

# RAMADAN AND TERROR

*Connecting the contradistinctive 'dots' of Islamic doctrine*

First **14** days of  
Ramadan

**79** Attacks in the  
name of Islam

**23** nations

**995** people dead



*By: Mike Burnard*

More than **150** dead in a suicide bombing in Kabul. Multiple attacks in Iraq that killed more than **50**. An ongoing battle in the southern Philippines against Islamic State. **29** Coptic believers killed execution style in Egypt. **3** Muslims shouting "this is for Allah," plough into pedestrians on London Bridge, then proceed to a market, stabbing people until **7** others are dead. A father of two is stabbed to death in Germany by two Muslims for smoking during Ramadan and refusing to fast... and the list goes on. The Muslim holy month of Ramadan is only a few days old and what is supposed to be a time of self-sacrifice, prayer and piety is again being marred by violence and terror.

Harun Khan, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, issued the following statement after the terrorist incident in London: *"I am appalled and angered by the terrorist attacks at London Bridge and Borough Market, in my home city. These acts of violence were truly shocking and I condemn them in the strongest terms. Muslims everywhere are outraged and disgusted at these cowards who once again have destroyed the lives of our fellow Britons. That this should happen in this month of Ramadan, when many Muslims were praying and fasting only goes to show that these people respect neither life nor faith."*

This strong statement might reflect the sentiments of many Muslims across the UK, but definitely not **ALL** Muslims as Mr Khan supposes. IS, who accepted responsibility for the London attack, has encouraged its followers to step up attacks during the holy season of Ramadan. *"Your targeting of the so-called innocents and civilians is beloved by us and the most effective, so go forth and may you get a great reward or martyrdom in Ramadan,"* said a message, titled "Where are the Lions of War?". This was followed by a statement on its social media site to... *"attack them in their homes, their markets, their roads and their forums."*

The challenge in meaningful journalism is to understand the real Islamic doctrine within a conundrum of religious teachings that seems to be continuously contradictive in definition. If Muslim leaders cannot make unified sense of senseless killings, how can they expect the non-Muslim world to do so?

In order to identify the 'true Muslim' in the midst of the 1,7 billion global followers, it will not be the media statements released by leaders that will determine the identity of Islam, but the writings of the Quran, the holy book, and the foundation of all teachings.

**In this regard, there are 3 principles to understand:**

# 1. THE CONTRADISTINCTIVE DOCTRINE OF ISLAM

The definition of a contradistinctive doctrine is a belief system that has distinct teachings that oppose one another. You can be a true Muslim and support either peace or violence, these are distinct, opposing values that contradict one another and are open to choice.

As an example, the Quran teaches the distinct, yet contradictive values that:

- Islam is a religion of **PEACE**: *"Those who believe [in the Quran], and those who follow the Jewish [Scriptures], and the Christians ...on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."* (Sura 2:62)
- But also of **WAR**: *"Fight those who believe not in Allah nor ... His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book."* (Sura 9:29)
- It is a religion of **TOLERANCE**: *"There should be no compulsion in religion."* (Sura 2:256)
- But also of **INTOLERANCE**: *"Allah commands Muhammad to compel men to Islam at the point of the sword."* (Sura 47:4; 2:191) Sura 8:12 says: *"[Remember] when your Lord inspired the angels, 'I am with you, so strengthen those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, so strike [them] upon the necks and strike from them every fingertip'."*
- It is a religion of **TRUTH**: *"And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]."* (Sura 2:42)
- But it also describes God as the best **DECEIVER** of all and calls Muslims to lie for the sake of Allah: God is described as *"The best (of) the cheaters/deceivers"* (Sura 3:54), where the root word used in these verses, *Makr*, means to deceive or double-cross.
- It is a religion of **CHARITY**, where the third pillar of Islam, *Zakat*, is giving alms to those who deserve it. Charity is described as part of the Muslim character and one of the foundational practices of Islam.
- But it is also a religion of **DEPENDENCY** through the Dhimmitude: *"Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled."* (Sura 9:29)
- It often proclaims that Muslims **SERVE JESUS** as well and that Christians should be tolerant towards a faith that reveres our Lord.
- It also pronounces a **CURSE** on anybody who calls Jesus the son of God: *"The Jews say, 'Ezra is the son of Allah'; and the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the son of Allah'. That is their statement from their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved [before them]. May Allah destroy them (may he curse them); how are they deluded?"* (Sura 9:30)

The contradictions are many and leave ample room for personal interpretation and preference. After the recent attacks in Manchester and London bridge, *Gatestone Institute*<sup>1</sup> published an article on Islam's doctrine of jihad, expansion and dawah (Islamic outreach, proselytising) and the heavy reliance on the use of both terror and luring: *"Targhib wal tarhib is an Islamic doctrine that means 'seducing (luring) and terrorizing' as a tool for dawah, to conquer nations and force citizens to submit to Islamic law, sharia. Most ordinary Muslims are not even aware of this doctrine, but Islamic books have been written about it. Mainstream Muslim sheikhs such as Salman Al Awda have discussed it on Al Jazeera TV. On a show called 'Sharia and Life', Al Awda recommended using extremes 'to exaggerate... reward and punishment, morally and materially... in both directions'. 'The use of terror under this doctrine,' he said, 'is a legitimate sharia obligation'."*

On the other side of the spectrum Yasar Colak, religious affairs representative at the Turkish Embassy in Washington, said the message of violence runs directly contrary to the Quran. *"Islam does not allow violence at any time of the year. Violence can't be and is not a legitimate way in Islam,"* Colak said. *"Terrorist organisations like IS are misusing and misinterpreting our religion and Sunna for their own political aims."*

The principle to understand is that that both IS terrorists and the moderate Muslim we have as neighbour are true Muslims because they both follow the Quran truthfully, but in a distinct, contradictive way.

**From a Christian perspective**, it is important to note that the teachings of Christ also contain contradistinctive messages, but not as contradictory values, but rather as complimentary virtues **which promote love, respect and harmony**.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/10474/islamic-terror-new-normal>

- It teaches prosperity, but also charity
- It teaches abundance, but also equality
- It teaches grace, but also works
- It teaches joy, but also anguish
- It teaches healing, but also brokenness
- It teaches reaping, but also sowing
- It teaches truth, but also love
- It teaches release, but also faithfulness
- It teaches us to believe, but also to test
- It teaches urgency, but also to be still
- It teaches unity, but also diversity
- It teaches humility, but also boldness
- It teaches about bearing fruit, but also about pruning branches

## 2. THE CONTRA-EVOLVING DOCTRINE OF ISLAM

This is perhaps the least explored doctrine within Islam, from a Western perspective, where all teaching in scripture is viewed as equal. The teachings in the Quran evolved from tolerance in the early years of Muhammad, when the prophet tried to befriend Jews and Christians, to terror and violence in the latter years, after he received further revelation, when his teachings were rejected.

Daniel Shayesteh, one of the founding members of the Hezbollah in Iran, explains as follows: *“Coming to (a full understanding of) the Quran, all Muslim scholars agree that the later inspirations in the Quran cancel the authority of the previous inspirations, especially with regards to the contradictions (in teachings). Even if the scholar did not say it, the common religious practice and ethics are proof for the dominance of the later inspiration. The last words of Muhammad in the Quran (Sura 9) is the completing task of Allah on earth since Sura 9 is the last revelation of the Quran. This chapter says that every person, family member or anybody else, must be killed or rejected if not committed or submitted to Islam. Sura 9 verses 1-11 are called the ‘sword verses’, Sura 9:23 instructs the follower to ‘disregard fathers or brothers as allies if they have preferred disbelief over belief.’ Sura 9:123 says ‘fight (in Arabic it is the word Qatelloo which means kill) your relatives and neighbours who are not Muslims’. The entire chapter therefore cancels all previous instructions and evolved into instructions of harshness and terror.”*

**From a Christian perspective,** Scripture also evolved, where the latter teachings of Christ cancelled the instructions of previous teachings. In Matthew 5, the Lord says five times: *“You have heard that it was said ... **But I tell you**”*. In verse 43 all instructions concerning revenge and hatred become one command: *“Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.”* There was a clear instruction that followers of Christ received, an evolved teaching (John 13:34): *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*

## 3. THE CONTRA-REFORMIST DOCTRINE OF ISLAM

With the continuous news of Islamic terrorism, more and more western Muslims find themselves isolated and embarrassed by the Islam of the Quran as expressed by radical groups like IS, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and Boko Haram. There is also the added call from Western leaders, politicians and religious scholars that Islam must reform in the same way that Protestants of the Christian Reformation distanced themselves from the medieval Catholic Church. The call for an Islamic Reformation presumes that the theocratic rulers of Iran and Saudi Arabia—and the theocrats in Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood—are the counterparts of the medieval Catholic Church; and that reformers who oppose them are the contemporary equivalents of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other Protestant reformers. This analogy is intended to suggest that a similar movement within Islam would counter the fundamentalism of Islamic extremists, strengthen religious freedom, and lead to something like the separation of church and state.

There is one critical factor, however, that most leaders seem to ignore when an Islamic reformation is considered, they overlook the fact that the reformed version of Islam the West so desires might just be the modern Islam as represented by Islamists in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran. What is today called ‘radical Islam’ is actually ‘reformed Islam’. And it follows the same pattern of Christianity's Protestant Reformation.

Raymond Ibrahim, a Middle East and Islam specialist, describes it as follows<sup>2</sup>:

“At its core, the Protestant Reformation was a revolt against tradition in the name of scripture—in this case, the Bible. With the coming of the printing press, increasing numbers of Christians became better acquainted with the Bible's contents, parts of which they felt contradicted what the Church was teaching. So, they broke away, protesting that the only Christian authority was scripture alone, ‘*sola scriptura*’.

Islam's reformation follows the same logic of the Protestant Reformation—specifically by prioritising scripture over centuries of tradition and legal debate—but with antithetical results that reflect the contradictory teachings of the core texts of Christianity and Islam.

As with Christianity, throughout most of its history, Islam's scriptures, specifically its ‘twin pillars’, the Quran (literal words of Allah) and the Hadith (words and deeds of Allah's prophet, Muhammad), were inaccessible to the overwhelming majority of Muslims. Only a few scholars, or ulema—literally, ‘they who know’—were literate in Arabic and/or had possession of Islam's scriptures. The average Muslim knew only the basics of Islam, or its ‘Five Pillars’.

In this context, a ‘medieval synthesis’ flourished throughout the Islamic world. Guided by an evolving general consensus (or ‘ijma’), Muslims sought to accommodate reality by translating Islam from a body of abstract, infeasible demands as stipulated in the Quran and Hadith into a workable system.

Those in the West waiting for an Islamic ‘reformation’ along the same lines of the Protestant Reformation, on the assumption that it will lead to similar results, must therefore embrace two facts:

Firstly, Islam's reformation is well on its way, and yes, along the same lines of the Protestant Reformation—with a focus on scripture and a disregard for tradition—and for similar historic reasons.

Secondly, because the core teachings of the scriptures of Christianity and Islam markedly differ from one another, Islam's reformation will naturally produce a civilisation markedly different from the West.”

## IN CONCLUSION

Defeating radical Islam will not happen through warfare, but through a deeper understanding of a religion that could be interpreted according to preference or prejudice. Christian leaders must abandon the notion that radical Islam is a misinterpretation of true Islamic teachings. It should be acknowledged for what it is; a true interpretation of texts found in Islamic doctrine. In addition, the views of liberal Muslim leaders, who reject the contradistinctive teachings of the extremist, political Islam, should be supported and widely circulated.

Ephesians 6:12 *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*

### SOURCES:

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<sup>2</sup> <http://raymondibrahim.com/2015/05/07/islams-reformation-is-already-here-and-its-called-isis/>