

A Religion of Peace, Harmony and Respect for All

Any one who thinks otherwise doesn't know how to read the Koran. So sayeth Osaama Saifi in an HuffPo [article](#).

According to Saifi, the purveyors of the thesis that the Koran endorses vengeance and supremacy by treachery, terror and torture and promotes hatred of the vile Jews (monkeys) and Christians (pigs) are just a bunch of cherry picking idiots. They understand not the literary-poetic style nor the historical context of the passages they quote and they fail to quote the full context of the passages they cite. Moreover, there are verses in the Koran itself which explain how the Koran is to be read and understood. The Koran is to be read with reason, rationality and reflection and not taken in as if it were some cook book recipe.

To back up his claim about verses that explain how the Koran is to be read with reason and reflection, Saifi references but does not quote the following two passages:

The claim, "The Qur'an encourages all to read it and reflect upon it (Chapter 30: Verse 22)." Here is the verse.

Other evidence of His existence are the creation of the heavens and the earth and the differences of languages and colors. In this there is evidence (of the truth) for the worlds (mankind).

The claim, "The Qur'an encourages mankind to test their faith with reason and rationality (Chapter 8: Verse 22)." Here is the verse.

Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason.

Count me among those who fail to see the overpowering effect of these two verses as regards tempering one's understanding of the violent passages in the Koran. The first deals with evidence for Allah's existence and the second states contempt for those who do not use reason. One only wonders why Allah, the all-powerful creator of the universe, bothers to create such creatures. Moreover, such contempt hardly evinces compassion for the misfortunes of one's fellow man. But somehow these two passages instruct how the Koran is to be read?

Saifi then proceeds to the particular passages which foster freedom of choice (Chapter 2: Verse 256), and justice and respect for all human beings (Chapter 25: Verse 8; Chapter 57: Verse 25).

Chapter 2: Verse 256

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things.

And this proves what? There is no need for compulsion in religion? At least not for those who can distinguish truth from error and have the brains to reject the evil of not believing in Allah. And here is what happens to those so lame-brained or evil as not to embrace Allah:

Quran (3:56) – "As to those who reject faith, I will punish them with terrible agony in this world and in the Hereafter, nor will they have anyone to help."

Quran (8:12) – "I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them"

Chapter 25: Verse 8 (fosters justice and respect for all)

Or (why is not) treasure thrown down unto him, or why hath he not a paradise from whence to eat ? And the evil-doers say: Ye are but following a man bewitched.

Chapter 57: Verse 25 (fosters justice and respect for all)

We verily sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance, that mankind may observe right measure; and He revealed iron, wherein is mighty power and (many) uses for mankind, and that Allah may know him who helpeth Him and His messengers, though unseen. Lo! Allah is Strong, Almighty.

Singling out these two verses as fostering justice and respect for all is pretty lame as there is no overt urging of Muslims to show justice and respect for all (including non-believers) or even mention of the words, “justice” or “respect.” To the contrary these verses when read with their accompanying verses support the theme that despite giving clear proofs that Islam is the culmination of the Abrahamic religions and despite the munificence of Allah there are those who through ignorance or evil fail to believe and deserve the wrath of Allah (2:85-99).

Saifi then proceeds to deal with the “misunderstood” so-called “violent” passages in the Koran which he reinterprets as being in reference to those enemies of Islam who would destroy the religion of peace. To wit:

The verse that is most famously quoted from this chapter states, “kill the idolaters wherever you find them and take them prisoners, and beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush.” [but] When this verse is taken into the historical context of the persecution the Muslims were facing, it instructed Muslims to protect themselves for the first time. At that time, there were only a handful of Muslims, and the Meccan attacks threatened Islam itself. This verse was revealed at that time for that specific moment in history, as a means of

self defense.

The Quran contains at least 109 verses that call Muslims to war with nonbelievers for the sake of Islamic rule. Some are quite graphic. The fate of the evil idiots who disbelieve would match that of [Judas Iscariot](#), in Dante's Inferno, whose head is gnawed by Lucifer's mouth and his back forever skinned by Lucifer's claws.

But the larger point here is that the apologists cannot have it both ways. If one must take into consideration the historical context of the violent passages in the Koran – that basically the violence is directed at those who at the time of Muhammad would enslave torture and kill Muslims and eradicate Islam – means that the verses have no universality. That or the historical situation is somehow representative of the perpetual situation the peace-loving Muslims find themselves. Enter Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb. The Muslim community through no fault of their own is perpetually subject to Islamophobia, disrespected, maligned and mocked. Abu Ghraib awaits the innocent Muslims who fail to see the evil that lurks in the hearts of the kafirs.

The leitmotif of Saifi's article, and apologists generally, is that Muslims must defend themselves with the only language the malicious, reason impaired kafirs understand – the language of force, brutality, treachery and terror. It is not their fault that that is the only language their would-be exterminators understand.

Yes. Islam would be a religion of peace were it not for those impervious to truth and reason and who thereby not only fail to embrace Islam but have it in for Muslims generally.