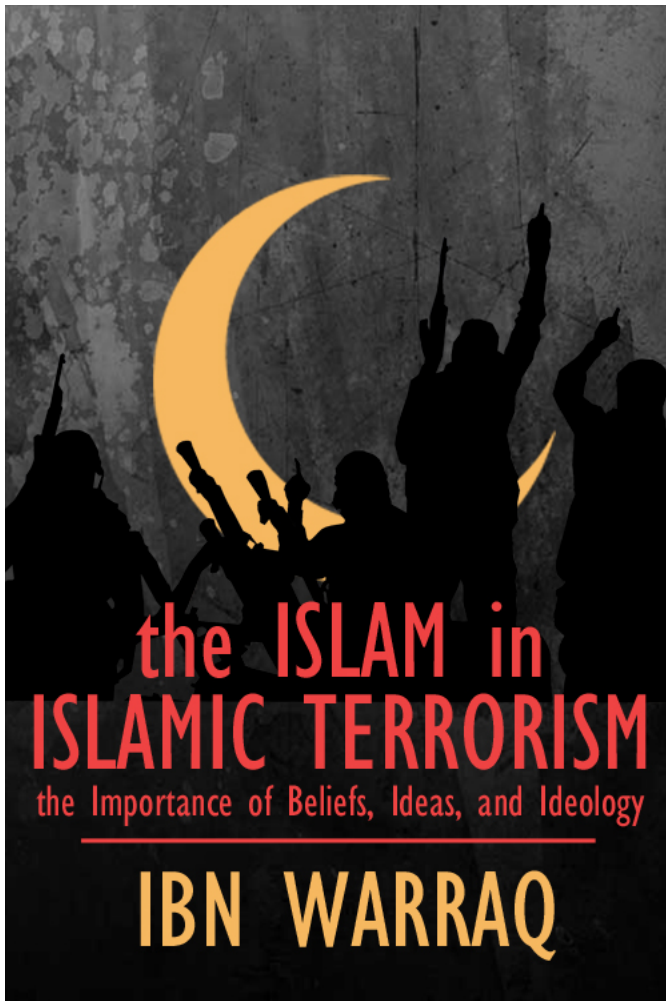


Holy Terror: an Interview with Ibn Warraq

by [Jerry Gordon](#) (July 2017)



On the cusp of the month long obligatory Muslim observances of Ramadan in late May 2017, New English Review Press published an important and timely work by noted former Muslim, Islamic doctrine exegete and colleague, Ibn Warraq: [The Islam in](#)

Islamic Terrorism: The Importance of Beliefs, Ideas, and Ideology

Warraq is the author and editor of such notable works as:

Why I am Not a Muslim (1996)

The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book (1998)

The Quest for the Historical Muhammad (2001)

Leaving Islam: Apostates speak out (2003)

Why the West is Best: A Muslim Apostate's Defense of Liberal Democracy (2007)

Which Koran?: Variants, Manuscripts, Linguistics (2008)

Virgins? What Virgins? and Other Essays (2010)

Sir Walter Scott's Crusades and Other Fantasies (2013)

During Ramadan 2017, Islamic terrorism rose to a crescendo of bloody spectacles across the globe with attacks by jihadists invoking the Islamic profession of fealty "Allahu Akbar" or "God is greatest." Attacks using knives, suicide bombs and vehicles took the lives of over a thousand innocent victims during this year's bloody "holy" month of Ramadan. Jihad attacks wreaking havoc, bloodshed, death and injuries have occurred in far flung locations such as Flint, Michigan, Manchester and London in the UK, Brussels, Paris, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Tehran, Melbourne and Mindanao in the Philippines.

The victims included Christians, Jews and even fellow Muslims. All performed in subservience to the pure Islam practiced by the self-appointed Caliphate of the Islamic State currently the subject of an "annihilation campaign" by a coalition of more than 60 countries led by the United States.

Yet, the Islamic doctrine that Warraq describes in his latest work has endured since "the uncreated words" of Islam's god Allah were propounded by his prophet Muhammad. This doctrine, formulated and followed by Mohammed and his original companions, the *Salafi* or ancient ones, whose exemplary behavior in the barbarous practices of Jihad imposed a totalitarian doctrine more devastating than either Soviet Communism or Nazism on all Muslims and subjugated peoples under *Sharia*, the Holy Islamic Law based on the *Koran*, *Sunna* and the *Hadith*.

Ibn Warraq, in his latest work, addresses numerous misconceptions regarding the cause of Islamic terrorism. Many scholars refuse to take into account the beliefs of terrorists, and many seem to think that "Islamic Terrorism" has emerged only in the past forty years or so.

Many analysts believe that the United States is targeted because of its foreign policy, while others opine that we have to dig out the root causes which are essentially socioeconomic, with poverty as their favorite explanation. Warraq argues that we must take the beliefs of jihadists seriously. The acts of ISIS or the Taliban or any other jihadist group are not random acts of violence by a mob of psychopathic, sexually frustrated and impoverished vandals, but are rather carefully and strategically planned operations that are a part of a long campaign waged by educated, often

affluent Muslims who wish to bring about the establishment of an Islamic State based on the aforementioned *Sharia*. Nor did Islamic terrorism emerge, *ex nihilo*, in the past forty years. From its foundation in the seventh century, violent movements have arisen seeking to revive pure Islam, which its members had neglected. The many failures of Islamic societies have been explained as due to the fact that they were not living up to the ideals of the earliest Muslims.

According to Ibn Warraq, the source of Islamic terrorism lies squarely in Islamic doctrine, especially the concept of "Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong." This is borne out by Warraq's examination of key Islamic thinkers of the past such as the Medievalist Ibn Tamiyya, Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhab in the 18th Century and prominent 20th Century activists such as Mawdudi and Khomeini.

Venerable Princeton Professor and Islamic scholar, Bernard Lewis said, "Ibn Warraq exemplifies the rarely combined qualities of courage, integrity and intelligence." Douglas Murray of *The Spectator* calls Warraq "one of the great heroes of our time." Noted activist and author, Ayaan Hirsi Ali considers Warraq "a hero of mine. His *Why I am not a Muslim* had a profound influence on me, and gave me courage in my own work and activities. His subsequent books have defended Western civilization and have reminded us what we are fighting for."

What follows are entirely Ibn Warraq's words largely taken from his latest book, *The Islam in Islamic Terrorism: the Importance of Beliefs, Ideas, and Ideology*.

How does Islamic terrorism threaten Western Civilization?

I am fearful for the future of Western civilization, and I believe the greatest threat comes not just from Islamic terrorism, but Islam *tout court*. Unlike many Western intellectuals, I believe Western civilization is worth defending—it is the greatest civilization that has ever existed, and I am deeply immersed in it. I enjoy the fruits of this civilization, and am profoundly grateful to it for providing me the material and spiritual sustenance for the last sixty years.

In order to be able to combat Islamic terrorism we need to understand the ideology that motivates it, we must characterize it correctly. To treat a disease, we first need a correct diagnosis. Unfortunately, in the present politically correct climate, many seem incapable of stating the obvious, that is, Islamic terrorism is caused by Islam.

Politicians, journalists, intellectuals and even many academics refuse to take the beliefs of the terrorists seriously. Instead, we are offered a wide variety of explanations, such as poverty, U.S. foreign policy, Israeli-Arab conflict, Western imperialism, and the Crusades. I examine each of these “root causes”, and show that they are totally inadequate or simply false as explanations for Islamic terrorism.

The acts of ISIS or the Taliban or any other *jihadist* group are not random acts of violence by a mob of psychopathic, sexually frustrated, impoverished vandals, but carefully and

strategically planned operations that are part of a long campaign by educated, affluent Muslims who wish to bring about the establishment of an Islamic state based on the Sharia—the Islamic Holy Law, derived from the Koran, that is the very word of God, and from the Sunna of the Prophet and the Traditions (*ahadith*, pl. of *hadith*), which are the sayings and doings of Muhammad and his companions.

Nor has Islamic terrorism emerged, *ex nihilo*, in the “past 40 or so” years. From its foundation in the seventh century, violent movements have arisen seeking to revive true Islam, which its members felt had been neglected in Muslim societies, who were not living up to the ideals of the earliest Muslims. Groups such as the seventh-century Azraqites sought to revive forgotten beliefs and rituals and to cleanse the body of Islam of the corrupt practices that had tarnished the pristine Muslim religion. Today, Deobandi extremists, for example, can only be understood against developments within Islam during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in particular the philosophy of Shah Wali Allah, who died in 1762.

As Bernard Lewis said, “No one, least of all the Islamic fundamentalists themselves, will dispute that their creed and political program are not compatible with liberal democracy. But Islamic fundamentalism is just one stream among many. In the fourteen centuries that have passed since the mission of the Prophet, there have been several such movements—fanatical, intolerant, aggressive, and violent.”

Is Islamic Totalitarianism comparable to Soviet Communism and Nazism?

I describe Islam as totalitarian because, as under Communism and Nazism, the democratic concept of the individual, with inalienable rights that no mythical or mystical collective goal can justifiably deny, and the concomitant notion of privacy, do not exist in Islam, the individual counts for less than the Islamic community as a whole. No less a figure than Sayyid Abu 'l-'Ala' Mawdudi, one of the major thinkers behind modern Islamist ideology, said that in an Islamic state as envisioned by him, "no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. Considered from this aspect, the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist and Communist states."

But there are also other aspects of Islam which are totalitarian. For example, in 1937, Charles Watson, a Christian missionary in Egypt, described Islam as totalitarian by showing how, "by a million roots, penetrating every phase of life, all of them with religious significance, it is able to maintain its hold upon the life of Moslem peoples." The late Georges-Henri Bousquet (d. 1978), a professor of law at the University of Algiers and later the University of Bordeaux and one of the foremost authorities on Islamic law, distinguishes two aspects of Islam he considers totalitarian: Islamic law and the Islamic notion of *jihad*, which has as its ultimate aim the conquest of the world in order to submit it to one single authority.

To quote another great scholar of Islamic law and longtime professor of Arabic at the University of Leiden, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, Islamic law was certainly aimed at "controlling the religious, social and political life of mankind in all its aspects, the life of its followers without qualification, and the life of those who follow tolerated religions to a degree that prevents their activities from

hampering Islam in any way.” The all-embracing nature of Islamic law is apparent in that it does not distinguish between ritual, law (in the European sense of the word), ethics, and good manners. In principle, this legislation controls the entire life of the believer and the Islamic community; it intrudes into every nook and cranny, from (in a random sample) the pilgrim tax to agricultural contracts to the board and lodging of slaves to issuing wedding invitations to the ritual fashion in which to accomplish one’s natural needs to the proper treatment of animals.

How are precepts of Islamic terrorism drawn from the canon of Islamic belief and ideology?

Muslims use the Koran as guide to conduct, both private and public. The Koran gives details of the moral and legal duties of believers; it is the basis of their religious dogma, beliefs, ritual, and one of the sources of their law. The Koran clearly has an exhortatory element; it is not a quiet, meditative tract enjoining private experience of God, but often a robust call to arms—to fight and kill, if necessary, in the name of God, until Islam dominates the world. It is constantly and extensively quoted by the *jihadists*, for all their tenets and ideology are located within its pages.

While there are two or three short verses that enjoin tolerance of non-Muslims (e.g., Q2. *al-Baqara*, the Cow, 256; Q109. *al-Kafirun*, the Disbelievers, 1–6), these have been abrogated or canceled by the so-called Sword Verses that enjoin fierce battles against the unbelievers (Q9. *at-Tawba*, the Repentance, 5; see also Q4:76; Q8:12, 15–16, 39–42). Other verses that incite violence against non-Muslims and other religions are abundant.

Jews and Christians are also regarded with much contempt and Muslims are told not to take them as friends (e.g., Q5. *al-Ma'ida*, the Table, 51). The final verses of the opening chapter of the Koran, the *Fatiha*, which has a central role in Islamic prayer and is repeated at least seventeen times a day, are: "The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours. Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray" (Q1. *al-Fatiha*, the Opening: 6–7). Evidently in verse 6, it is those who are on the right path who have been blessed, while verse 7 is interpreted to refer to Jews and Christians, respectively.

Here is the commentary on verse 7 of *al-Qurtubi* (1214–1273), famous for his commentary on the Koran:

The majority say that those with anger on them are the Jews and the misguided are the Christians. That was explained by the Prophet [pbuh, "peace be upon him"], in the Hadith of 'Adi ibn Hatin and the story of how he became Muslim, transmitted by Abu Dawud in his *Musnad* and at-Tirmidh in his collection. That explanation is also attested to by the Almighty who says about the Jews, "They brought down anger from Allah upon themselves" (Q2. *al-Baqara*, the Cow, 61; Q3. *'al 'Imran*, the Family of Imran, 112) and He says, "Allah is angry with them" (Q48. *al-Fath*, the Victory, 6). He says about Christians that they, "were misguided previously and have misguided many others, and are far from the right way" (Q5. *al-Ma'ida*, the Table, 77).

Thus in a sense, Jews and Christians are singled out for admonition several times a day, every day, by all Muslims.

Antisemitic sentiments are plentiful in the Koran.

According to Islam, is the Hereafter to be preferred to this life on Earth?

The term *al-akhirah*, meaning “the Hereafter,” is mentioned more than a hundred times. The Hereafter is to be preferred to this life on earth: Q40. *Ghafir*, the Forgiver, 39: “O my people, surely this present life is but a passing enjoyment, and the Hereafter, is the abode of stability”; Q16. *an-Nahl*, the Bee, 30–31, “the abode of the Hereafter is better”; Q29. *al-Ankabut*, the Spider, 64, “And the life of this world is but a sport and a play. And the home of the Hereafter, that surely is the Life, did they but know.”

According to the Koran, Muslims alone possess the absolute truth, and they constitute the best of all nations, as in Q3. *'al 'Imran*, the Family of Imran, 109: “And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.” Because Islam is the religion of truth, those not following Islam must be subjugated and made to pay a tax: Q9. *at-Tawba*, the Repentance, 29: “Fight those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, nor follow the Religion of Truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgement of superiority, and they are in a state of subjection.” Any accommodation with any other creed on a basis of equality is unthinkable, for Islam is destined to prevail: Q9. *at-Tawba*, the Repentance, 33: “He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, and that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists are averse.” Precisely the same message is given

at Q48. *al-Fath*, The Victory, 28, and Q61. *al-Saff*, The Ranks, 9.

Can Islam coexist with any other religion?

Muhammad made it clear that Islam cannot coexist with any other religion, and he dutifully informed his successors that Arabia must be cleansed of Jews and Christians: "There shall be no two faiths in Arabia" (Imam Malik, *Muwatta'*, *hadith* 1588). The theory and practice of dhimmitude, whereby non-Muslims such as Jews and Christians are termed *dhimmis* and endure various social and legal disabilities, is based on the premise that Muslims are superior to non-Muslims. Most of the canonical *hadith* collections contain this *hadith*: "Muhammad the Prophet said: A Muslim should not be killed in retaliation for the murder of a disbeliever." As the Ayatollah Khomeini once put it, "Eleven things are unclean: urine, excrement, sperm, blood, a dog, a pig, bones, a non-Muslim man and woman, wine, beer, perspiration of the camel that eats filth."

Does Jihad mean literal war against the unbelievers for the sake of Allah?

Jihad by all accounts, in the early centuries of Islam *jihad* was interpreted in its aggressive, military sense. The Koran encourages the view that the Muslims had God on their side in their war on unbelievers, and were thus assured victory, a fact that played its part in the success of the early Muslim conquests. The principles adumbrated in the Koran were supplemented by a vast number of reports gathered in great *hadith* collections, which in turn were used to construct

elaborate legal codes of conduct covering all aspects of *jihad*: conquests, prisoners, treaties, truce, etc. The conquests were regarded to be a “confirmatory miracle for Islam,” Cook points out, and “because of the close identification between this miraculous event and the *jihad* ideology that enabled it come about, *jihad* has remained of crucial importance in Islamic culture . . . and can be brought to the fore . . . at any time.” Familiarity with the theory and practice of *jihad*, therefore, is also essential to understanding the philosophy and practices of modern Islamic fundamentalists groups, who are strictly following in history’s footsteps.

While the root of *jihad* means “to strive or exert oneself,” in its primary sense it came to mean “warfare with spiritual significance,” that is, fighting in a military sense, or armed combat, for the sake of God (*fi sabil allah*). The aim of *jihad* is the expansion of Islam, and it is an incumbent religious duty of all able-bodied Muslim males. The goal is to submit the world to Islam, and spread a gospel of unmitigated, uncompromising monotheism spelled out in the Koran. By its nature, *jihad* is a permanent state and can only fall into abeyance when all of mankind submits to Islam—when the last *Dar al-Harb*, a country that has not yet been subdued by Islam, becomes *Dar al-Islam*, a territory where the edicts of Islam are fully promulgated—where the Sharia reigns supreme.

Were Mohammed and his companions exemplars of Jihad?

The *Sunna* plays an important part in Islam, and is a further guide for all Muslims to follow. *Sunna* can be seen as model pattern of behavior. It is also “custom” or “customary behavior.” Finally, it is the way Muhammad acted, which is

then emulated by Muslims. The *hadith*, on the other hand, is a tradition or written report, and can be the source material for the *sunna*.

From our twenty-first century perspective, Muhammad the Prophet was hardly a model of tolerance, kindness, or compassion. Islamic sources contain numerous accounts of his cruelty, hatred of Jews, and intolerance of other religions. Nonetheless, Islamic purists who insist on the sunna of Muhammad as a guide to their own behavior are, in terms of doctrine, fully justified.

Here is an instance of Muhammad's cruelty: When some people from the tribe of Ukl, who had reverted from Islam, and while trying to steal some camels had killed a shepherd of camels, were captured. Muhammad ordered their hands and legs to be cut off, their eyes to be branded with heated pieces of iron, and that their wounds not be cauterized till they die. In another instance, Muhammad ordered the torture of a prisoner in order to discover the whereabouts of some hidden treasure, and is recorded as saying, "Torture him until you extract it from him." Muhammad also revived the cruel practice of stoning adulterers to death.

Did Muhammad promulgate hatred of Jews, Christians and his opponents?

Here are some examples and expressions of Muhammad's hatred of Jews, all taken from the Life of Muhammad by Ibn Ishaq (c. 704–c. 767 CE), our earliest and most important source for the life of Muhammad:

- “Kill any Jews that falls into your power,” said the Prophet. (p. 369)
- the killing of Ibn Sunayna, and its admiration leading someone to convert to Islam (p. 369)
- the killing of Sallam ibn Abu’l-Huqayq (pp. 482–83)
- the assassination of Ka’b ibn al-Ashraf, who wrote verses against Muhammad (pp. 364–69)
- the raid against the Jewish tribe of the Banu ‘l-Nadir and their banishment (437–45)
- the extermination of the Banu Qurayza, between six hundred and eight hundred men (pp. 461–69)
- the killing of al-Yusayr (pp. 665–66)

For example, the killing of poetess ‘Asma’ b. Marwan, who had written satirical poems that “vilified Islam and incited people against the Prophet,” is mentioned in Ibn Ishaq’s biography, and described in gruesome detail in *Kitab al-Tabaqat* by Ibn Sa’d (c. 784–845 CE), a traditionist and biographer of Muhammad, and *Kitab al-Maghazi* by al-Waqidi (747–823 CE), an important early Muslim historian and judge who was patronized by Harun al-Rashid. Al-Waqidi’s major work, *The Book of Campaigns (Kitab al-Maghazi)* is an important source on early Islam and the life of Muhammad.

The assassins responsible for the massacre of the cartoonists of the French satirical weekly, *Charlie Hebdo*, on January 7, 2015, had Muhammad’s example as a guide, and thus Islamic doctrine on their side.

It is believed that the last injunction Muhammad gave before his death was in his words “Let not two religions be left in the Arabian peninsula,” while a hadith informs us that “The Apostle of Allah said, ‘I will certainly expel the Jews and the Christians from Arabia.’”

Did Muhammad engage in military campaigns to advance Islam?

As for jihad, Muhammad waged many military campaigns on behalf of Islam. As al-Tabari (839–923 CE), a major early Islamic historian and exegete of the Koran, put it, “The Messenger of God was commanded to proclaim the divine message which he had received, to declare it publicly to the people, and to summon them to God.” Muhammad’s wars can be seen as “prototypical *jihad* wars “whose religious nature cannot be ignored. Like the conquests, Muhammad’s campaigns are grounded in religion, a fact emphasized by Scottish historian W. Montgomery Watt in *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, a biography highly regarded by Muslims: “Thus, whether Muhammad incited his followers to action and then used their wrongs to justify it, or whether he yielded to pressure from them to allow such action, the normal Arab practice of the *razzia* [raid] was taken over by the Islamic community. In being taken over, however, it was transformed. It became an activity of believers against unbelievers, and therefore took place within a religious context.”

Who were the Kharijites?

The Kharijites are often considered the first terrorists in

Islamic history. Scholar Julius Wellhausen explains, "In the theocracy, piety generally has a political slant, and this is so to the greatest extent amongst the Kharijites. God forbids His people to keep silent if His commandments on earth are abused. Not only must they personally do good and avoid doing evil, but they must see to it that this happens in all cases . . . Public action against injustice is the duty of the individual. He must express his convictions by word and deed. While this principle is common to all Muslims, to act recklessly upon it at all times is characteristic of the Kharijites."

Michael Cook correctly summarizes that the duty of Forbidding Wrong is "regularly associated with Kharijite political activism." Islam scholar Wilferd Madelung also sees Kharijite activism as a consequence of this principal duty in Islam:

Although the formula [commanding right and forbidding wrong] could be interpreted to refer to the preaching of faith in God and the precepts of Islam to the infidels and to the *jihad* in order to reduce them to obedience, it came soon to be understood primarily as a duty of Muslims to induce their fellow Muslims to live and act in accordance with the Koran and the religious law and to refrain from acts objectionable under the *šari 'a*. In particular, the Kharijites proclaimed it as a slogan in their censure of the unlawful and unjust conduct of the Muslim rulers and of the Muslim community at large supporting them, justifying their armed revolt and struggle to enforce adherence to the divine law.

Thus the Kharijites were trying to bring the Islamic community back to the founding principles of Islam, principles which had

been abandoned or seriously compromised by the introduction of innovations (*bida'*)

This desire to bring Islamic communities back to their original pristine state, and the rejection of innovations were behind the violence in 9th and 10th century Baghdad.

Is there a connection between the Ottoman Qadizadeli cult in the 17th and Wahhabism in the 18th Century?

Did the Qadizadelis have an influence on the Wahhabis? Historian Simeon Evstatiev points out that both “movements were the product of very different social, political, and cultural local contexts but . . . shared a pattern of understanding what the demands of ‘true belief’ were and what an authentically Islamic orthodox creed should mean for Muslims.” Evstatiev argues for “continuity rather than rupture between the ideas promoted by its adherents and other revivalist strands in Islamic history,” for example, “their struggle for a *shari'a*-minded reform brought about through reviving the beliefs and practices of the first Muslim generations . . . seems not to have been entirely new; such trends appeared not only in earlier Islamic experience in general but also in the earlier Ottoman intellectual and religio-political experience.” In other words, what these movements—one in a seventeenth-century urban setting, the other in the heart of eighteenth-century Arabia—for the purification of Islam share is their understanding of Islam.

“[T]he Qadizadeli movement was one of the culminations of an already existing trajectory in Islamic history,” Evstatiev

emphasizes. The Qadizadelis admired Ibn Taymiyya; his “appeal for the eradication of blasphemous practices and unbelief” resonated within the rank and file. Islamic history is full of such movements, and this was a part of a wider call for a return to the Koran and the *Sunna*, a rejection of heretical innovations, and the aggressive reassertion of *tawhid*—an uncompromising monotheism that was in danger from *shirk*, polytheism, or more strictly attributing partners to God, and thus by extension, practicing idolatry.

How is the Iranian Revolution connected to the earlier Sunni revival movements?

The Iranian Revolution that took place in 1979, when the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned to Iran from exile and set about creating an Islamic republic, has been very influential throughout the Islamic world, even though it was a theocracy of a Shi'ite kind. (It was often argued that because Iran was Shi'ite, it could not possibly have any impact on the Sunni world. It was also assumed that Sunnis and Shi'ites would never collaborate.) Henceforth, whenever riots with pretensions to revolutionary movements broke out in Muslim countries from Bangladesh to Morocco, portraits of the glowering and formidable figure of Khomeini were defiantly brandished and translations of his works into the local languages were distributed among protesters.

The assassins of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat invoked Khomeini's name at their 1981 trial, and King Hasan of Morocco held the Ayatollah responsible for the kingdom's 1983 riots. As Amir Taheri explained in *The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini & the Islamic Revolution* (1986):

It became evident that Khomeini's appeal was not limited to Sh'ites. Sunni radicals also adopted his slogans in their efforts to mobilize popular support. Fear of Khomeini was in part responsible for the sudden and almost concerted reintroduction of strict Islamic laws in Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Abu Dhabi, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania. Even secular Turkey had to move some steps away from Kemalism in order to accommodate the new mood of Islamic militancy exported by Iran.

Could you explain the importance of *The Qur'anic Concept of War* by Pakistani General Malik published in 1979?

Malik's treatise is important because it is constantly quoted and referred to by modern jihadists. General Zia al-Haq gave his stamp of approval to Malik's book, approval which took on greater significance when Zia al-Haq became President of Pakistan, and began the serious Islamization of the country.

Also as Patrick Poole and Mark Hanna point out in their publisher's preface:

The continued relevance of *The Qur'anic Concept of War* is indicated by the discovery by US military officials of summaries of this book published in various languages on captured and killed *jihadist* insurgents in Afghanistan. This is hardly a surprising development as Malik finds within the Quran a doctrine of aggressive, escalating and constant *jihad* against non-Muslims and the religious

justification of terrorism as a means to achieving the dominance of Islam around the world—dogmas that square with the Islamist ideology driving terrorism worldwide.

Why has Jihad doctrine reemerged with such ferocity?

Why has jihad reemerged with particular ferocity in the last forty years? Prolific contributor to the *New English Review* and *Jihad Watch* Hugh Fitzgerald offers gives three reasons for its resurrection, to which I add one additional explanation.

In my view, paradoxically, it was increasing literacy and education that led to a growing dissatisfaction with current conditions in Islamic countries, as well as a rise in fundamentalism. Before the rise in urbanization and literacy, Islam was divided between a folk variant and an Islam accessible only to clerical elite who could read Classical Arabic. Now more people have access to their own High Culture. They can read Ibn Taymiyya, and recognize for themselves that their own societies have fallen away from the true Islam, the pristine Islam of Muhammad and his companions.

Fitzgerald argues that “[t]he doctrine of Jihad wasn’t suddenly invented in the past fifty years. It’s been the same, more or less, for 1350 years. It had fallen into desuetude, but did not, and could not, disappear. What happened to make things so very different? Well, some might point to the end of ‘colonialism.’ But that is not the main thing.”

Muslim countries in the Middle East became immensely rich

thanks to geology. Fitzgerald writes, "Since 1973, the Arab and other Muslim-dominated oil states have received ten trillion dollars from the sale of oil and gas to oil-consuming nations, the greatest transfer of wealth in human history. The Muslims did nothing to deserve this, though many took the oil bonanza as a deliberate sign of Allah's favor."

Apart from buying billions of dollars in arms, Saudi Arabia has spent millions on Islamic propaganda on the building of madrassas. During the campaign against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, much money was provided to *jihadi* groups for missiles and training. Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries such as Iran and Brunei have corrupted Western universities by large donations with strings attached, so that Islam is only taught in a manner acceptable to them.

Second, there has been large-scale immigration into the West, from Islamic nations, often former colonies, of Muslims who are implacably hostile to the West, have no desire to learn why the West became so rich and tolerant, and certainly have no desire to assimilate. They feel no gratitude or allegiance to their Western host nations; their only obligations are to fellow Muslims.

The mere presence of so many Muslims in the West has affected the domestic and international behavior of governments, whose foreign policy is dominated by a fear of offending their own Muslim population, ready to riot on the slightest pretext. These unassimilated Muslims are committed to introducing Islamic laws in the West, and they are able to do so by cleverly exploiting the freedoms created over centuries by the infidels.

Third, advances in technology, from cell phones to the Internet, from satellite television to YouTube videos, has meant the spread of Islamic propaganda, reaching all believers. By now no Muslim can claim ignorance of his duties, from the daily five prayers to the duty of Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong to *jihad*. Theoretically, the West could use the same technological advances, which it invented, to broadcast its own propaganda. But the West, lacking confidence in its own values and afraid of offending Islamic governments considered “allies,” has not done so. No Western government dares point out the “connection between the political, economic, social, and intellectual failures of Muslim societies, and Islam itself.” In any case, Muslims only watch channels such as *al-Jazeera* that are broadcast in their own languages.

The Internet presents young Muslims access to Islamic material that was totally unknown to their parents—everything from the Koran, *hadith*, the life of Muhammad, and the history of Islam. Islam is a totalitarian system that demands the suppression of one’s individuality, and as surprising as it may seem, there are thousands of Muslims willing to submerge their identities into the group, where all answers are handed down from on high. They breathe a sigh of relief as they join the collective, “the charismatic community” in Watt’s description, a community whose actions are undergirded by God.

What prospects do you hold for combating and countering Jihadist Islam today?

Unfortunately, we in the West are far from united in this war

against Islamic fundamentalism. In Europe, those politicians who have understood the nature of the threat are not in positions of power. Europeans do not seem to be too concerned about Islamic terrorism despite the rise in number of jihadi attacks. In the USA, for a short while the election of Donald Trump as President gave hope to those who have been warning the world about the dangers of Islamic terrorism, the dangers of mass immigration from Islamic countries, the dangers of giving into ever-increasing demands for the implementation of Sharia. But Trump is still surrounded by many advisors who refuse to acknowledge that it is Islam which is the problem. This willful blindness does not bode well. I am not at all optimistic for either the short or the long term.

But we must continue to fight, educate, and warn our fellow citizens, and our political leaders. What else can we do? I am working on a second volume which will be a follow up to the "The Islam in Islamic Terrorism", and which will try to suggest some practical steps we can take to bring about reform in the Islamic world, and suggest ways as to how we can educate the West about the real root cause of Islamic terrorism which is, of course, Islam.

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