

Was the Medina Attack an “Assault on Islam Itself”?

by Hugh Fitzgerald

After every attack by Muslim terrorists, Muslims, and many non-Muslim apologists for Islam, insist that “these attacks cannot possibly have anything to do with Islam.” But now, after the attack in Medina, a new mantra is being chanted, which is that these attacks have something to do with Islam because they constitute “an attack on Islam.”

The U.N. human rights chief, for example, a member of the Jordanian royal family, [called](#) the suicide bombing outside the Prophet Mohammad’s Mosque in the Saudi city of Medina “**an attack on Islam itself.**” He was echoed by others, including the tireless Muslim propagandist Haroon Moghul, [who wrote](#) that the “Medina attack is an assault on Islam itself.” Still others have lumped the Saudi attacks in with those in Baghdad and Dhaka, claiming that in these attacks of the last few weeks “Muslims have been the main victims.” (In a purely arithmetical sense, given the 200 killed in Baghdad, that may be – misleadingly – true). My, how quick so many of us are to sow or reap confusion.

Let’s try to keep clear and distinct what each of these attacks was targeting.

The first thing to do is not to allow ourselves to forget what the attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka was all about. Beyond any confusion or doubt, it was an attack solely on non-Muslims. These were selected, by their killers, through the administration of a macabre quiz about the Qur’an. Those who, among the patrons and staff, showed sufficient knowledge of the Qur’an, were spared, and were even treated solicitously by the attackers, who made sure they were fed, while those who

could not pass it were identified as non-Muslims, and tortured and killed.

Indeed, [the attackers appear to have suggested](#) to those they had spared that they should try to be just like themselves, they who had been busily torturing and killing 20 men and women, as the very models of “good Muslims” that others should emulate:

“When they realised that troops might storm the building, they came to our room one last time and told us not to tarnish the name of Islam, be a good Muslim and uphold the pride of Islam. They said they had no intention of hurting us as we were Muslims.”

Whatever place it may have attained in the annals of grotesque cruelty, what happened at the Holey Artisan restaurant did not constitute an “attack on Muslims.”

After Dhaka, it was bombs away in Baghdad, set off in the mainly Shi’a Karada neighborhood, killing nearly 200 people. Was this an “attack on Islam,” as some Western apologists for Islam have claimed? (Sunni Muslims are noticeably silent on the attacks aimed at Shi’a, and are careful not to claim that such attacks are an “attack on Islam itself.”) No, those bombs were targeted at Karada precisely because the Shi’a, in the view of the energetic takfiris of ISIS, are not real Muslims at all. And it is not just the Sunnis of ISIS, but other Sunnis, too, who share that view.

We must not forget that according to these Sunnis, the Shi’a are “Rafidite dogs” (from “*rafida*” – “rejectionists”), so called because they reject the legitimacy of three of the caliphs – Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman – who followed Muhammad, insisting instead that the only legitimate successor to Muhammad was Ali. This is the main, but not the only difference between Shi’a and Sunnis. The most extreme Sunnis regard the Shi’a as even worse than Christians and Jews. An

ISIS spokesman put it this way in 2015: “The greatest answer to this question [are the Shi’a worse than Christians and Jews] is in the Qur’an, where Allah speaks about the nearby enemy – those Muslims who have become infidels – as they are more dangerous than those which were already infidels.” ISIS has been ferocious in its nonstop denunciation of the Shi’a. In the 13th edition of the ISIS magazine *Dabiq*, for example, the main article is entitled *The Rafidah: From Ibn Saba’ to the Dajjal*