for disgracing the family. Under Shari'a, women may not drive, may not receive an education, and may not leave the house unless accompanied by a male relative. During Taliban rule in Afghanistan, women were compelled to wear garb which covered their bodies from head to toe. They were beaten if any part of their bodies was exposed in public. The Q'uran states that it is permissible for a man to beat his wives. A man may have several wives and it is legal to marry them when they reach the age of nine - called pedophilia in Western societies. This is the tolerance of a religion which the jihadists wish to impose on the entire world.

Many Western leaders, including the president of the United States and the prime minister of Great Britain naively insist that Islam is a religion of peace. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not only does the Q'uran contain verse after verse inspiring violence in the name of Islam, it also promotes an astonishing amount of intolerance and self-righteousness. Most Muslim-American groups are apologists for those who wish to wage "jihad" against America. Islamic institutions in the US are filled with jihadist propaganda against Jews and Christians, calling for the slaughter of the "descendants of pigs and monkeys" (Jews) and the destruction of the "Great Satan" (America). There are close to 500 verses in the Q'uran that call for the murder of non-believers. As we have witnessed, there are many Muslims who take these calls to violence seriously and will do their best to carry out Allah's will to bring Islamic rule over the entire world - or they will happily die trying to do so, having been promised rewards for their "martyrdom" in the next life.

Contrary to the excuses put forth by the apologists for Islamic radicals, the violence they wage against us is not the result of poverty, crime or intolerance on our part. The jihadists themselves clearly credit their Islamic faith for their acts of terror. In Afghanistan, a leader of the Taliban proclaimed, "In the name of Allah the Avenger, I swear on the holy book to perform my sacred duty as a soldier of Islam in this Jihad...". The Credo of the Muslim Brotherhood (the leading terror organization in Egypt) states, "*Allah is our objective, the Q'uran is our Constitution, the Prophet [Muhammad] is our leader, Jihad is our way, and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations*". How about that for a statement of peace? The deceased former Supreme Leader of Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini, explained the jihadist belief very clearly when he said, "Those who know nothing of Islam pretend that Islam counsels against war. Those who say this are witless. Islam says, 'Kill all the unbelievers just as they would kill you all! Kill them, put them to the sword and scatter their armies'".

In summation, Islam is far from a religion of peace. Can it become one? That is the biggest question for Muslim leaders today. "The words and deeds of Muhammad have been moving Muslims to commit acts of violence for fourteen hundred years now. They are not going to disappear in our lifetimes; nor can they be negotiated away." (Robert Spencer, "The Truth About Muhammad"). Only those who consider themselves moderate Muslims can make the necessary changes to their religion by rejecting the violent elements of Islam and by enacting a reformation which moves the religion out of the 7th century into the 21st century. Only then can Islam be called "A Religion of Peace". (For more information see <http://www.thereligionofpeace.com/>).

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