

ISLAM

AN APPRAISAL



A consideration of the emergence of Islam in our society today and its implications. A Christian commentary for use in churches of all denominations.

Islam: An Appraisal

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Foreword

During the past 50 years there has been a huge influx of practising Muslims into the United Kingdom. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Asia, the Middle East and Africa have come to live here and large worshipping Muslim communities have emerged in many urban areas across the United Kingdom.

Led by imams, these communities have a distinctive pattern of prayer and religious and social practice. In recent years they have developed a strikingly higher profile in our society. Their influence upon our national life is undoubtedly growing.

Christians need to reach out with love and deeper understanding to their Muslim friends and neighbours and it is important that bonds of goodwill are forged. Christians must at all times show them respect and love.

It is vital for people in our churches to have a far better knowledge of the nature of Islam and of its social and spiritual significance. This is the purpose of this publication.

Sometimes neighbourly relations and community integration have floundered because of suspicion, misunderstanding and lack of knowledge. Occasionally, problems have arisen from differing concepts of so-called ‘pluralism’ and ‘multiculturalism’.

This document endeavours to provide basic information about the nature of Islam and its significance. It is not a detailed analysis of every aspect of Muslim belief.

At its heart Islam is a self-contained political and religious movement, often heavily funded by wealthy adherents and substantial oil revenues. As in many countries, in recent years there has been a resurgence of Islamic evangelism, particularly where Western society has been perceived to be decadent. It is undoubtedly committed to the conversion and political transformation of our nation. Some Islamic activity here is militant and provocative in nature, but most Muslims in Britain live in peace with their non-Muslim neighbours, with whom they often have much in common.

In endeavouring to establish social cohesion some non-Muslims have adopted a form of syncretism which has proved unhelpful. There are numerous areas where Christians and Muslims can, and do, co-operate, but this must not inhibit the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus and our recognition of the fundamental nature of Islam. Many Muslims are open and very interested to learn more.

This document has been written by a ‘Spearhead Group’ made up of members of the Maranatha Community. Its aim is to inform and equip Christians in a situation of radical national and international change and to make a positive contribution to peace, reconciliation and justice. The prayer of the team which compiled it is simply that it may honour God and that the truth may be spoken in love.

Dennis Wrigley
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Introduction

In 2006 Pope Benedict XVI gave an address in Regensburg, Germany where he alluded to a view that Islam was indelibly linked to violence. Most Western political leaders deny this view, and the speech evoked a severe reaction.

Secular politicians commonly suppose that there are two Islams, one peaceable and based on the principles set out in the Quran, the other violent and held by followers who have distorted Islam. Most simply assume that any religion must be peaceable. However, Muslims worldwide do not generally take the view that there are two Islams. Although most British Muslims whom we know and respect as our neighbours are peaceable, God-fearing people, we believe it is vital for Christians and non-Christians to understand Islam by looking at its core ideas and tendencies based on its sacred writings and its history.

This analysis provides tools to understand the root of the Islamic position today. Maranatha hopes that Christians, secular persons and indeed Muslims will benefit from the information set out below.

In the West, religion and the State are separate entities. In Islamic lands the situation is different. Islam is a religious movement which asserts influence over all aspects of life, law and politics. It acknowledges one sole God, creator of the world and the human race. This document will use the word 'God' rather than 'Allah.' The Islamic understanding of the Creator differs somewhat from the biblical view, however. In Islam the last and greatest prophet is Mohammed, whose life is a model for male Muslims.

The central doctrine of Islam is the Oneness of God, *tawhid* in Arabic. The grasping of *tawhid* comprises the supreme inner acceptance of Islam by any Muslim. It is the mark of true belief.

Starting with the doctrine of God, *tawhid* extends into a vision of daily life. Based on this principle, society is formed not along pluralistic or democratic lines, but holistically, and normally paternalistically. Doubt, criticism and challenge are regarded as challenges that threaten to break the *tawhid* of the *umma* (the people of God), which is a further outworking of the idea of *tawhid*. That there is one people, one law, one practice, is central and is essential for understanding Islamic society; many of the issues that concern Western political parties are irrelevant in Islamic societies.

The notion of the nation state, superimposed on Islamic regions by retreating Western colonial powers, is often regarded as incompatible with the primacy of the *umma* - which is transnational - and with God's supreme sovereignty over all his people. There is an Islamic insistence on the unity and consistency of God's law, as they see it, irrespective of political boundaries. Nationalism breaks *tawhid*. Even within States the sharia (law) must be applied integrally to conform to the notion of *tawhid*, since beliefs and practices are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. This inevitably brings Muslims into conflict with non-Muslims when Muslims seek to introduce sharia. This feature makes Islam intolerant of minorities and their alternative systems.

I. The Five Pillars of Islam

Islam is said to involve five ‘pillars,’ as follows.

- **Shahada**, the declaration of faith: “*There is no god but Allah; Mohammed is the messenger of Allah.*” To convert to Islam it is sufficient to say and mean this short statement of faith.
- **Salah**, corporate prayer, of which there are five daily. (Personal petition to god is known as *dua*.) Corporate prayer is normally in a mosque (*masjid*, meaning place of prostration). Anybody can lead these prayers as there is no priesthood. Beforehand there is a ritual washing. The prayers involve men in line together, movements of the hands to the head, genuflections and prostrations, and all are to be performed as prescribed. These prayers last only a few minutes and generate a powerful sense of unity and common purpose. On Fridays there is a sermon. If women attend, they pray in an adjoining room, although outside the West they are not expected or encouraged to come. When men cannot go to the mosque they are still expected to pray. Men praying in the market or office are a common sight in Muslim countries. The exact times of prayer are specified, emphasizing unity. The prayers are always in Arabic and comprise portions of the holy book, the Quran, which Muslims believe is the direct revelation of God.
- **Sawm**, total fasting during daylight in the month of Ramadan. The evening meal eaten after dark with the family is significant. During Ramadan, Muslims attend the mosque as often as possible. Ramadan ends with *eid ul fitr*, a festival which lasts up to three days. In atmosphere it is not dissimilar to Christmas: presents are given, and people invited round to eat and celebrate. As Mohammed forbade the inclusion of an extra month every other year to keep the lunar year in line with the solar year, the dates of the various festivals move from year to year.
- **Zakah**, the duty of almsgiving to the poor. Pious Muslims remember the poor as

part of their religious duty, showing genuine generosity. Every Muslim is expected to give each year 2.5% of his combined estate for this use. This requires a proper valuation of one’s estate, a grey area. Muslims do not usually extend charity to non-Muslims.

- **Hajj**: Millions go on pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca to commemorate the flight of Hagar and her son Ishmael, the ancestor of the Arabs. The *hajj* is celebrated in the twelfth month of the Islamic year. It ends with *eid ul adha*, which is similar to *eid ul fitr* and is celebrated by all Muslims, whether they made the *hajj* or not.

2. Mohammed and Early History

Mecca was an important trading town for the Bedouin Arabs in Mohammed’s time. It included a *haram*, an area where violence was forbidden, in the midst of which was a shrine, the Kaaba. Into this *haram* the different feuding Bedouin tribes came to meet, discuss and trade. The Kaaba was believed to have been founded by Abraham. Mohammed, born in Mecca around 570 AD, travelled far and wide as a Bedouin trader. He was illiterate (Q7:157) and began to have visions, which became known as *the recitation*, the Quran. These fall mainly into two periods, at Mecca and later at Medina.

Mohammed was an extraordinary man, maintaining his course unflinchingly despite fierce opposition. The Arabs were involved in continual inter-tribal warfare, recognizing no authority other than their particular chief. Their religious practices were remarkably crude and frequently embraced paganism. By the end of his life Mohammed had united them under one banner and provided them with a code of law that endures today. Amongst his followers he taught forgiveness of injuries in place of vengeance, equality and fairness, and offered a clear path to prepare for the day of judgment and the life to come. He restrained the blood feud ethos by replacing the notion of tribe by a single extended people, providing a unity and power which changed the course of history.

In 622 Mohammed left Mecca, where his message was not well received, for Medina, a

fertile oasis town to the north. Many became followers there. He led many raids for booty and fought many battles. The Quranic material from this period is concerned with details of administering the community, often *ad hoc* and frequently contradictory; this has led to considerable difficulty for interpreters. The view adopted is that later revelations cancel out previous ones if there is contradiction (the doctrine of *naskh* or abrogation in Q2:106). The most peaceable Quranic verses are from the early time in Mecca. From Medina onwards more violence is sanctioned, particularly in fighting and killing those opposed to the message (eg, Q9:5, 9:29). After one battle (the Battle of the Trench) Mohammed ordered the execution of many hundreds of Judaic Arabs, and had their women and children sold into slavery.

In 630 Mohammed returned to Mecca at the head of a thousand men, effectively becoming its conqueror. He used the Kaaba to maximize continuity with the earlier cult, and changed the direction of prayer (the *qiblah*) from Jerusalem to Mecca. According to the Arab historian al Waqidi (748 - 822) and others, shortly before his return to Mecca Mohammed made a concession, which he later revoked, that veneration of three pagan goddesses was permitted. The original permission is commonly called the 'Satanic Verses' (repudiated at Q53:23).

3. Quran and Hadith

Muslims believe that the Quran comprises the unalterable word of God, unchanged by human hand, and dictated by the angel Gabriel (Q2:97) or 'the holy spirit' (Q16:102) to Mohammed. The text we have today was compiled after Mohammed's death, starting with the longest chapter and finishing with the shortest, not in chronological order. It includes many allusions to contemporary events which are obscure without recourse to accounts of Mohammed's life (the Hadith).

When the Quran is recited publicly it is always sung. Muslims regard its beauty as incomparable. In Islamic countries recitations of the Quran frequently draw large crowds, filling sports stadia. There are strict rules for handling the Quran. The text of the Quran is about four-fifths the size of the New Testament.

The Quran draws on the oral tradition of Jewish, Christian and pagan Arab traditions. Legends, normally Jewish or Christian, are continually used to reinforce its doctrines. Speeches put in the mouths of protagonists emphasize monotheism and good moral conduct. These men overcome hardship and persecution, and finally retribution falls on those who oppose them. The telling of these stories is often disjointed, consistent with oral recitation without prior plan. Repetition is frequent. The mother of Jesus is in one place confused with the sister of Moses, who had the same Hebrew name (Q19:27-8). Little distinction is made between Jews and Christians; both are called 'People of the Book.' The distinction may not have been clear to Mohammed.

In the Quran, as in the Old Testament, God is creator (Q10:3) and is identified as the Biblical Jehovah (Q29:46). The earth is created in six days. Adam is the first man (Q15:26). Noah constructs an ark (Q10:36f). Abraham goes to sacrifice his son Ishmael (not Isaac) (Q37:100-113). Joseph is taken to Egypt, is imprisoned, interprets dreams and meets his brothers as the master of the land (Q12). Moses performs miracles and leads the children of Israel through the Red Sea (Q19). As in Christian tradition, Jesus is born of a virgin (Q3), is holy, exerts power over death, performs miracles, was crucified (although not to death), and was assumed alive up to heaven. He will come again. He is called *messiah*. However Jesus is not divine in the Quran (Q4:171). As he did not die on the cross, he was not raised from the dead (Q4:157). Nevertheless claims are made for Jesus which are not made for Mohammed, who was not born of a virgin, did not raise the dead to life, nor perform miracles (Q17:92-97; Q18:10) and will not come again.

The highest standards of personal conduct are demanded, and there is a sense of horror toward acts such as dishonesty, thieving, adultery and lying. The Quran promises forgiveness to those who, despite having sinned, repent and ask for God's help (Q7:153).

At the Day of Judgment, however, every person's deeds will be weighed, good and bad, with little sense of grace. One's fate appears to be set before birth, either to heaven or hell in an extreme form of predestination. This generates a sense of

fatalism which is liable to cause Muslims to take risks, including with their own lives, since everything is preordained. Nevertheless the whole tenor of the Quran, presuming that one can choose, is threat of everlasting punishment for the infidel and reward for the believer. The punishment of damnation is severe, with hell called ‘the fire’ (*an-nar*) in Arabic. In Q8:50 angels beat the damned souls on the faces and backs while taunting them. There is no necessity to love these unbelievers who, if they do not repent, are seen as justly doomed to destruction. Mohammed lived in daily expectation of the impending raising of the dead and the judgement that would accompany it. It formed the main emphasis of his preaching, and dominates the Quran.

In the eighth and ninth centuries oral traditions called the Hadith were written down. The subject is Mohammed’s life. These lengthy collections provide most of the information that is held to be reliable about Mohammed and the initial expansion of Islam. There are many collections of Hadith, with individual sayings ranked according to reliability. The most authoritative compendium for Sunni Muslims is that of Al Bukhari, followed by that of Imam Muslim. These are designated by Sunni Muslims as *sahih*, meaning of excellent reliability. Categories below that are *hasan* (good) and *da’if* (weak). Further information about Mohammed is provided by Ibn Ishaq’s biography of him which survives in a version edited by Ibn Hisham and is based on similar oral sources to Hadith. These three texts were compiled in the ninth century. Although the *hadiths* are not regarded as the direct word of God they are still generally prescriptive for Muslims. As Mohammed’s life was in conformity with God’s will, Muslims are expected to follow his way, even in some cases down to the manner in which he cleaned his teeth.

4. Historical Developments

The Arabs did not by culture combine except on a temporary basis. The death of Mohammed gave an opportunity for most of the Arab tribes he conquered to rebel. Skilful war-leaders put these rebellions down, ruthlessly subduing the tribes that broke away

and uniting them ahead of what was to follow.

The phenomenal expansion of Islam following the death of Mohammed ranks as one of the most extraordinary events in world history. Islam and the philosophy of life bequeathed by Mohammed gave extraordinary power to the Arab peoples. With remarkable speed Arab armies won and colonized vast areas. During Mohammed’s lifetime there had been a destructive war between the Persian and Byzantine empires and a devastating plague which left a third of the population dead. The Christian Council of Chalcedon in 451 had also left many Christians in the Arab vicinity strongly opposed to Byzantine Orthodoxy, with little incentive to resist that empire’s enemies. As a result there was a vacuum, which Islam rapidly filled. By 661 this expansion had reached modern Tunisia in the West and modern Pakistan in the East, although Constantinople would hold.

In 661 Ali, the fourth successor (*caliph*) to Mohammed, was assassinated and his rival Muawiya became Caliph. The division between Ali’s supporters and those of Muawiya remains bitter to this day, the former known as Shia (10-15% of modern Muslims), the latter as Sunni (85-90%); many subdivisions of Muslims now exist, including Ahmadiyyas, Alawites, Ismailis, Sufis and others. The united Arab armies rapidly swept across North Africa, wiping out Christian civilisation in the Maghreb. They crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in 711AD and then the Pyrenees, but were pushed back by the Western Franks in 732AD. In response to a Byzantine call for help, a Christian Crusade to recover Palestine was called in Western Europe in 1095. Jerusalem was taken in 1099, but was recaptured by Muslim forces in 1187. Ottoman (Turkish) armies conquered the whole Near East, reaching the Balkans in the fourteenth century and the gates of Vienna in 1529 and 1683. This conflict was played out at sea as well as on land. The Ottoman Turkish Sultan proclaimed himself the Caliph, the international leader of all Muslims. To the East the Moghuls continued their thousand year *jihad* against Hindu India. The Islamic faith spread far and wide.

From the eighteenth century the West out-developed the Ottomans. Following defeat in the First World War, the Ottoman Empire was finally dismembered. This

undermined the concept of continual Islamic expansion and saw many Islamic lands under Western (infidel) control.

With this collapse the idea of the *umma* receded as Muslim countries adopted nationalism and looked to the West for leadership to modernize their lands. In the slimmed-down Turkey Islam was severely restricted in the public sector. In 1924 the caliphate was formally abolished and education secularized. In 1925 religious shrines were closed down, and the wearing of the fez and other religious forms of dress were banned. In 1926 the Western calendar was adopted and in 1928 the Arabic alphabet was replaced by the Latin. These secular reforms were intended to break ties to the Islamic past, which was seen as a major cause of Ottoman decline. There was no explicitly Islamic political party in Turkey until 1970, reflecting the popular eclipse of Islam.

Elsewhere in the Muslim world, British and French colonial governments brought with them Western schools and concepts of governance. In the post-colonial period Muslim rulers sent their sons and daughters to Western universities, and politics was dominated by issues of secularism, nationalism, and communism or capitalism. A proposed constitution for Syria in 1973 made no mention of Islam, just like the Turkish constitution of 1928. In Cairo and Alexandria a thriving film industry produced films with similar themes and expression to those in the West. In some countries young people would go to discos and bars and wore Western clothes. Almost everywhere Islamic political leaders were silenced or imprisoned by governments that were essentially secular. The hero of the post-war world was Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt, who styled himself an Arab socialist, not an Islamist.

5. The Modern Islamic Revival

In modern times Islam has experienced a revival of great intensity. This revival potentially matches in significance some of the great turning points of world history such as the Catholic Renaissance and Protestant Reformation. The Islamic revival has sought to reassert Islamic superiority over the

hegemony of the West, and interprets the collapse of the Ottoman Empire not as a failure of Islam but a result of failure to follow the core texts and spirit of Islam.

This revival, unlike the Catholic Renaissance or Protestant Reformation, does not point forward toward democratic principles and institutions, but the reverse. That this movement, which often motivates terrorism, is called 'radical' Islam in the West is a misunderstanding. The revival in Islam is based primarily on a personal faith having analogues with Protestant pietism. It has affected every Islamic land, and most importantly the young, particularly young men. It also crosses the Sunni-Shia divide. It is not to be seen as an aberration of Islam, but as encapsulating its essence.

The following account of the conversion of Rashid al-Ghannushi (b.1941) is representative of what is happening to millions of young Islamic men:

That was the night I embraced true Islam. That very night I shed two things off me: secular nationalism and traditional Islam. That night I embraced what I believed was the original Islam, Islam as revealed and not as shaped or distorted by history and tradition. That was the night I was overwhelmed by an immense surge of faith, love and admiration for this religion to which I pledged my life. On that night I was reborn, my heart filled with the light of God, and my mind with the determination to review and reflect on all that which I had previously conceived.¹

The Islamic revival reacts against colonialism and post-colonialism. The implicit acceptance of the superiority of the West by Islamic lands, manifest in the following of Western forms of education and government, is firmly rejected. The revivalists assert the principles of seventh century Arab desert culture, encapsulated in the Quran and the Hadith, to counter the rejected perceived Christian and/or Western values of liberal democracy, consumerism and individualism. Simultaneous to the revivalists asserting Islamic values against those of the West, the sudden bonanza of oil gave many Islamic countries financial independence.

In particular, it is insisted that religion and state belong together, in contrast with

¹ John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islam*, p212, Hurst and Co, London, 2010, p129, quoting source, www.ghannouchi.net/autobiography.htm. Accessed 5/11/2006

the modern Western notion that religion is a private matter. In 1970 the Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini said in a series of lectures (published in exile) that Islam as divine law must be applied through the State. “*It is a logical necessity that there must be a government which undertakes to put the [Islamic] rules into practice and to apply all [Islamic] measures absolutely.*”² This is a key aspect of the Islamic Revival and underpins the call for introduction of sharia as a central element in the complete Islamic society.

Although the Islamic revival became internationally visible in the 1970s, its roots go back to the 1920s and notably to Pakistan and Egypt, both of which are at the centre of the Islamic Revival.

In British-run India in the 1930s, Sayyid Abul ala Mawdudi (1903-79) called on Muslims to embrace the true spirit of Islam, the Quran and the Hadith. The call was again personal and piously orientated, based on personal resolve and integrity. “*He will be content with what he can earn honestly, and if a heap of ill-gotten riches were placed before him he would push them away in disgust.*”³ The idea is that as the Muslim cannot know all things himself, he seeks one who can guide him, finds Mohammed the only reliable teacher, and submits; the Muslim’s “*whole life is a way of submission to God ... because the submission of his whole being to the will of Allah is Islam.*”⁴

In 1941 Mawdudi formed *Jamaat e Islami* (JI) to promote Islamic core values, with the long-term aim of a pure Islamic State having sharia law, in opposition to Western ideologies such as capitalism, socialism and secularism. “*The purpose of Islam is to set up a state on the basis of its own ideology and programme. ... It must be evident to you from this discussion that the objective of Islamic Jihad is to eliminate the rule of an un-Islamic system and establish in its stead an Islamic system of state rule.*”⁵ JI was involved in many clashes with the State. During the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War JI assisted the Pakistani state by calling for *jihad* against India, encouraging the mobilization of Muslim

men to arms. JI rose to be a force having millions of members.

In Egypt Hassan al Banna (1906-49) formed in 1928 a similar organization called the Muslim Brotherhood. Doctors, lawyers, and university-educated people were generally its core supporters, based in the cities. In villages Islamic life went on as it had before. The Muslim Brothers (*al-ikhwan*) were initially concerned with protecting Muslim men from the secularism and corrupting influence of Western ideas. Its credo is: “*Allah is our objective, the Quran is our law, the prophet is our leader, jihad is our way and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations.*” There was also a need to purify Muslim women. New educational possibilities, and particularly the joining of many women in the workforce through the high demand for labour during the 1939-45 war meant that many women were challenging traditional gender roles, and choosing Western dress and lifestyles.

Al Banna called for a return to the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. By the 1930s the programme was expanded to include the entire political, legal and administrative system based on the Quran. For al Banna, Islam provided everything needed for the social order without need to resort to Western ideas. Further, he began to address the whole Islamic world, not just Egyptians, calling for independence from colonial authority and an Islamic identity and purity. The Brothers soon turned to terrorism and assassination, and their victims included two Egyptian Prime Ministers, in 1945 and 1948. Terrorism increased with the outbreak of war in Palestine in 1947-8. Support for the Jews by the Americans, who had previously been seen by Arabs as supporters of international justice and of the self-determination of native peoples, was regarded as a betrayal indicating a deep moral flaw.

A further important figure is the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906-66). He wrote that the West had turned away from a spirituality that was supportive of the social conscience of peoples working together in harmony, and had adopted materialism and selfish individualism. “*It is a civilization that does not hear anything except the sound of machines, and does not speak of anything*

² Quoted in Dilip Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, Paladin Paperback, Collins, London, 1988.

³ Adul a' la Maudoudi, *Comprendre L'islam*, Association des Etudiants Islamiques de France, Paris, 1975, (first 1932 in Urdu), p.27-8

⁴ Ibid p18

⁵ Sayyid Abdul a'la Mawdudi, *Jihad in Islam*, Beirut, Holy Quran Publishing House, 1980, p.9.

*except commerce.*⁶ Qutb visited America, which he regarded as the archetypal Western country, in 1948-50, and said, “*The American is naturally fascinated by greatness in size and number. For him, it is the first measure of feeling and appreciation.*⁷... “*there is no correlation between the greatness of the American material civilization and the men who created it ... in both feeling and conduct the American is primitive (bida'a).*⁸

At the heart of Qutb's criticism of the West was his sense that Western capitalism lacked compassion for the poor. For him Islam prohibited profiteering at the expense of others in any economic activity. Islam advocated charity, prohibited usury, and demanded that people govern their economic relations according to the common good. For Qutb, this feature was lacking in the West.

Not only has the West been intent upon political subjugation, it has also succeeded through the more insidious process of cultural colonization in divorcing Muslims from their beliefs and sense of social responsibility, which had up to the modern era remained intact. ... In pre-modern Islamic discourses the term ‘justice’ (‘adl) referred to a condition of ‘balance’ or ‘equilibrium’ that resulted when a just prince was able to maintain the proper order of society. In Qutb’s view, as in al-Banna’s, far from being a benevolent mentor to Muslim peoples, the West and its domestic agents were adversaries intent on the political and cultural conquest of the Islamic world.⁹

If, moreover, the post-colonial countries were not following the Americans then they were following Russian communism, another godless form of materialism. For Qutb Islam had instead at its heart a sincere and purer moral consciousness without greed.

Mawdudi and Qutb regarded the Muslim world as steeped in *jahiliyya*, “ignorance” of the divine mandate. Post-colonial Islamic countries followed the leadership offered by the West, emulated its ways, and courted its favour. Egypt's political elite was a pack of hirelings in the pay of the West: “mercenary writers and journalists” and “professional men of religion who sold themselves, not to God or the homeland, but to Satan.” These Westernizers had given birth to the “‘brown English’ ... intent on perpetuating the

materialist and aggressive values of the foreign power [in Egypt]. It was a light thing for them to disparage Islam as a ‘relic of backwardness and decline.’”¹⁰ Qutb talked of ‘American Islam’, that version that restricted the practice of Islam to the realm of devotion and ritual and kept it out of the social and political arena. It was this Islam, he believed, that the West desired Muslims to follow. The call to renewal has led to the call to regard leaders of traditional Muslim countries who do not follow the full Islamic program as opponents and in the *dar al-harb* (house of war; see below).

In Pakistan the Islamisation movement has led to increasing violence in the political arena, and frequently a refusal to accept democratic decisions if they are perceived as less than a complete return to Islam. Under the aegis of JI and other organizations, thousands of madrassas were set up in Pakistan to teach Islam from its original sources, the Quran and Hadith. It was from these madrassas that the Taliban movement was formed which sought to conquer Afghanistan, and welcomed Osama bin Laden and others to base their *jihad* there. Afghanistan and Pakistan have been cradles of the Islamic revival, attracting young Muslims worldwide to the madrassas and to learn to fight, after which they would return to their native countries to spread the message and set up Islamic organisations.

Taliban means ‘students’ and refers to the students of these Pakistani madrassas. Its mullahs have no education beyond being literate in the Quran, the Hadith and the sharia. All learning is by rote, learning by heart and with no questioning. The rise of the Taliban was due entirely to this system of education, involving blind obedience and discouraging personal reflection and questioning. The Taliban movement began with a call to arms among the students of madrassas in Pakistan against the Russian control of Afghanistan from 1979, and produced a ready source of young men inspired by the simple teaching of men like Mawdudi. The Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid wrote of the formation of the Taliban under the leadership of Mullah Omar:

All those who gathered round Omar were ... deeply disillusioned with the factionalism and criminal activities of the once idealized

⁶ John Calvert p121

⁷ Ibid quoted p150

⁸ Ibid p152, quoting “Amrika Allati Ra’ayt: Fi Mizan al-insaniyya,” *Al-Risala*, no. 959 (19 November 1951), 1301-2

⁹ Ibid 137-8

¹⁰ Ibid p159-60

Mujaheddin leadership. They saw themselves as the cleansers and purifiers of a guerrilla war gone astray, a social system gone wrong and an Islamic way of life that had been compromised by corruption and excess. Many of them had been born in Pakistani refugee camps, educated in Pakistani *madrassas* and had learnt their fighting skills ... in Pakistan. ... from their *madrassas* they learnt about the ideal Islamic society created by the Prophet Mohammed 1,400 years ago and this is what they wanted to emulate. ... Omar himself gave a simple explanation: “*We took up arms to achieve the aims of the Afghan jihad and save our people from further suffering at the hands of the so-called Mujaheddin. We had complete faith in God Almighty. We never forgot that. He can bless us with victory or defeat.*”¹¹

It is inaccurate to classify these young men as fundamentalists, as if there is an alternative Islam. In its societal aspects Islam is ineradicably a religion of the seventh century. It is original, primitive Islam that students learn through their Islamic societies at British universities or as children in British madrassas which they attend up to five evenings a week.¹² There they are taught that the unbeliever is due little mercy.

Finally, the 9/11 atrocity in New York has acted as a stimulant and catalyst for the Islamic revival in the West. The wearing of the *hijab* and *niqab* by Western Muslims was little practised before 9/11. As a direct result of 9/11 many young Muslim men have sought to emphasize their Islamic identity and their rejection of the West. Revived Islam has now gained a place in European countries.

6. Islam and the Jews

Mohammed had at first a favourable attitude towards the Jews. His choice of home for his movement, Medina, was a town where Judaism was widely practised. The direction of prayer for his followers was initially toward Jerusalem. His later hatred of the Jews appears to have resulted from rejection. A ‘reliable’ Hadith says: “*The hour [of resurrection] will not be established until you fight 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.” (Bukhari 4:94/2926).¹³ Jewish communities have nevertheless been permitted to live in Islamic countries. Until 1947, for instance, about one third of the population of Baghdad was Jewish, a community that stemmed from Old Testament times.

Many Jews migrated to Palestine in the 1930s as a result of Nazi persecution, and more after 1945. The growing concentration of Jews seeking to create a lasting homeland led to many injustices committed against the indigenous Arabs as well as Arab reprisals on the Jews. The State of Israel was declared in 1948, at which point the conflict took on international significance. During the fighting, between 583,000 and 609,000¹⁴ Arabs fled the country or were driven out. The humiliation of the Arab forces that fought against the Jewish State, together with the resulting Jewish jurisdiction over land that had formerly been Muslim-ruled, incensed Arab-Muslim feeling against Jews. (Q2:191 commands the retaking of such land.) As hatred grew Jews were expelled from Arab lands where they had lived for centuries, particularly after the six-day war of 1967.

Arab nationalism has become identified with hatred of Jews. The stoking of hatred against the Jews by Arab Muslim leaders as a focus for unity is now a common phenomenon that makes it virtually impossible for Jews to live in Muslim lands. This hatred has since become part of the worldwide Muslim mentality and generates acts of violence. In his desire to become the populist Pan-Arab leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the former president of Egypt (1956-70), was a prominent initiator of this practice. He sought to create a common identity for Arabs as well as a common enemy in the Jews.

A thriving Israel acts as a continual reminder to Arab Muslims of their failure to develop their economies or educate their people to international standards. Muslims have comprised 12-20% of the world’s population during the 20th century but have

¹¹ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, 2001, Pan Books, London, p.23.

¹² www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-15256764. A personal account: blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/8983/what-really-happens-inside-a-madrassa

¹³ Bukhari references are from Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, 9 Volumes, Translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Darussalam, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1997. The digit before the colon refers to the volume, those after to the paragraph, and the number after the slash to the specific hadith. Numbering systems for Bukhari often differ between editions, including online versions.

¹⁴ These figures are from Ephraim Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed*, Yale University Press, 2010, pp264-272.

won only two Nobel Prizes awarded for science, or 0.36% of the 558 science prize winners to date. Both scholars received their advanced research training outside the Islamic world.

7. Recent Islamic Conflicts

Islamic violence against minorities in predominately Islamic countries is universal, extreme, and rarely condemned by other Muslims. Some examples follow. Unhappily it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Islam is wedded to violence.

In 1979 Pakistan's sharia courts issued *hudood* ordinances introducing strict sharia law in that country. Four Muslim men would now be required as witnesses to prove a woman's charge of rape. A thirteen year old girl became pregnant after being raped by her uncle. As she could not provide four male witnesses to the crime and her pregnancy was evident, she was convicted of adultery and sentenced to a public lashing and three years imprisonment. The sentence was suspended until her child was two years old.¹⁵

Professor J. T. Joseph of Newman College, Thodupuzha, Kerala, India set an examination paper on English comprehension including a person with the name of 'Mohammed.' Although Prof. Joseph had an unblemished record of twenty five years and intended no reference to Islam's prophet, this was deemed offensive to Islam. Eight students attacked him on 4th July 2010, cutting off his hand. Muslim preachers publicly applauded the act, and Prof. Joseph was dismissed from his post at the Christian-run college on 4th September for his insult to the Muslim community. One of the accused, Anas Vazhakulam, of no prior political involvement, stood for a local election in October 2010 and won a large majority due to his involvement in the attack on Prof. Joseph. It is clear that the local Muslim community consented to the violence and the subsequent sacking. A similar situation arose in Sudan in November 2007 when a 54-year-old British

teacher, Gillian Gibbons, inadvertently chose the name Mohammed for a toy stuffed animal. Only concerted international pressure prevented her from receiving a likely fatal 40 lashes.

In Nigeria the introduction of sharia law in the north has led to considerable violence against non-Muslims. Churches are often attacked, permits to build churches denied, and Christians forced to wear Islamic dress or face sacking from government jobs.

The following story involves violence against a Muslim magistrate who stood up for the principle of law. Two teenage girls, Mary Chikodi and Unche Edwarda, were abducted and forcibly converted to Islam in Bauchi State on 12th May 2009, and were taken to Kano State. The Muslim Emir of Ningi in Bauchi, Alhaji Mohammed Mahbishi, located the girls and had them returned to their parents. The Emir's house was ransacked by enraged Muslims and his furniture burned in the street.¹⁶ Such violence intimidates all but the most courageous, causing the majority to keep quiet and undermining the rule of law.

Abductions of Christian girls are frequent in Muslim countries, with the authorities usually unwilling to get involved. The Catholic Agenzia Fides¹⁷ claims that in the Punjab at least 700 Christian girls are abducted each year, and over 1800 Hindu girls. In Egypt the practice has intensified since the revolution which ousted Hosni Mubarak, with the authorities neither stopping nor returning the girls. Muslims who oppose this violence are universally in danger.

It is well known that the punishment for apostasy from Islam is death (Q4:89), and there is widespread support for it in Islamic countries.¹⁸ Consequently even those who have converted to Christianity in the UK are often at risk, facing violence and death threats.

Those in predominantly Muslim countries live at risk of their lives. Many face the choice of emigration to the West or death. In fact few if any states carry out the death penalty, which is left to lynch mobs. If

¹⁵ Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, p269, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1988 (No year or name given by author). According to Nonie Darwish, in *Cruel and Unusual Punishment*, Thomas Nelson, Tennessee, 2008 (p67), 75% of women in prison in Pakistan are jailed for sexual crimes, frequently raped but unable to produce four male witnesses. Darwish cites similar instances to Benazir Bhutto on p63-4.

¹⁶ Religious Intolerance, A Threat to Nigeria's Unity, Stefanos Foundation, Jos, Nigeria, 2010, p84

¹⁷ 24th Jan 2012 cf:

Fides.org/aree/news/newsdet.php?idnews=30845&lan=eng

¹⁸ The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society. Report of the Pew Forum, April 2012 based on a detailed poll of 38,000 Muslims worldwide.

Muslims speak out against such punishments they are often killed. This happened in Pakistan on 4th January 2011 when the Punjabi Governor Salman Taseer (who sought to end the law punishing blasphemy without evidence by death) was murdered. His killer, Malik Mumtaz Hussain Qadri, was showered with rose petals on appearing in court and was almost universally regarded as a hero. Few other than family attended the Governor's funeral and there was a notable absence of government ministers, who feared being implicated in blasphemy and thereby risking death.

As Islamic state after Islamic state responds to popular demands for increased Islamization, Algeria in the 1990s is the benchmark for the return to the seventh century. Algeria is also the first country in which jihadists returning from the struggle against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan exerted a profound influence. For Ali Belhaj, one of two main leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIA), democracy was a foreign innovation contrary to divine order. He said: "*When we are in power there will be no more elections because God will be ruling*," eliciting the comment that an Islamic vote was one man, one vote, one time. This was openly stated in the build-up to the 1991 election. The FIA would also institute full sharia law. In the first stage of a two stage election in December 1991 the FIA received an overwhelming victory. The people were obviously prepared to forgo future votes as long as an Islamic society was inaugurated.

The second stage of the election was then cancelled by the ruling military junta. A civil war followed in which between 100,000 and 200,000 persons died. The Islamic Army Group (GIA) developed out of the FIA, which was regarded as too moderate, with other splinter paramilitary organizations causing much loss of life. In August 1994 the GIA started threatening schools with arson attacks if they allowed classes of girls and boys together, or music (which is largely interpreted as forbidden by Islam), gym for girls, or if girls did not wear the hijab. Assassinations continued, including politicians, artists, sportsmen, unveiled women and then anybody who did not actively share the terrorists' vision. Voting boycotts became the norm and the GIA threatened to kill anybody who voted. The GIA's killing continued, including whole villages massacred with

mutilations and dismemberment. The killings were called an "offering to God," with victims considered apostates and deserving of death. Eventually the horror of the killings revolted the populace, and the GIA and similar groups lost support allowing a victory for the government against Islamic political parties.

A further recent conflict took place in the Sudan from approximately 2001, leading to a refugee crisis and the starvation of up to half a million people in Darfur. This was entirely due to an Arabification-Islamization policy by the Arab Government conducted largely against Muslim people of black African origin, supported by arms and money from Libya.

Since December 2010, when the 'Arab Spring' began, minorities have suffered. In Egypt violence incited in Friday mosque sermons has increased. Mohammed said: "*Go to the people who do not join the congregational prayer and order their homes to be burnt*" (Sahih Muslim 2:234). There is considerable pressure on Coptic Christians, of whom approximately 200,000 left Egypt between January 2011 and July 2012, prompting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to refer to "*the Egyptian government's failure to curb rising violence against the Coptic Christians and its involvement in violent attacks.*"¹⁹

Samuel Huntington looked at statistics from three studies of war. "*Three different compilations of data thus yield the same conclusion: In the early 1990s Muslims were engaged in more intergroup violence than were non-Muslims, and two-thirds to three-quarters of intercivilizational wars were between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam's borders are bloody, and so are its innards.*"²⁰ "*Wherever one looks along the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peacefully with their neighbours... Muslims make up about one-fifth of the world's population but in the 1990s they have been far more involved in intergroup violence than the people of any other civilization.*"²¹ Huntington continues: "*Muslim states also have had a high propensity to resort to violence in international crises, employing it*

¹⁹ <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/30/usa-religion-idINL2E8IUBQ620120730>

²⁰ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, New York, 2003, p257-8

²¹ Ibid p256

to resolve 76 crises out of a total of 142 in which they were involved between 1929 and 1979. ... When they did use violence Muslim states used high-intensity violence, resorting to full-scale war in 41 percent of the cases ... and engaging in major clashes in another 38 percent of the cases. While Muslim states resorted to violence in 53.5 percent of their crises, violence was used by the United Kingdom in only 11.5 percent, by the United States in 17.9 percent, and by the Soviet Union in 28.5 percent of the crises in which they were involved.”²²

Muslim fertility is an important factor in the impact of Islam. In the early 1990s the fertility rate for Russian women was 1.5. For Muslims in the republics of former Soviet Central Asia it was 4.4. In Bosnia in 1961, Serbs constituted 43% and Muslims 26%. By 1991 the figures were 31% and 44%; almost reversed. Today in Bosnia Muslims comprise 48%. In Lebanon, a Christian majority nation (54%) in 1932 is in 2013 a Muslim majority nation (59-60%). These high birth rates have political effects and also produce a large number of young men. This factor has led to a rise in the proportion of Muslims in the world population from 15% in 1970 to nearly 25% in 2013. Huntington states that any society with a large group of under-employed young males would be unstable.

This also means that immigrant communities in the West have many more children than indigenous families, a fact that is particularly true of Muslim Pakistani immigrants, with a female reproductive rate of 3 as opposed to indigenous women with approximately 1.25.²³ This demographic difference will have indelible consequences, particularly in Britain with its large Pakistani community and its persistently high fertility, whereas in other European Muslim communities fertility has tended to decline on relocating to the West. The rise in the Muslim population through high birth rates has been frequently suggested and encouraged by Muslim leaders as a means of Islamization in the West.

²²Ibid, p258.

²³ *How Civilizations Die* by D. Goldman, Regnery Publishing, Washington DC, 2011, p43. There are no figures for white women in British statistics, but based on Goldman's figures in America, Israel and Europe this would be a good estimate. Not all Muslim countries are experiencing this increase and Turkey, Iran, Tunisia and Algeria are notable exceptions.

8. Jihad and Sharia

The Bedouin society which dominated 7th Century Arabia was not primarily agricultural, but nomadic. To augment their scanty resources, tribes and sub-tribes would raid each other, killing or being killed. In their arid and wild desert home, no army could conquer the Bedouin. In this society, honour came through the strength of the warrior, and the reward for prowess was many wives and slaves brought back from raids.

Mohammed's new code was quickly adopted as it was based on the Arab tradition of nomads and raiders and let followers call their way of life 'holy war' (*jihad*), except that the limitation of loyalty to the tribe was expanded to the entire Muslim people. The mentality of raiding and war remained the same. If the warrior lives he has slave wives; if he dies then he gets the same in heaven. To die in *jihad* is an assurance that one's sins are forgiven (Q61:10-12) and is the only sure passage to paradise, which is portrayed in highly sensual masculine terms - reposing on couches adorned with precious stones accompanied by bashful virgins with large black eyes (Q56). Mohammed warned: "*Know that paradise is under a shade of swords*" (Bukhari 4:156/3025), and stated that "*I have been made victorious with terror*" (Bukhari 4:122/2977).

The shift to *jihad* against non-Muslims was the most significant aspect of the early history of Islam. The movement divided the world into *dar al-Islam* (house of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (house of war). This removed from Bedouin society the irritant of intertribal warfare, which had hitherto prevented the Bedouin from becoming anything more than a minor fractious people, and created a unity that facilitated extraordinary expansion.

Many Muslims, particularly in the West, seek to soften the meaning of 'holy war' into 'religious struggle' in the sense of personal spiritual development. This sense of *jihad* is not the historic meaning of the term, and it is not found in Arabic dictionaries such as Hans Wehr's authoritative work of 1961-74.

Mohammed Muhsin Khan, in his commentary on Al Bukhari says: "*Al-Jihad (holy fighting) in Allah's cause (with full force of numbers and weaponry), is given the*

utmost importance in Islam, and is one of its pillars (on which it stands). By jihad Islam is established, Allah's word is made superior. ... By abandoning jihad, (may Allah protect us from that), Islam and the Muslims fall into an inferior position, their honour is lost, their land is stolen, their rule and authority vanish. Jihad is an obligatory duty in Islam, on every Muslim, and he who tries to escape from this duty or does not in his innermost heart wish to fulfil this duty, dies with one of the qualities of a hypocrite.”²⁴ This is confirmed by Q9:41: “Go forth [to war], whether [armed] lightly or heavily. Make jihad with your wealth or your lives for Allah's sake. This is best for you, if you but knew it.” The inference is clear: make jihad, whatever your means. Fight, whether you are armed well or poorly, and if you can't do that, use your wealth so others can. Seeking a way out of jihad is a form of unbelief (Q9:45), for which the reward is hell (Q9:49).

Muslims frequently say that Islam is peace, stating that the Arabic word *Islam* is derived from *salam*, meaning ‘peace’. This is misleading. Although *salam* and *islam* share a common root they are derived from different verbal forms. The derivation of the noun *islam* is from ‘submission’, not from *peace*. Consider for instance Q9:5: “Kill the heathen wherever you find them, and capture them and besiege them, and lie in wait for them in each and every ambush.”²⁵

During *jihad* Mohammed permitted the killing of women and children (Bukhari, 4:146/3012), and allowed people who re-converted from Islam to be tortured to death (Bukhari 4:152/3018). Mohammed sent men to kill others deceitfully (Bukhari 4:158/3031), and ordered the killing of defenceless prisoners (Bukhari 4:169/3044). In regard to insistence that Islam is peace, Mohammed allowed deception for the purpose of advancing Islam. This is known as *taqiyya* and permits a Muslim to lie to a non-Muslim. It is often used by Muslims to mislead Christians. The purpose of *taqiyya* is to confuse and split the enemy, so that they can be conquered for Islam. The eminent Islamic scholar al-Ghazali wrote in the 12th century, “If a praiseworthy aim is attainable through both telling the truth and lying, it is

unlawful to accomplish through lying... When it is possible to achieve such an aim by lying but not by telling the truth, it is permissible to lie if attaining the goal is permissible, and obligatory to lie if the goal is obligatory.”²⁶

Western politicians, whose secular mindset considers religion a private matter, too readily accept from Muslim leaders the assurance that Islam is peaceful and respectful of others.

The sharia (law) is taken from both the Quran and the Hadith. It is the code of seventh century desert culture. Differing schools are of differing severity but all relate to every area of life including hygiene, sexual ethics, economics, politics, and crime and punishment.

Whereas Christianity from the first century and Judaism from about one thousand years later gave respect to women by requiring monogamy, Islam is locked to the law code of the desert nomad, permitting multiple slave wives and child brides. Mohammed had sexual relations with Ayesha from the time she was six when he married her, and full intercourse from the time she was nine.

According to sharia a man can divorce any of his wives by saying ‘I divorce you’ three times. A woman cannot normally divorce her husband without his consent and usually cannot remarry. In court a woman’s witness is deemed worth half that of a man’s. The Quran permits a husband to beat his wife merely on the suspicion that she is rebellious (Q4:34). The woman must cover herself up. She is not required to attend mosque but is required to stay at home. A hadith says: “Woman is awrah (pudenda). When she goes outside (the house) the devil welcomes her.”²⁷ In a hadith that is weakly attested but still accepted by many Muslims Mohammed calls for female ‘circumcision.’²⁸ This practice is common among African Muslim communities, including those transplanted to the UK. It is estimated that 66,000 women and girls living in the UK have suffered genital mutilation, with 2100 visiting British hospitals

²⁴ From *Ihya ulum al-din*, chapter: *The extent to which lying is permissible*.

²⁵ Kanz-el-Ummal, Vol. 22, Hadith No. 858.

²⁶ Abu Dawud, translated by Yaser Qadhi, Darussalam Riyadh, (2008), 5271: It is related ... that a woman used to circumcise females in Al Medinah, and the Prophet said to her: “Do not go to extremes in cutting, for that is better for the woman and more liked by the husband” (*da’if*).

²⁴ Comment at opening of Al Bukhari, ‘The Book of Jihad’, Vol 4, Chapter 1, p44.

²⁵ There are 34 quranic ‘sword verses’ of this sort, and many more jihad verses.

or clinics since 2006 as a result of which 700 needed surgery or further treatment.²⁹

A woman must cover her body head to foot when not at home. “*What seventh-century Bedouin women needed to wear ... has become a shield of isolation and a symbol of subjugation in the twenty-first century. Besides the increased sense of alienation, the niqab is unfriendly. It sends the message, ‘I do not want to know you on a personal basis...’ Hiding the face in particular can also be intimidating and frightening for others, because people do not know who is under the garb.*”³⁰

The *fatwa*, or legal decision by a Muslim scholar, is an aspect of sharia. It is not easy for ordinary Muslims to ignore these as non-compliance can be seen as a form of apostasy. They may be on mild issues with compliance not mandatory, but they can also involve coercion. Application of the Quran and Hadith in the present era can have bizarre outcomes. In 2007 a *fatwa* was issued by Dr. Izzat Atiya of al-Azhar University in Cairo allowing women to breastfeed male colleagues at work, thereby allowing women and men who were not related by family to be in the same office (something otherwise prohibited) by creating a kinship link between them. The precedent is in a hadith, “*Ayesha would follow that decision [of Mohammed’s] and would command her sister’s daughters to breast-feed five times those whom [she] wished to visit her, even if he was an adult, and they would visit her.*”³¹ After extensive criticism for bringing shame upon Islam Izzat Atiya withdrew his *fatwa*, but it was entirely consistent with Islamic use of hadith as legal precedent.

Fatwas frequently call for the death of individuals. An example is Taslima Nasrin, a Bangladeshi writer who is deemed to have insulted or criticized Islam. Despite worldwide acclaim it has proved impossible for Nasrin to live in either Bangladesh or India. Her works have been banned by the Bangladeshi government. Muslim groups have threatened to burn her alive. The *fatwa* invites vigilante action. There are numerous other examples. Nonie Darwish writes of the

fatwa: “*It is like living with a permanent maniac or in a hostage crisis. We must not anger the sharia maniac who lurks about ready to kill those whom he thinks has violated [Islam].*”³²

9. Islam and the Secular West

Since World War II, Western society has abandoned faith and chosen consumerism, multiculturalism and sexual freedom. (By multiculturalism is meant an ethos which denies the host culture primacy.) Bit by bit the trappings of Christianity have been removed, and society implicitly has chosen no goal other than wealth creation and the negative freedom that permits each person to follow the dictates of his own often unguided conscience.

T.S. Eliot wrote in 1939: “*By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of getting on to which the alternative is a hopeless apathy, Liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanised or brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.*”³³ (Eliot is using the American rather than the British meaning of liberalism.) This control, exerted through ever increasing legislation, replaces the moral consciousness that the Bible had fostered. Society has changed radically and this trend is accelerating. This movement replaces a view of society that was heavily influenced by Christian principles with one that is at heart atheistic and hedonistic. Biblical Christians increasingly find themselves attacked and defeated in the courts for their Biblical standards, and sacked at work for holding views incompatible with the new orthodoxy. Some Christians have collaborated in the undermining of the Christian ethos.

People now choose self over their parental or marital responsibilities. Since the

²⁹ Reported in London *Evening Standard*, 14th March 2013 following article the previous week in the *Daily Mail*.

³⁰ Nonie Darwish, *Cruel and Unusual Punishment*, Thomas Nelson, Tennessee, 2008, p81.

³¹ Ibid Abu Dawud, 2061; *sahih*.

³² Nonie Darwish, *ibid*, p150.

³³ T.S. Eliot, *Christianity and Culture*, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc. New York, 1940, 1949.

1960s family breakdown has become widespread. UK statistics for unmarried cohabitation, divorce and children living with one parent all show a ‘hockey-stick’ trend from 2-5% over several centuries to 20-50% since the 1960s.³⁴ More than half of all births are now to unmarried women. In 2008 a senior family court judge, Mr Justice Coleridge, warned: “*We are experiencing a period of family meltdown whose effects will be... catastrophic... stable family life has been co-extensive... with a stable and balanced society... almost all of society's social ills can be traced directly to the collapse of family life.*” He spoke of a “*ceaseless river of human distress*” passing through his courtroom, and warned of dire effects on national life within 20 years.

A new generation without the values induced through a father’s instruction is creating a society that is more and more lawless, dysfunctional, and unable to seek or even know what is good. The tax-and-welfare system has been subverted in recent decades, penalising marriage financially.³⁵ In schools children face explicit sexualising educational videos. Teenage girls have an incentive to get pregnant, to get their own accommodation and living expenses from the state. Alternatively, the state provides a free abortion service. As a result, Islam has many pertinent criticisms of Western society today. Sharia law tolerates none of these excesses, and is closer regarding sexual morality to Mosaic Law than British law.

Islamic criticism of the financial exploitation of the world’s poor is also valid. Since 1945 Western capitalism in its multi-national corporate and banking form has lost any connection with Puritanism, which provided the bedrock of economic success in Britain and America with its ethic of work, fairness, honesty and service for others to the glory of God. In its place is selfishness and exploitation. Workers, society at large, the customer and the environment are mistreated for the sake of profit. High taxation induced by unrealistic electoral promises has resulted in complex tax avoidance schemes that benefit only the rich. The new barons of

Western society are the chief executives of large companies, whose remuneration has exceeded all historic bounds, and investment bankers whose losses are covered by governments or central banks and whose profits come from speculation that siphons off the collective wealth for fewer and fewer people.

How much longer Western society can continue with such imbalances we do not know, but we believe that in the absence of a change of course there will come a terrible correction such as history has produced when there have been similar imbalances.

In *Sex and Culture* (1934), J.D. Unwin looked at more than 80 cultures. He found that a people grew strong when they practised abstinence before marriage and lasting fidelity within it, and fell soon after becoming promiscuous. Marriage is basic to humanity; wherever the family has broken down, the way of life associated with stability and security has followed suit. That is because the principles of loyalty and how to get on with people, necessary for society to function, are learned first within the family by the personal example of parents. Will Durant, the author of a multi-volume world history, said that “*a great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself within.*”³⁶ Our ancestors might understand better than us that Islam could represent *the rod of mine anger* (Isaiah 10:5).

It is partly these aspects of Western society that fuels so many young Muslim men to react violently in their hatred of their Western host countries. Nevertheless the extreme violence they resort to is not excusable and they must be dealt with impartially under the law.

10. Moderate Islam

Many moderate Muslims ardently reject violence.

The Ahmadiyya sect of Islam firmly disavows violence. In 1974 the Pakistani State declared them to be non-Muslims. They suffer state persecution and under a law of 1984 they are forbidden to recite the Muslim

³⁴ These statistics and the link to dysfunction are proven in the UK Centre for Social Justice’s 2011 paper *History and Family: Setting the Record Straight*.

³⁵ *The taxation of families 2010/11* by Don Draper, Leonard Brighton and Alistair Pearson. This and related material is available online at: <http://www.care.org.uk/advocacy/family/family-fiscal-policy>

³⁶ Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization* vol. 3: Caesar and Christ, Epilogue, p.665 (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1944).

creed, call their own places of prayer ‘mosques’, pray in other mosques, or even call themselves Muslims on pain of imprisonment. In May 2010 an Islamic attack on two Ahmadi mosques killed 95 people.

Dr Usama Hasan of the Quilliam Foundation, a counter-extremism think-tank in the UK says: “*Reformers argue convincingly that all these verses [advocating violence, slavery, lower status for women] were specific stages in the process of liberation...*”³⁷ He rejects Quranic literalism which advocates stonings amputations or beheadings. Moderate Muslims like him have reversed the doctrine of abrogation and believe that the peaceful verses of the Quran supersede those of violence and war.

However, the burden of proof lies with moderate Muslims to show that Islam can accept the concept of different Quranic interpretations in good conscience. Unfortunately, this concept destroys Islam’s inner rationale: its great *tawhid* that God revealed his absolute will in the Quran.

For mainstream Islamic reformers worldwide, there can be no firm historical or process-driven reading of the Quran. There are constant calls to return to the full force of the original meaning of the verses, which are considered to be the timeless will and thought of God. This is the reading that dominates all Islamic States, notably Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

II. Engaging with Muslims

Christians must take seriously the great commission to bring the Gospel to all peoples. The great challenge today is to bring the Gospel to Muslims. With so much common ground of Biblical characters and with the high Muslim respect for Jesus, much could be achieved. Many Muslims today are having visions of Jesus Christ and becoming Christians. We take this to be God’s generous response to the sincerity of Muslims to worship their Creator as fully as possible. In evangelism it may be helpful to invite Muslims to read about Jesus for themselves not only in the Quran but also in the Bible. For the Quran states: “*So if you are in any doubt concerning*

that which we have revealed to you, then ask those who are reading the Book before you” (Q10:94).

Partnerships with Muslims can be proposed to advance shared aims, for instance against graphic and morally subversive sex education taking place in schools. As friendships develop, opportunities may arise to share in deeper ways. In all interactions with Muslims it is important to be aware that alcohol is forbidden (Q5:90-91), as is pork (Q2:173). It is best to use a Bible without photographs or any handwritten notes, which Muslims would regard as showing disrespect for the holy word. Many Muslims wash their hands before handling the Quran, so the Bible should be kept off the floor with nothing put placed on top of it.

It is wiser to ask questions than to contradict or criticize. Muslims are bound by admirable codes of etiquette and courtesy. A Christian man should not expect to talk to a veiled woman and should not offer her his hand. Muslims rarely understand that modern Western immorality is the result of turning from Christian teaching, and they can be pleasantly surprised to find Christians sharing their horror at modern family breakdown and promiscuity. If they insist that the West is Christian, Christians can invite them to read what the gospels say Christianity is for themselves.

It is important to be aware that many Muslims regard Christians as tritheists for worshipping the Holy Trinity (Q4:171, 5:73). Affirm also that Mary is not divine and that she conceived her son as a virgin, as attested in the Quran (Q3:47). You can give your own testimony of knowing that your sins are forgiven once you come to believe in Jesus Christ, and how it changed you. Explain that Jesus could have destroyed his opponents with a word but that he chose to give his life for his brothers (John 10:18). Help Muslims to see this as an act of love and strength, not of weakness! He showed his power in defeating death by returning to life.

12. Sources of Islam

In this document we have generally taken the Quran, Hadith and Ishaq’s *Life of Mohammed* at face value, because they are regarded as normative by Muslims and

³⁷ Dr. Usama Hasan 1/6/2013, The Tablet, London, p4

represent the authentic face of Islam today. The Islamic account of their writing is open to question, however. Below are some of the more important critical issues.

The earliest Islamic hard copies we have can be dated to several generations after Mohammed's time. Evidence datable to that long gap reveals some surprising discrepancies. Early accounts written by peoples conquered by the Arabs do not use the names Mohammed, Islam, Muslim nor the Quran, and the conquerors do not mention Islam, Mecca or the Quran for at least six decades, during which mention of Mohammed is not specific and in two cases is related to a Cross. In one inscription Muawiya is associated with a Cross. The change to canonical Islam becomes clear in the 690s under Abd al-Malik, who with his subordinate Hajjaj ibn Yusuf claimed in various Hadiths to have collected the Quran (contradicting the standard Islamic account that it was collected earlier). The Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount in Jerusalem was completed in 691 and its internal inscriptions use a different text of the Quran from subsequently, indicating that the text was not at that time finalized. Many other inscriptions from the earliest times are consistent with a broadly Bible-based monotheism that denied Jesus' divinity, suggesting a very different origin of Islam than Islam itself asserts.

The Quran shows a clear change in the conception of the revealed nature of God between the Meccan and the Medinan constituent portions. The Quran also states in several places that Mohammed did not perform any miracle (Q17:92-97; Q18:10), whereas various hadiths that are quoted as *sahih* (reliable) have him performing several miracles. This discrepancy proves that parts of either the Quran or Hadith are wrong.

Muslims do accept that not all hadiths are authentic. Bukhari accepted only about one in a hundred. They are traditionally authenticated by quoting the chain (*isnad*) of people involved in the transmission from the event to the time they were written down. There are severe tensions between hadiths, and evidence that some were created by Sunni and Shia factions to claim Mohammed's authority in disputes with each other.

The critical study of Islamic source texts by scholars is still in its infancy, but

undoubtedly has significant implications for the faith of the Muslim community.³⁸

13. Concerns

We reject the view that Christianity and Islam are essentially alternative religions with similar agendas. Christ and Mohammed led very different lives and represent very different forces. The Quran and the Hadith show that Mohammed was often violent, vindictive and cruel as well as a shrewd and careful lawgiver. In following him, sadly, Muslims collectively have been more consistently violent than any other major civilisation. Its system of ethics and law is based on a 7th century desert culture of warring Bedouin tribes. The texts of Islam cannot be changed and under the doctrine of abrogation the violent verses supersede the peaceful. Islam is therefore violent unlike New Testament Christianity. We therefore conclude that there are not two Islams, a peaceful and a violent version, but one. Radical Islam is the real Islam.

We recognize that there are very many peaceful Muslims and that there is a diversity of practice of their religion. Many of us are privileged to know kind, decent and peaceable Muslim neighbours. They are the human face which we gladly acknowledge does not correspond to the violence of Islamic extremists. However, many Muslims, like many Christians, do not diligently read their scriptures and simply assume that their religion is peaceable. Such Muslims do not follow their faith to its logical end. They follow the ethical rules and rightly see that as pleasing to God. They wish to live in the 21st century, not the seventh. They desire peace, not war.

When, however, an impressionable young man is intent on deepening his faith by study there is often the possibility that his study will lead him to violence. In the past, Western governments have been careful to restrict the influence of extreme political movements and minimize their effects. It is now time to consider how this can be done in relation to a system of politics and religion that few in the West have understood and

³⁸ For fuller details see the book "Did Muhammad Exist?" by Robert Spencer (ISI Books, Wilmington, Delaware, USA, 2012), which cites the original sources and recent research into their context and authenticity.

which due to demographic reasons we are no longer shielded from by distance.

Revived Islam in the West is correcting our false sense of security. There are many who seek *jihad* as the essential means of pleasing the warped depiction of the creator God found in the Islamic scriptures. The effect of these scriptures on the minds of impressionable young men seeking meaning for their lives while immersed in a nominal Muslim culture set in a secular society can be seismic. These texts are the breeding ground of terrorism. Islam is not a religion of peace, but of war on the non-Muslim.

It follows that Western Governments should not extend to Islam the latitude that is granted to other religions. More than any other religion in its present revived form Islam refuses to assimilate or acknowledge many of the core values that have underpinned Western society, namely pluralism and tolerance. Appeasement of Islam or the laissez-faire attitude which is characteristic of Western democracy has allowed Islam's influence to grow and increasingly threaten the rest of society - including the society that many decent Muslims prefer to live in. The following points are of particular concern:

- The unwillingness of government and its agencies to apply the law fully and impartially for fear of a Muslim backlash;
- Media unwillingness to present material that is critical of Islam;
- The blind eye of the State to Islamic teaching and preaching that operates against assimilation of Muslim communities;
- The failure to address (or even investigate properly) abuses which have been shown to exist within Quranic schools and madrassas;
- The creeping imposition of sharia law and the enforcement of sharia rulings through the courts;
- The growing power and influence of Islamic finance, which is often used to advance Islam and fund Islamic organizations that foster terrorism;
- The extent of foreign funding of Islamic activity, often of organizations with links to extremism, and the influence of this

funding on the media, universities, museums and elsewhere. Unless money for Islamic building projects can be proved to come from local sources then we believe that planning permission should be withheld;

- The lack of understanding of Islam that is evident in the British government's response to insurgency movements in Muslim countries (such as the 'Arab Spring'), which often lead on to the persecution of Christian and other minorities in unstable and extreme Islamic regimes.

14. Conclusion

It is clearly our responsibility as Christians to have right relationships with individual members of the Muslim community. To achieve this it is important that we should have a deeper understanding of the origins and nature of Islam and of the practices of ordinary Muslims.

There is an immediate need for Christians to extend the hand of friendship and love to our Muslim neighbours, respecting their convictions and being sensitive to their traditions. We need to make every effort to understand the fundamental beliefs and feelings of Muslims in Britain.

It is essential for Christians to fulfil their responsibilities to help to create strong, healthy and balanced communities and at the same time to live and speak the Gospel. We are seeing a new environment emerge, with a large and growing Muslim population. It is important for us to respond with grace and truth to this situation.

We must surely endeavour to be the presence of Christ in our local communities and in our national life, leading men and women into an experience of a loving Father.

Suggested Reading

ISLAMIC PRIMARY SOURCES

The Quran. Various translations.
The holy book of Islam.

Hadith - Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim. Others, eg Sunan Abu Dawoud
Collected sayings of Muhammad, some of more reliable provenance than others.

Ishaq's Sira Rasul Allah (Life of the prophet of Allah)
ISBN 978-0196360331
Biography of Muhammad.

Al-Tabari's History of the Prophets and Kings.
ISBN 978-0-7914-7249-1 and ISBN 978-0-7914-7250-7
An early 10th century Islamic history of the Middle East.

BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.
Life of Mahomet (Washington Irving)

ISBN 978-1425494476
One of the first sympathetic biographies of the founder of Islam produced in the West.

The Great Islamic Conquests AD 632 to 750 (David Nicolle) ISBN 978-1-84603-273-8
Brief account of the first Muslim campaigns against the Byzantine and Persian Empires.

A History of the Crusades (Steven Runciman)
ISBN 014-02-1381-3
Seminal history of the crusading movement.

Empire of the Sea (Roger Crowley)
ISBN 978-0-571-23231-4
Muslim-Christian conflict in the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages and early modern era.

The Last Crusaders (Barnaby Rogerson)
ISBN 978-0-349-11537-5
Portuguese and Spanish attempts to confront Islam in the Middle Ages and early modern era.

The Great Game (Peter Hopkirk) ISBN 0-19-280232-1
Primarily about the contest for supremacy in Central Asia between Britain and Russia, but with good background about the Muslim Khanates of that region and the impact of Islam.

The Clash of Civilisations (Samuel Huntingdon)
ISBN 0-684-84441-9
Analysis of intra-cultural conflict and the part played in this by different systems of belief.

'Facing the Muslim Challenge' (John Gilchrist)
ISBN 0-9583905-5-1

ISLAM'S ORIGINS

Did Muhammad Exist? An Inquiry into Islam's obscure origins (Robert Spencer)
ISBN-10 161017061X, ISBN-13 978-1610170611
A particularly clear overview of the scholarly material covering the long gap between Muhammad's time and the appearance of the Quran and Hadith.

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men: The making of the last prophet (David S. Powers)
ISBN-10 0812241789, ISBN-13 978-0812241785

Proposes that the disinheriting of Muhammad's adopted son Zaid and his (to us) shocking 'stealing' of Zaid's wife was not shocking to contemporaries and that the point of the story is to emphasise that Muhammad had no sons who might continue his prophetic line, making him the final and definitive prophet.

The hidden origins of Islam (edited by Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-R. Puin)
ISBN-10 1591026342, ISBN-13 978-1591026341
A compendium of scholarly papers on the 6th and 7th century Middle East and the rise of Islam. Includes significant numismatic evidence that is hard to square with the conventional Islamic account, and compares the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock against the Quran.

The death of a prophet: the end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam (Stephen J. Shoemaker)
ISBN-10 0812243560, ISBN-13 978 0812243567

Examines about a dozen Byzantine sources contemporary with Islam's early expansion into Byzantine territory and finds that the prophet/leader of the Arab armies was still alive at the time, whereas the Islamic account (of which the earliest copies are dated much later) states that Muhammad had died by then.

Qur'anic Geography (Dan Gibson)
ISBN-10 0973364289, ISBN-13 978-0973364286
Strong arguments that, while Medina is authentic, Mecca does not fit the descriptions of "the holy city" of Islam set in Arabia.

The Syro-Aramaic reading of the Koran (Christoph Luxenberg)
ISBN-10 3899300882, ISBN-13 978-3899300888
Argues philologically that the Quran, although written in Arabic, derives from Syriac sources.

Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation (John E. Wansborough and Andrew Rippin)
ISBN-10 1591022010, ISBN-13 978-1591022015
Argues that the sources of the Quran derive largely from Iraq, consistent with the Syriac theory and the displacement of the Umayyad dynasty by the Abbasids.

SELECTED ANALYSES OF ISLAM

Islam and Christianity (Rev Bruce Green)

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Compares beliefs across a range of issues in a fold-out format, with simple suggestions for correcting misunderstandings.

Windows into the Qur'an: Medinan suras in chronological order 622 to 632 AD (Daniel Scot)

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Analysis of those parts of the Qur'an that date from the period when Mohammed held political power in Medina.

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A study of Islam's treatment of the peoples it conquers.

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A historical study of political Islam and its spread.

The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims (Andrew Bostom, ed.)

ISBN 978-1591-0230-74

After an extended introductory essay, the author collects passages, many historical, from Muslim authors that verify his assertions about the warlike nature of Islam.

The Legacy of Islamic anti-Semitism (Andrew Bostom, ed.)

ISBN 978-1591-0255-42

A major study of Islamic anti-Semitism.

A Summary of the Quran (Daniel Scot)

ISBN 0-646-43900-6

Comments on each sura, including the key verses, by a Christian brought up in Pakistan.

Global Jihad: the future in the face of militant Islam (Patrick Sookhdeo)

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Major book on the mode of expansion of Islam from its beginning to the present, by a Christian who was brought up Muslim.

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The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (Robert Spencer) ISBN 978-0895-2601-30

Detailed summary of Islam.

The Truth about Muhammad: founder of the world's most intolerant religion (Robert Spencer) ISBN 978-1596-9852-85

Biography of Muhammad by an American Catholic.

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