

“Are you Muslim or Christian? We don’t want to kill Muslims.” That’s what the Islamic terrorists reportedly told their innocent prey during a murderous shooting spree last Saturday in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, that left at least 17 civilians dead in the initial assault. 1 How are we to interpret such repeated acts of terrorism, targeting non-Muslims? Perhaps the most influential contemporary doyen lecturing to us about “Islamic fundamentalism” has asserted, in multiple writings since 1990 2, the following: fundamentalism and its accompanying “Muslim rage” derive exclusively from a steady decline in the geopolitical power of Muslim states, evidenced, most dramatically, by the official dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate after World War I, and the creation of the State of Israel after World War II. Despite his erudition, this doyen appears unwilling to examine an obvious alternative explanation for the etiology and persistence of Muslim animus toward non-Muslims- what Muslim children, for generations, have been taught to think about the infidel “other,” regardless of the geopolitical circumstances.

E.W. Lane wrote an informative firsthand account of life in Egypt, particularly Cairo and Luxor, composed after several years of residence there (first in 1825-1828, then in 1833-1835). James Aldridge in his study Cairo (1969) called Lane’s account “the most truthful and detailed account in English of how Egyptians lived and behaved.” 3 Egyptian Muslims, Lane explains, regarded “persons of every other faith as the children of perdition; and such, the Muslim is early taught to despise...I am credibly informed that children in Egypt are often taught at school, a regular set of curses to denounce upon the persons and property of Christians, Jews, and all other unbelievers in the religion of Mohammad.” 4 Lane, who had perfect command of Arabic and went on to write a colossal Arabic-English lexicon, translated the prayer below from a contemporary 19th century text Arabic text. It contains curses on non-Muslims, “which the Muslim youths in many of the schools in Cairo recite, before they return to their homes, every day of their attendance.” 5 One typical curse is:

“I seek refuge with God from Satan the accursed. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. O God, aid El-Islam, and exalt the word of truth, and the faith, by the preservation of thy servant and the son of thy servant, the Sultan of the two continents (Europe and Asia), and the Khakan (Emperor or monarch) of the two seas [the Mediterranean and Black Seas], the Sultan, son of the Sultan (Mahmood) Khan (the reigning Sultan when this prayer was composed). O God, assist him, and assist his armies, and all the forces of the Muslims: O Lord of the beings of the whole world. O God, destroy the infidels and polytheists, thine enemies, the enemies of the religion. O God, make their children orphans, and defile their abodes, and cause their feet to slip, and give them and their families, and their households and their women and their children and their relations by marriage and their brothers and their friends and their possessions and their race and their wealth and their lands as booty to the Muslims: O Lord of the beings of the whole world.”6 (Emphasis added.)

Not surprisingly then, Lane describes how the Jews, for example, were “often...jostled in the streets of Cairo, and sometimes beaten merely for passing on the right hand of a Muslim...(The Jews) scarcely dare ever to utter a word of abuse when reviled or beaten unjustly by the meanest Arab or Turk; for many a Jew has been put to death upon a false and malicious accusation of uttering disrespectful words against the Qur’an or the Prophet. It is common to hear an Arab abuse his jaded ass, and, after applying to him various opprobrious epithets, end by calling the beast a Jew.” 7

Over five decades later, in Tunis, 1888, the following personal account reveals further evidence of the visceral abhorrence and hostility inculcated in Muslim children, specifically, toward non-Muslims: “(The Jew) can be seen to bow down with his whole body to a Muslim child and permit him the traditional privilege of striking him in the face, a gesture that can prove of the gravest consequence. Indeed, the

present writer has received such blows. In such matters the offenders act with complete impunity, for this has been the custom from time immemorial.” 8 (Emphasis added.)

Mary Boyce, Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies and a pre-eminent scholar of Zoroastrianism, spent a 12-month sabbatical in 1963-64 living in the Zoroastrian community of Iran (mostly in Sharifabad, on the northern Yazdi plain). During a lecture series given at Oxford in 1975, 9 she noted how the Iranian ancestors of the Zoroastrians had a devoted working relationship (i.e., herding livestock) with dogs when they lived a nomadic existence on the Asian steppes. This sustained contact evolved over generations such that dogs became “a part in (Zoroastrian) religious beliefs and practices...which in due course became a part of the heritage of Zoroastrianism.” 10 Boyce then provided an historical overview of the deliberate, wanton cruelty of Muslims and their children towards dogs in Iran, including a personal eyewitness account:

In Sharifabad the dogs distinguished clearly between Moslem and Zoroastrian, and were prepared to go...full of hope, into a crowded Zoroastrian assembly, or to fall asleep trustfully in a Zoroastrian lane, but would flee as before Satan from a group of Moslem boys...The evidence points...to Moslem hostility to these animals having been deliberately fostered in the first place in Iran, as a point of opposition to the old (pre-Islamic jihad conquest) faith (i.e., Zoroastrianism) there. Certainly in the Yazdi area...Moslems found a double satisfaction in tormenting dogs, since they were thereby both afflicting an unclean creature and causing distress to the infidel who cherished him. There are grim...stories from the time (i.e., into the latter half of the 19th century) when the annual poll-tax (jizya) was exacted, of the tax gatherer tying a Zoroastrian and a dog together, and flogging both alternately until the money was somehow forthcoming, or death released them. I myself was spared any worse sight than that of a young Moslem girl...standing over a litter of two-week old puppies, and suddenly kicking one as hard as she could with her shod foot. The puppy screamed with pain, but at my angry intervention she merely said blankly, ‘But it’s unclean.’ In Sharifabad I was told by distressed Zoroastrian children of worse things: a litter of puppies cut to pieces with a spade-edge, and a dog’s head laid open with the same implement; and occasionally the air was made hideous with the cries of some tormented animal. Such wanton cruelties on the Moslems’ part added not a little to the tension between the communities. 11

Sorour Soroudi, an Iranian Jewish woman and academic, whose family left Iran in 1970, published this recollection:

“I still remember the rhyme Muslim children used to chant when they saw an Armenian in the streets, ‘Armeni, Armeni-dog, sweeper of hell are you!’ ” 12.

A decade later, anti-infidel discrimination intensified and became state sanctioned policy with the ascent of the Khomeini-lead Shi’ite theocracy in Iran.13 Professor Eliz Sanasarian provides one particularly disturbing example of these policies, reflecting the hateful indoctrination of young adult candidates for national teacher training programs. Affirming as objective, factual history the hadith14 account of Muhammad’s supposed poisoning by a Jewish woman from ancient Khaibar, Sanasarian notes, “Even worse, the subject became one of the questions in the ideological test for the Teachers’ Training College where students were given a multiple-choice question in order to identify the instigator of the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad, the ‘correct’ answer being ‘a Jewess.’” 15

The ongoing proliferation of Saudi Arabian-sponsored educational programs rife with bigotry against non-Muslims has been well documented. A recent comprehensive report provided unambiguous examples of these hatemongering teaching materials, accompanied by this triumphal pronouncement from a Saudi royal family publication: “The cost of King Fahd’s efforts in this field has been astronomical, amounting to many billions of Saudi riyals. In terms of Islamic institutions, the result is

some 210 Islamic centers wholly or partly financed by Saudi Arabia, more than 1,500 mosques and 2,002 colleges and almost 2,000 schools for educating Muslim children in non-Islamic countries in Europe, North and South America, Australia, and Asia.” 16

Vilification of non-Muslims has been intrinsic to the religious education of Muslim children and young adults for centuries, an ignoble (and continuing) tradition that long antedates the modern or even pre-modern Muslim “fundamentalist” revival movements. We must acknowledge this reality and begin to think and act beyond the well-intentioned but limited constructs of even our most respected doyens. Perhaps it would be wise to heed the sober advice of this courageous madrassa dropout and secular Muslim “apostate” Ibn Warraq:

First, we who live in the free West and enjoy freedom of expression and scientific inquiry should encourage a rational look at Islam, should encourage Koranic criticism. Only Koranic criticism can help Muslims to look at their Holy Scripture in a more rational and objective way, and prevent young Muslims from being fanaticized by the Koran’s less tolerant verses... We can encourage rationality by secular education. This will mean the closing of religious madrassas where young children from poor families learn only the Koran by heart, learn the doctrine of Jihad – learn, in short, to be fanatics... My priority would be the wholesale rewriting of school texts, which at present preach intolerance of non-Muslims, particularly Jews. One hopes that education will encourage critical thinking and rationality. Again to encourage pluralism, I should like to see the glories of pre-Islamic history taught to all children. The banning of all religious education in state schools as is the case in France where there is a clear constitutional separation of state and religion is not realistic for the moment in Islamic countries. The best we can hope for is the teaching of Comparative Religion, which we hope will eventually lead to a lessening of fanatical fevers, as Islam is seen as but another set of beliefs amongst a host of faiths. 17

Until Warraq’s recommendations are heeded, we can look forward to an endless jihad.

ENDNOTES:

1. Reuters, “Gunmen hunted “infidel” Westerners”

Sun May 30, 2004 06:30 AM ET,

<http://www.reuters.co.uk/newsPackageArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=520188§ion=news>

2. i.e., Bernard Lewis, for example, in 1990 <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/90sep/rage.htm>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/90sep/rage2.htm>; November/December 1998 “License to Kill: Usama bin Ladin’s Declaration of Jihad”, Foreign Affairs;

2002 <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2002/01/lewis.htm>;

2003 <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/05/lewis.htm>

3. Quoted by J.M. White, in his introduction to, Lane, E.W. *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, New York, 1973, p. v.

4. Lane, E.W. *Modern Egyptians*, p. 276.

5. Lane, E.W. *Modern Egyptians*, p. 575.

6 Lane, E.W. *Modern Egyptians*, p. 575.

7. Lane, E.W. Modern Egyptians, pp. 554-555.

8. Fellah. "The Situation of the Jews in Tunis, September 1888.", Ha-Asif (The Harvest) [Hebrew] 6 (Warsaw, 1889), English translation in, Bat Ye'or, The Dhimmi- Jews and Christians Under Islam, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985, p. 376.

9. Boyce, Mary. A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism (based on the Ratanbai Katrak lectures, 1975), 1977, Oxford.

10. Boyce, M. A Persian Stronghold, p. 139.

11 Boyce, M. A Persian Stronghold, pp. 141-142.

12 Soroudi, Sorour. "The Concept of Jewish Impurity and its Reflection in Persian and Judeo-Persian Traditions" Irano-Judaica 1994, Vol. III, p. 155 (footnote 33):

13 See Tabandeh, Sultanhussein. A Muslim Commentary on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, translated by F.J. Goulding, London, 1970, pp. 17-19. Tabandeh was a Sufi Shi'ite ideologue whose writings had a profound influence on Ayatollah Khomeini's discriminatory policies towards non-Muslims in Iran, as discussed in Sanasarian, Eliz. Religious Minorities in Iran, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 24-27.

14 Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 47, Number 786: Narrated Anas bin Malik: "A Jewess brought a poisoned (cooked) sheep for the Prophet who ate from it. She was brought to the Prophet and he was asked, 'Shall we kill her?' He said, 'No.' I continued to see the effect of the poison on the palate of the mouth of Allah's Apostle."

15 Sanasarian, E. Religious Minorities in Iran, p. 111.

16 Stalinsky, Steven. "Preliminary Overview. – Saudi Arabia's Education System: Curriculum, Spreading Saudi Education to the World and the Official Saudi Position on Education Policy," Middle East Media Research Institute, December 20, 2002.

17 Warraq, Ibn. "A True Islamic Reformation," FrontPageMagazine.com, May 19, 2003

Source: <http://97.74.65.51/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=12788>

Here is a response written to refute this article.

Abdallah says:

September 23, 2011 at 7:10 pm (Edit)

What an utter crock of an article.

Let us look to other sources Henry de Castries wrote in his book entitled 'Islam' in 1896:

"I cannot imagine what the Muslims would say if they heard the tales of the mediaeval ages and understood what the Christian orators used to say in their hymns; all our hymns even those which emerged before the 12th century emanated from one concept which was the cause of the crusades, these hymns were filled with hatred towards the Muslims due to the total ignorance of their religion. As a

result of those hymns and songs, hatred against that religion became fixed in people's minds, and the erroneous ideas deeply rooted, some of which are still carried nowadays. Everyone used to regard the Muslims as polytheists, disbelievers, idol worshippers and apostates."

Or perhaps, we need mention the statement of General Allenby in 1917 on entering Jerusalem: "Only today the crusades have ended."

And yes now we're back to the crusades. You know about them don't you.

Bo Perrin says:

September 23, 2011 at 7:31 pm (Edit)

Truth is a crock to those who refuse to accept, Abdallah. It is easy to find through out history a dhimmi whose desire for peaceful coexistence with a nonpeaceful entity like Islam colors his or her's ability to see the truth. The truth is Islam is a violent theocracy. I mean which of the 109 verses which call for the death of the Kufir would you like me to choose? de Castries' statement simply shows his own self-imposed ignorance of the Qur' an. It could actually be that the lyrics of the songs sung were so because they were not ignorant of the Islamic theocracy. They had first hand experience of so-called Islam peace.

Yes, I know the crusades. You sound a little violent there, Abdallah! I also know that dhimmis like de Castries have twisted the truth about their actual intent as you do now. Yes, I know the real crusades that began when Mohammad attacked Mecca from Medina and then went on an Islamic rampage throughout the middle and near east and into Europe. Those are the real crusades where Islam uses Da'wah and Jihad to force Islam on those who do not want. Yes, we are very aware of the crusades, the real crusades and we are in the midst of those crusades today. The crusades are going on in France, Germany, England and in the States. Your crusades may succeed in Europe and England due to the West ignorance of Islam's true goals. But not in America! The American people are waking up and I proud to have a part in helping my fellow countrymen to understand the reality of jihad.

Nirjhar Mazumder says:

September 24, 2011 at 10:18 am (Edit)

MR Abdullah, Please read the article again. And try to understand the real meaning of it.