

## Islam v. The Western World

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**We** unthinkingly say this is 2003 (dated from the birth of Christ). Yet, to the Jew it is 5764 (dated from Adam), and to the Muslim it is 1381 (dated from Mohammed). In the year 600 A.D., however, there *were* no Muslims. Today there are more than one billion spread among every nation. More than 10 million Chinese follow the faith, and the number of Muslims in this country increases daily. Yet, remarkably, the average American knows very little of the Muslim's faith and the temporal goals that faith compels them to advance. Our ignorance fuels their antagonism toward us. We do not respect their heritage, and many of them hate us for it.

It is that simple.

The Muslim people are in love with Islam, the God of Islam, and principles of government that Islam commands ... principles contrary to our own concepts of law. We see Islam in their dress, their music, their daily habits, and their poetic architecture. Everything about them centers on and revolves around Islam. It is the religion and faith of Islam they wish to govern them ... not popular opinion or changing principles of political manipulation that have corrupted the dream of those who founded our American legal system.

If we were wise we would learn more of their queer culture, seeking the meaning of their religion in order to understand what makes them act as they do.

If we were truly wise we would reconstitute our system of government, restoring the landmarks set out for us by men like Washington, Adams, and Penn. We would honor the principles of justice and liberty for all and fight against the inroads of political opportunism eating away at the goodness of our nation's soul. We would be true to our own national faith in God ... knowing there is but one God, the God of Abraham, Mohammed, and Christ.

That we have different views of religion's place in society and government, different cosmic theories of the universe, different beliefs as to the origin and evolution of life forms, different ideas of when human life begins or ceases to have value, and different opinions as to the reality and nature of Eternal God may be a minor issue with many of us Americans.

It is a *major* issue to the Islamic People ... *all* of them!

Their concept of God is the scale by which they measure us -- not material successes or technological advancement. They have been taught a very certain concept of God. From earliest childhood they are taught what God desires of us as human beings ... and what God demands. They are given promises of afterlife in measure as they live their lives on earth. And they are reminded daily when calls to prayer prostrate them in the streets together, unified in faith and committed to a common purpose -- Islam.

They believe we have rejected God by what they see as our god-less, money-driven culture. The Koran has taught them we are infidels, i.e., people without faith, for our behavior gives the lie to what we say. To go into detail about the morals of our modern way of life would detract from the message of this essay, yet to imagine we can ignore the fact Muslims fear the influence of our profligate lifestyles is to invite more of the dangers we face as they use *violence* to protect their way of life according to the Koran, their "Bible".

To the people of Islam, Allah is *everything*.

It is this pivotal difference between our cultures that makes them react to us as they do, and only some effort on our part to understand and accommodate their religious views can prevent greater bloodshed. We simply cannot longer ignore the necessity of learning what they believe ... and why.

To understand the Muslims' faith we turn to the history of man recorded by Moses, an account accepted not only by Christians and Jews, but also by the followers of Mohammed.

Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah, and Abraham are all historical figures to the Muslim, just as they are in our own Synagogues and Sunday Schools. The Garden of Eden is not disputed by them. The Flood and the

Ark are common to our faiths. Indeed, their Allah *is* the God of Abraham to them – an infinite being of no limit in time or space, supremely powerful and just, promising a day when each of us must give account of our deeds, a day when the righteous will inherit eternal bliss and the wicked eternal damnation. Whether we Americans believe these things or not, we are unwise to ignore the fact that vast masses of humanity *are* swayed by faith in Abraham's God ... the Creator and Sustainer of Life ... the God they call "Allah".

The religious fervor of Islamic peoples opposing us in the Middle East is seen in the names by which they are known. "Islam" means "surrender to God". "Muslim" means "believer". The Muslims are a people to whom Allah is life itself!

Why are we at war? The answer is in the varied views we have of our One God and the varied views we have of our relationship to God and to each other. Nearly all leading religions of this world believe there is only one supreme God and that unregenerate man is a rebellious being, in enmity with God, separated from perfection by ambition, greed, and lust. Muslim, Christian, and Jew agree on this. Only profligate atheists and agnostics, intent on creating their own concept of good and evil so they can live according to their lusts, believe that man is not rebellious, ambitious, and greedy. True followers of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic faiths agree on these fundamentals and agree that God alone ordains Truth, that God alone provides for our basic needs, that God alone can unite us as peoples living harmoniously in peace.

But, these three major world religions do *not* agree as to the manner by which we should worship God. The three are divided even among themselves on questions of doctrine and principles, each confident that it alone has the perfect picture of that which cannot ever be completely comprehended.

So, error leads to bloodshed.

The Muslim, Christian, and Jew believe in a personal God Who intervenes in the affairs of men. All believe this same God made heaven and earth and all things therein. All believe God made man in His own image, created woman from the man, and that these two are the same Adam and Eve of whom Moses wrote in Genesis. Adam and Eve bare Cain, Abel, and Seth. Cain murdered Abel. His youngest brother Seth fathered generations that led to Noah. Cain fathered a lineage of polygamous nomads who settled east of Eden in the land of Nod, of whom we know nothing more. (They presumably perished in the great flood.)

Seth to Noah was nine generations, and Noah had three sons: Shem who was father of the Semitic races including Syrians, Israelis, Arabs, and Armenians; Ham, who was father of the African races; and Japheth, father of the Caucasian races who migrated north from the middle-eastern cradle of civilization.

Shem to Abraham, was another nine generations. Abraham took a wife, Sarah, who was barren. When Abraham was about 75 years old (c. 2100 B.C.) God promised he would father a great nation. Abraham, in fact, fathered both the Jewish and Islamic nations.

After many years, when Sarah had not given birth, Sarah's handmaiden Hagar conceived of Abraham a son. His name was Ishmael. Sarah despised Hagar, of course, and sent her into the wilderness to pray. An angel appeared to Hagar, saying her son Ishmael would father a numberless multitude, but that he would be *a wild man whose hand would be against every man, and every man's hand would be against him*.

This same Ishmael fathered the line from which Mohammed was born ... the Islamic peoples of today!

Later, at the age of 90, Sarah gave birth to Isaac, father of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Israel fathered twelve sons, heads of the twelve tribes, the children of Israel.

Thus, the Jews and the Arabs have Abraham as their common father!

About this there is no dispute.

Ishmael *also* had twelve sons whose descendants settled in the Arabian peninsula from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, a vast desert land. These nomadic peoples did not retain the faith of Abraham, the religion of One Omnipotent and Omnipresent God. Instead they worshipped stones and camels and

coconuts. They had a god who was supposed to be creator of the universe, but they regarded this god no more highly than the gods of wind or fire or the mysterious, ever-shifting desert.

By the Sixth Century A.D. an advanced culture of polytheists settled at Mecca, a bustling port on the Red Sea. Mecca was a city of prosperous merchants trading in gold and silver, spices and dyes, perfumes and delicate silks. Mecca was also site of the holiest of pagan shrines, the Arabs' Kaaba, a cubical building in which were worshipped the idols of hundreds of gods.

It was in this city of great commerce that Mohammed was born, son of a poor trader who died before Mohammed's birth. His mother died during Mohammed's infancy. The young man was reared by his uncle, Abu Talib. Mohammed was an orphan.

Having no wealth from family, he tended sheep and made what trades he could with passing caravans. He worked for a wealthy widow named Khadija, who was so taken with the shrewdness and honesty of the young man that she offered herself to him as wife -- which offer Mohammed assiduously accepted. Freed of the tedium and constraint of business life, Mohammed now took to meditating and searching for meaning.

Until Mohammed, Arab peoples had no common faith. They were spiritually and politically fragmented. Having labored in poverty as a youth, Mohammed had pity on the plight of the poor around him. He hated the excesses of those whose opulence was undiminished by charity of any form. The leaders of the desert tribes were men of great power and unimaginable wealth. Money and possessions were the goal of all existence. Mohammed yearned for more ... and it is from this vision that the religion of Islam was born and their hatred of excess, stifled charity, and moral profligacy.

In 610 A.D., an angel appeared to Mohammed and commanded him, "Read!"

"What shall I read?" Mohammed answered.

"Read of the God who teaches men by the pen."

This God of written teachings was that of the Christians and Jews. These are the writings Mohammed read. There were none other. Only Christians and Jews possessed writings about the One God of Abraham.

Three years passed -- during which time, no doubt, Mohammed *read much!* The records of Moses, the Torah, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. And, as he read, he learned of the promised Messiah in reports of an event at Calvary, the Miracle of an Empty Tomb, teachings that agreed with his own concerns for the oppressed and his anger at the power of those who ruled without mercy.

Mohammed did not believe Jesus was God's Messiah nor that Jewish Rabbis had any inkling of the God of Abraham, whom Mohammed called Allah, "worthy to be adored".

He read what was written and *saw* what was practiced!

A later visit from the angel ordered him, "Rise and warn!" So Mohammed began to teach his people of a Creator God who is One God Alone, not one of many, a God of Justice who judges men according to their deeds, rewarding some with bliss eternal, condemning others to everlasting pain and unimaginable terror.

A distinction should be made between the Islamic and Jewish views of eternal rewards for earthly works and the Gospel of Christ that promises eternal Paradise to all who seek forgiveness through Christ's Love. Christians are not saved by works, "lest any man should boast", claiming he has earned redemption and making God his debtor. Paul taught that Heaven is a Free Gift, not a prize we win by efforts. It is a Gift of Grace, available to all who believe in their hearts and confess to others that Jesus is the Christ, that He died on a cruel Cross at Calvary so we could know True Love, and that God raised Him from the dead to be our Savior. Those who confess their unworthiness and accept God's Love in Christ, receive eternal life. This is, of course a radical departure from the Jewish and Islamic faiths ... and is, unfortunately, not widely known nor understood even by the millions who claim to be Christians!

The confusion arising from our general lack of understanding about these things threatens disaster!

The Gospel was corrupted almost as soon as it was proclaimed by its early apostles. Ambitious church leaders hid the Truth from the illiterate poor in order to receive financial and material support from them. They created a priesthood of pomp and riches. They adulterated the message of Jesus, to appease European monarchs and to build a power structure that has not been paralleled in its extent and influence throughout the modern world. The people could not read for themselves. The Scriptures were not published. The Truth of Christ's Gospel and the Promise of His Eternal Church subsided in the darkness of the Middle Ages and, according to many, has not yet been found again. If a poor man could have read the Scriptures for himself, he might have learned that Judgment Day is not a time to count an algebraic score-card of merits, as many today believe ... and thereby perpetuate what is, perhaps, this world's greatest error.

Mohammed did not learn this Greater Truth. Perhaps Mohammed had no access to the letters of Apostle Paul, where the Mystery of Christ's Gospel is explained. A reasonable guess is that such writings as he had were copied by hand and did not include Paul's letters. Indeed, it is probable he read accounts of Christ that were not accurate, mere fabrications being published for the money they could bring. Such is the nature of religious "leadership" even today – unfortunately.

Mohammed did not understand Christianity, and that error and the error of those who wielded power at the Church in Rome caused much bloodshed – and threatens even more this very moment.

Mohammed believed, as do followers of Islam and Judaism today, Christ was just another prophet.

And so, like Christianity, the simple faith of Mohammed in a God worthy to be adored, in a way of life ruled by beauty and worship, became a political tool turned to the selfish ends of monarchical despots who used isolated excerpts from writings of Mohammed to justify attacks on neighboring peoples who did not follow the way of Allah. Violent wars were waged in the Name of Allah, but having the secret purpose of expanding the Islamic kingdom and the wealth of Islamic kings.

Some verses from Muslim writings include the following:

Surah 9. "Slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captive, and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. Fight against those who have been given the scripture but believe not in Allah nor the Last Day. The Jews say Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say Messiah is the son of Allah. How perverse are they! They have taken as lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks and the Messiah son of Mary, when they were bidden to worship only One God. Oh ye who believe! Lo! Many of the Jewish rabbis and the Christian monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and bar men from the Way of Allah. They hoard both gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of Allah."

Surah 66. "Make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal sternly with them. Hell is their home and evil their fate."

Surah 47. "As for those who are slain in the cause of Allah, he will guide them and ennoble them and admit them to Paradise."

This animosity is clear. The warring attitude, the violent spirit against Christians and Jews and all who will not follow the Faith as taught by Islamic leaders (who often quote the Koran out of context to achieve selfish goals).

This ethnos of hatred is entrenched in the Islamic mind.

It is tradition.

It is Islam.

And we of the western world, agnostic, atheist, Jew, or Christian, need to understand Islam has become a *militant* religion whose goal is Islam at all costs.

Only fools ignore this truth!

The world according to Islam is divided into Dar Al-Harb (the region of War) and Dar Al-Islam (the region of Faith). This evolved view of the Islamic peoples sees the entire planet as a stage for bloodshed. The great war is Muslim against Infidel, pitched in an eternal battle to the death, a destiny (they have been told by their despotic religious leaders) decreed by God Himself.

They are the sons and daughters of the son of Sarah's handmaid: Ishmael, the wild man whose hand is set against every man, and against whom is set the hand of every man.

Islam offers Paradise to those who meet its standards of charity, courage, and unwavering dedication to Allah. They believe in a perpetual state of bliss for those who die in the warfare of spreading the faith of Islam, and they are reminded of this promise each and every day when they hear the call to prayer. They are assured of inheriting ecstasy if they die in holy battle – no matter how sinful their former life has been. The motive for martyrdom is powerful. It is an overwhelming inducement to those whose records most need eternal expungement. When one believes he or she will receive eternal happiness for driving a dynamite laden truck into the lobby of a busy hotel, our task of preventing such behavior is incalculably difficult.

If we refuse to accept these facts about their excuse for violence, our task approaches the impossible.

Christians, Jews, atheists, and agnostics are facing an immediate crisis of unthinkable consequence.

At issue is not oil or military force or political expedience or other secular concepts – at issue is our idea of eternity and the nature of what we choose to call the infinite. Individually, in this land of liberty, we are not compelled to decide one way or another. But, as a nation coexisting with other religious convictions of incredible intensity, dealing with people willing to die for their convictions, we owe it to ourselves and to our children to learn more – not only about our own religious heritage but also of the religious heritage of our international neighbors.

We especially need to understand Islam -- and protect ourselves from its destructive enthusiasm.

We Americans have a right to believe in God or not to believe. We inherited that right from those who bought this great land for us with their lives.

Muslims, however, not only believe in God but believe *with a vengeance!*

It is likely they will continue to focus our attention to that fact by killing us whenever possible – and this they will do whenever and however they can until, as the Bible tells us, the very end of time.

Don't let Washington experts or well-groomed TV news commentators mislead you into thinking we are fighting a war for secular values or objectives. That lie can only result in needless loss of life.

Nor is the central issue weapons of mass destruction or the overthrow of tyranny. Never in the history of mankind has there been a tyrant who ruled without the support of armies who agreed with his goal. It is impossible to rule without support.

In the case of Saddam's regime, that support is garnered by the promise of Paradise.

Isn't it time we learned more about the uncorrupted message of the Koran where we may find a common ground for understanding between us?

If we must fight and die in the meantime, let us work all the harder to seek the path to peace that comes not with the threat of further hostilities but in the promise of peaceful agreement.

God hates corruption and the oppression of innocence, regardless of the Name we honor in our prayers.

All reasonable men and women know this instinctively.

Let us work, therefore, to find agreement in this.

Let's agree with the God of peace!

Before it's too late!

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