



Sacred Visions and Religious Terror: The Case of Islam

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All religions have, at their core, a sacred vision of the ideal utopian community based upon their religious scriptures, traditions, and laws. This is the case in Christianity with its vision of a Christian society organized according to the gospels and faithful to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, in Judaism with its view of the ideal Jewish society based upon talmudic tradition and observance of halacha, and in Islam whose history and theology call for establishing societies and states under the sole authority of Muslim religious leaders and governed by the Muslim *shari`a*, religious law.

Islam, for complex historical reasons, has never religiously accommodated to modernity and, with the exception of a small cadre of liberal theologians and intellectuals,¹ its mainstream laity and religious leadership have steadfastly maintained its classical outlook and religious vision. Islam has refused to retreat to the “private realm” of personal life and still asserts its rightful place in the public sphere of government, the legal system, and civil society.² Nonetheless, the forces of modernization and seculariza-

tion are worldwide and have affected Muslim as well as European societies and Islam has been confronted by its inability to carry out its religious vision as it finds Islamic religious, political, and social programs challenged by both Muslim states intent on modernization and an emerging global order antagonistic to its religious world view.

ISLAMIC DILEMMAS, RELIGIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT, AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

From the time of the prophet Muhammad onward, Islam has divided the world between the lands and states under Muslim control, referred to in Muslim jurisprudence as *Dar al-Islam*, the domain of Islam, and those lands and territories not under Muslim jurisdiction, called *Dar al-Harb*, the domain or abode of war. The faithful Muslim's duty is to engage in religious struggle, *jihad*, to transform non-Muslim lands, the *Dar al-Harb*, into *Dar al-Islam* lands, governed by Muslim law. The goal of *jihad* is not to force individual conversion, but the transformation, by forcible conquest if necessary, of non-Muslim areas into Muslim-controlled states, whereby they become part of the Islamic world, the *Dar al-Islam*. Islam, from its earliest periods, permitted monotheistic religions like Christianity and Judaism to maintain their religious institutional life but these communities, known as *dhimmi* communities, while permitted religious and economic rights, were consigned to an inferior status within Muslim society, and subject to special taxes and obligations. Unlike the *dhimmis*, who are tolerated minority communities, citizens of non-Muslim societies are seen as *harbi*, people living in a war zone, and therefore subject to conquest. For Islam, "there is a canonically obligatory perpetual state of war" between Islamic civilization and non-Muslim societies, which must be fought by faithful Muslims "until the whole world either accepts the message of Islam or submits to those who bring it."³ The world, in the Muslim view, is divided between "Islam" and "war" and the devout Muslim believer must answer the call of *jihad* to advance Allah's message for all humankind. Theologically, Muslims should throw themselves into an unrelenting, unyielding, and unending *jihad* until their duty of world transformation is complete. Political reality, military considerations, and historical developments,

however, makes this impossible even for the pious Muslim. *Jihad* is not fought in a divine battlefield but in the material world and a Muslim will find it necessary and permissible to delay or renounce the battlefield, for a time, in order to make alliances, obtain war materials, and assemble a capable force. A truce, however, is a temporary matter to be followed by a continuing *jihad*.

The precise contexts and meanings of *jihad* and *Dar al-Harb* have shifted in the course of Islamic history. In the earliest periods of Islamic history, when Islam was steadily advancing in the ancient and medieval world, it was assumed that all non-Muslim lands would be conquered and take their place in the greater *Dar al-Islam*. After the Spanish Reconquista and the expulsion of Islam from Europe, this classical view of total and constant *jihad* was modified somewhat to fit the gradual loss of Muslim hegemony. Despite these changes, the call to *jihad* remains central to Islamic doctrine and religious imagination. While the ultimate goal of *jihad* is the creation of a universal world community living according to the *shari`a*, the Muslim religious code based on the *Qur`an* and the various Islamic legal traditions, the immediate task of the faithful is to make certain that existing Muslim states remain loyal to Muslim teachings and practices.

Islam rejects the secular state and acknowledges no separation between a distinctly religious realm and a secular realm. The Islamic state is the community of believers, the *ummah*, those faithful to Islam and living under Islamic law wherever they may be. National boundaries are irrelevant. Muslims may have state entities but the Muslim *ummah* transcends national or ethnic categories and includes all who are faithful to the Muslim vision. Allegiance then is not to any national state authority but to the *ummah* and to those Islamic religious leaders who will forge an Islamic entity which will be true, in every way, to the full gamut of Muslim law, custom, and government. Practically, this means the establishment and enforcement of *shari`a* law in all Muslim societies and in all international relations.

The Islamic civilization, envisioned, required, and desired by faithful Muslims, has not occurred. A recalcitrant reality involving the international community, modern economics, and international trade and, perhaps most painful of all, the passivity and, not

infrequently, the antagonism of fellow Muslims have come together to deny the faithful their deepest religious goals.

Perhaps most painful and tragic for the Muslim faithful is the continued existence of an alien Jewish state of Israel. In the Islamic view, the State of Israel now illegitimately occupies, with the assent and backing of Western military power, Islamic lands. According to Islamic perceptions, hundreds of thousands of the Muslim inhabitants of Palestine were terrorized and forced to leave their ancestral home and the holy places of Islam, the Haram el Sharif in Jerusalem and the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron which are under Jewish control. Not to be discounted is the everyday consciousness and experience, by an indigenous and religiously autonomous Muslim community, of being a conquered people in what is considered a sacred center of Islam.

Disappointment is a stressful human experience, and religious disappointments in particular may be among the most painful of such states because the believers invest so much of themselves in a religious faith. The psychologist Leon Festinger has described the experience of religious disappointment as a state of “cognitive dissonance” — that is, a state where two elements of belief or “fact” turn out to be contradictory or inconsistent. Festinger argued that human beings seek consistency between their beliefs and goals and their experience of external reality, because of a human propensity for order and consistency. In a series of experimental studies, Festinger and his colleagues have demonstrated that the experience of cognitive dissonance leads to severe states of discomfort and to attempts, of all sorts, to reduce or eliminate the inconsistencies and discomfort.

Dissonance produces discomfort and, correspondingly, there will arise pressures to reduce or eliminate the dissonance. Attempts to reduce dissonance represent the observable manifestations that dissonance exists. Such attempts may take any of three forms; the person may try to change one or more of the beliefs, opinions, or behaviors involved in the dissonance; to acquire new information or beliefs that will increase the existing consonance and thus cause the total dissonance to be reduced; or to forget

the importance of those cognitions that are in a dissonant relationship.⁴

The desire to reduce dissonance and disappointment is psychologically equivalent to the desire for food when hungry, or sleep when fatigued. Living with disappointment, being ridiculed for one’s beliefs, and being unable to fulfill ones religious obligations are intensely difficult situations. As Peter Berger described it, the longer it continues “it becomes very difficult to take yourself seriously.”⁵ The Muslim faithful find themselves in such a psychological dilemma. Their essential religious theology and religious obligations — the call to *jihad*, the conquest of non-Muslim lands for Islam, the institutionalization of *shari`a*, and an essentially clerical leadership — are inherently in conflict with the nationalistic modernizing Muslim regimes and the democratic secular traditions of Europe and the United States. The challenge facing Islam is both religious and psychological and an appreciation of the Islamic dilemma must consider both.

ISLAMIC RESPONSES

There are three ways religious groups can attempt resolution to the experience of cognitive dissonance and chronic religious disappointment: surrender, reinterpretation, and revolutionary transformation. In the Muslim case, these correspond to what I will refer to as modernism, traditionalism, and militant Islam.

MODERNISM

Muslim modernism deals with the contradictions and dissonance engendered by Islamic faith by surrendering those elements of dogma and behavior which are in conflict with modern sensibilities and culture. In this fashion, the painful experience of dissonance is dealt with by rejecting implausible faith positions for the newer “truths” of modernity, science, and political reality. Perhaps the earliest modernist writing developed in 19th century British India where the Muslim community found itself living under severe colonial rule. After the British had suppressed the Muslim revolt of 1857, some Muslim intellectuals, wanting to accommodate the new political realities and because some were captivated by European superiority, began to abandon *jihad* and

conquest as an obligation for Muslims. One prominent acculturated Muslim writer, Moulavi Cheragh Ali, who spoke for a whole cadre of modernist Muslims, explained that all the verses in the *Qur'an* relating to *jihad* were of historical importance only and that Islam was opposed to *jihad* and had no call to wage wars of conquest.⁶ Ali's writings are of interest because he works so hard to make a case for the similarity between European Christianity and Islam.

For contemporary modernists, as well, the classical doctrines of the division between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* and the obligation of aggressive *jihad* are rejected. Modernist scholars like Mahmud Shalut and Abu Zahah argue that taking the full context of the *Qur'anic* passages on *jihad* into account — “contextualized interpretation” — demonstrates that Islam is opposed to violent confrontation and is encouraged to make permanent peace with non-Muslim communities. There is a full rejection of the classical approach to Islamic treaties as temporary and limited in time as exemplified by the Muhammad's agreement with the Meccans at Hudaibiya.⁷ Muslim modernists invoke the category of “silent *shari'a*” to indicate that Muslims are left considerable leeway in decision making because, in the modernist view, the *Qur'an* only prescribed broad principles but has left details and specifics for the human community to decide. For example, in their rejection of a religious state, modernists argue, “there is nothing in the Islamic *shari'a* that compels one to bind religion to state-setting, the *shari'a* does not deal with any specific form of government.”⁸ The modernists also invoke the “silent *shari'a*” to show that Islam can be fully compatible with western political democracy, pluralism, and equality. One Muslim scholar has found Islam compatible with a Jewish state in the Middle East.⁹ The modernists are frequently pious and highly acclaimed scholars of the *Qur'an* and its associated literature, but their world view represents a surrender of classical Islam, as they create a synthesis between modernity and Islam traditionalism.

TRADITIONALISM

Traditionalism is a complex phenomenon and presents elements of surrender, resignation, and, despite all this, maintains crucial elements of the classical tradition. Traditionalists tend to ambivalence

both in language and action and, unlike modernists, refuse to outrightly reject classical doctrine while de facto discouraging or even forbidding followers from strictly following those same scriptural admonitions. There is no cognitive or theological capitulation to political and cultural reality but there are elaborate reinterpretations of classical doctrine to make it compatible with current reality. Traditionalists engage in “cognitive and theological bargaining,”¹⁰ willing to compromise on some issues so they can achieve the more important goals at some future point.

The Muslim Brotherhood organization in Egypt and Jordan and its affiliates all over the Muslim world, originally a sectarian revivalist movement and later, in the sixties and seventies, a radical revolutionary organization before it was transformed into a popular Islamic movement, illustrates the traditionalization response. These groups continue to affirm the complete legitimacy of *jihad* and accept fully the obligation to create Islamic states which will govern in full conformity to religious law. But while they view the current leadership of Muslim nations as “infidels” and enemies of Islam, members of the Brotherhood serve in parliaments, in Jordan, Egypt, and elsewhere, and take their place as legitimate political parties. The Muslim Brotherhood justifies their participation by appeal to the *Qur'anic* narrative of Joseph who, as a prophet doing divine bidding, took a most active role in the evil and idolatrous Pharaonic regime. Similarly, argue Muslim traditionalists, while we desire *jihad*, while we await a true Islamic state and world order, we can and are obligated to participate in governmental activity as did the prophets in the *Qur'anic* narratives.¹¹

Muslim Brotherhood members in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan, who, prior to the Intifada of the late nineties, refused to participate fully in organized violence against Israel and secular Muslim regimes, justified their inaction by appealing to Muhammad's *hijra*, migration to Medina, when he could not overcome the powerful opposition in Mecca and establish an Islamic state, only to return 13 years later and triumph over his opposition. Traditionalists argued that there is no violation of Muslim doctrine and no inconsistency or cognitive dissonance in their refusal to engage in a violent *jihad* at a time they saw as importune, because their course of action is fully compatible with the example of the prophet Muhammad. In

the past, when challenged and even taunted by more activist groups for their refusal to engage in terrorist action against Israel, Brotherhood leaders proclaimed :

Work for Palestine does not come in one form, that is bearing arms. It also includes awakening the youth to work for Palestine. Only the Muslims can undertake this duty, taking the youth out of their soft childhood to manhood, from nothingness to self realization, from fragmentation and diverse concerns to unity and cohesiveness. The Muslim Brotherhood does all these things and all such efforts are being made on the road to the liberation of Palestine which is part of the land of Islam.¹²

After a time, many of these traditionalist groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood in the West Bank, responding to pressure from more radical groups and to their growing sense of dissonance and infidelity to religious teachings, return to a more activist orientation. Traditionalism without engaging in violent confrontation is a difficult stance to maintain in the Islamic world.

MILITANT ISLAM: THE TRANSFORMATION OF REALITY

The transformation response seeks to change reality, to make it conform to religious expectations and dogma. Transformationists see modernists and traditionalists as faithless and weak-minded in their willingness to compromise their essential religious beliefs and goals. Militant Islam rejects Islamic modernism as theological surrender and apostasy. Traditionalism and its willingness to compromise aids and abets the enemies of Islam and deludes the Muslim faithful. Militant transformationists are pure believers, impatient with waiting and zealous to do battle for God. God spoke and his truth is literal. Any other response is blasphemous.

Muslim theology has not undergone liberalization, as has Christianity, nor has it been modified in a traditionalist mode as has Haredi Judaism with its rabbinical adjustments to new realities.¹³ Islam has remained an essentially literalist *Qur'anic* tradition and deviations from the texts receive no legitimization or support from the religious virtuoso class of leading clerics.¹⁴ The militant

response in its demand to engage in *jihad*, to make the literal texts come alive, to fulfill the precise demands of scripture is not sectarian or idiosyncratic as many Western secular observers imagine, but central to the inner life of Islam. The Islamic injunction to establish a universal Islamic society, to reclaim immediately Muslims lands and to establish *shari'a* as the state law is the Muslim obligation. Compromises, theological bargaining, and sophisticated reinterpretations do not ultimately address the failure of responsibility and the experience of dissonance for pious Muslims. The texts, the oral histories, and world view passed on within the closed Muslim world of Islamic schools, mosques, and universities worldwide do not permit abandonment of the classical traditions. One commentator put it this way:

To a considerable extent, all Muslims are fundamentalists, that is they believe that the *Qur'an*, the holy scripture of Islam is God's final complete and perfected revolution for all mankind. The *Qur'an* is therefore the supreme guide for the human race, the direct words of god, covering all aspects of human life transmitted directly to his last prophet and messenger, Muhammad.

Islam is God's plan for the world, every inch of it, not only just the Islamic regions. Islam is for everyone, whether one wants it or not. It is the duty of every Moslem to help expand the borders of Islam until every being on this planet acknowledges that "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger."¹⁵

Islam never rejected these beliefs and religious duties but they lay dormant in the Muslim world under the yoke of colonialism and later by the attractions of nationalism and economic modernization, whether in the form of socialism or capitalism.¹⁶ Two 20th-century thinkers, the Indian Muslim Maulana Mawdudi and the Egyptian Sayid Qutb gave new life to the core Islamic goals, and in doing so ignited a transformation of Islam. Maulana Mawdudi argued that Islam is entirely incompatible with modernity and the modern state and that modernity in its rejection of God's laws for society and in its depraved moral order is actually identical to the *jahiliyah*, the barbarism and pagan immortality which Muhammad

came to destroy and replace with the new moral and political order of Islam. Modernity is not a neutral matter, it is lethal to a genuine and faithful Islam and a Muslim cannot under any circumstance accommodate or compromise with *jahiliyah*. Qutb, who incorporated Madoodi's ideas in his own rejection of modernity, explained the following about *jahiliyah*:

... denotes rejection of the divinity of God and the adulation of mortals. In this sense, *jahiliyah* is not just a specific historical period (referring to the era preceding Islam) but a state of affairs. Such a state of human affairs existed in the past, exists today, and may in the future, taking the form of *jahiliyah*, that mirror image and sworn enemy of Islam. In any time and place human beings face that clear-cut choice: either to observe the Law of Allah in its entirety, or to apply laws laid down by man of one sort or another. In the latter case they are in a state of *jahiliyah*. Man is at the crossroads and that is the choice: Islam or *jahiliyah*.¹⁷

Qutb excoriated the modernists who sought to imitate Western societies or to define Islam in Western religious categories. Qutb went back to the texts and challenged the acquiescing Muslim clergy and politicians for failing to demand the full implementation of Islam in the political, social, and economic realm. Qutb's Islam is aggressive and all-encompassing, and he refused to dilute or compromise what he took to be authentic Islam.

Qutb worked for most of his life as an educational inspector for the Egyptian government and during the early part of his life felt that education and preaching could lead to the establishment of a Islamic state. The recalcitrance of the Egyptian state and his own religious development changed his position and led him to champion violent *jihad* as the correct path. His stay in the United States during 1949–52, studying educational administration, had a profound effect on him and highlighted for him the depravity and inferiority of the Christian West.

During my years in America, some of my fellow Muslims would have recourse to apologetics as though they were defendants on trial. Contrariwise, I took an offensive

position, excoriating the Western *Jahiliyah*, be it in its much-acclaimed religious beliefs or in its depraved and dissolute socioeconomic and moral conditions: this Christian idolatry of the Trinity and its notions of sin and redemption which make no sense at all; this Capitalism, predicated as it is on monopoly and interest-taking, money-grubbing, and exploitation; this individualism which lacks any sense of solidarity and social responsibility other than that laid down by law; that crass and vacuous materialistic perception of life, that animal freedom which is called permissiveness, that slave market dubbed “women's liberation.”¹⁸

The Islamic response to this sordid, immoral, and God-denying situation, which Qutb now saw as invading Muslim countries, is a full uncompromising return to the fundamentals of Islam which for Qutb will only occur by means of a militant *jihad*. Moreover, the enemies of Islam are not only those who wage war against Muslims or deny Muslims their religious, political, or civil rights, but the entire world of *jahiliyah* whose very existence should not and cannot be tolerated by Islam. Islam has in this view a universal liberating and humanizing message for all humanity and it is inevitable that other religions and systems will not recognize the truth of the Islamic message. Consequently, these others powers must be “destroyed” and their leaders “annihilated.” As Qutb explains, “Truth and falsehood cannot exist on earth. . . . The liberating struggle of *jihad* does not seize until all religions belong to God.”¹⁹

Qutb went even further. Basing himself on the widely recognized medieval theologian Ibn Taymiyya, he argued that Muslim governments who are disloyal to Islamic law and do not rule according to *shari`a* are themselves to be classified as *jahiliyah* regimes and are rightfully to be violently overthrown. This was a revolution — which Qutb successfully carried out by his astute use of the legacy of the unimpeachable Ibn Taymiyya — certainly within Sunni Islam whose traditionalist leadership had for centuries been materially dependent and had accommodated the distinctly non-Muslim policies of the ruling elites. Historically, the fear of *fitna*, civil war, had been so great among the Sunni community that a great tolerance for religious compromise had been legitimated. Qutb's

writings and revolutionary activity changed all that. *Jihad* and revolt were now back on the Islamic agenda. Qutb saw those willing to compromise as “spiritual and intellectual defeatists.” He refused to tolerate dissonance between the Muslim texts and traditions and political and social reality and insisted on the transformation of reality in accordance with the Muslim vision.

Sayid Qutb was executed by the Egyptian government in 1956 for his Islamic revolutionary activity and is today a highly respected figure read by millions of Muslims all over the world, and he has inspired numerous revival and *jihad* organizations. Still, his writings on violence have elements of apology — he still seems caught in the traditionalist argument which defines *jihad* as a last if necessary resort — and his training as a teacher led him to believe that discussion and propaganda would bring some people to Islam. His revolutionary rhetoric, strong as it was, gave a place for *hijrah*, separation and migration from infidel regimes, and his writing on *jihad* lacked an immediate and programmatic quality.

The most sophisticated theological continuation of militant transformative Islam was taken by Abt al-Salam Faraj in his *Al-Faridah al-Gha'ibah*, (*The Absent Duty*),²⁰ a booklet which provided the theological justification for the assassination of Anwar Sadat. Faraj was executed by the Egyptian government in 1982 for his involvement in the assassination, but his work continues to be circulated widely, taken seriously by both establishment clerics and militants. He continues to be the major inspiration for Islamic “sacred terror”²¹ worldwide, including followers in the United States, Europe, and India. He most recently has gained a readership in Muslim areas of the former Soviet Union whose religious leadership is increasingly adopting Qutb and Faraj as their religious inspiration.²² Faraj’s critical point is that *jihad*, violent and physical confrontation including death and destruction, is the “absent” and neglected duty of contemporary Islam. The *Qur'an* is clear: “Fight and slay the pagans wherever you see them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in ambush” (*Surah* 9:5).

Faraj dismisses any and all of the traditional restraints on *jihad*. Such arguments for limiting *jihad*, even those used by the most orthodox schools as excuses, are but examples of Muslim cowardice. *Hijrah* is ridiculed: “All this nonsense — about going

out to the dessert — results from denouncing and refusing to follow the right way to establish an Islamic state,” writes Faraj.²³ It is the unwillingness to fight *jihad* that leads Muslim leaders to put their faith in preaching, propaganda, or scholasticism as ways to achieve the Islamic state. Muslims do not and will not achieve their divine mission without *jihad*. And the *Qur'an* puts it directly, “Fighting is prescribed for you and ye dislike it, but it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you and you love a thing that is bad for you. But God knoweth and ye know not” (*Surah* 2:216). The high value the Muslim community puts on religious study and knowledge is similarly derided with Faraj’s argument that the great ages of Muslim conquest and glory saw little scholarship but great *jihad*.

Faraj’s expansion of *jihad* is most vividly seen in his encouragement of individual acts of religious violence and treachery (*fard ayn*) and his strong theological position that *jihad* needs no approval of Muslim religious authority and need not be limited by earlier ethical restraints against murder of children and certain other civilians. Moreover, the soldiers of *jihad* may use any and all methods, including deception and deceit, surprise attacks, trickery, and large-scale violence to achieve their religious goals. Throughout his writing, Faraj is clear that *jihad* means “confrontation and blood,” and that no Muslim may legitimately avoid the call to *jihad*.

Faraj and his disciples laid the theological groundwork for a fundamentalist, aggressive, and increasingly violent Islam. In its emphasis on violence and murder and in its justification of individual and haphazard attacks, the new militants have religiously institutionalized *jihad* as every man’s “sacred terror.” The fact remains that the understanding of *jihad* and the nature of violence tolerated by Muslim authorities has been transformed after the publication of *Al-Faridah al-Gha'ibah*. This is not to say that Faraj’s policy of violence is the actual Islam of most Muslims. Followers of such movements are not insignificant — likely in the hundreds of thousands worldwide — but the ultimate importance of these transformative militant thinkers is that they have created a sacred canopy under which purveyors of “sacred terror” can operate, collect money, and recruit new followers among the Muslim faithful. Qutb and Faraj were marginalized but their spiritual children are

among mainstream Muslims and it is these spiritual offspring who are setting the Islamic agenda.

This sometime quiet and sometime noisy transformation is occurring all over the Muslim world. The release from the traditional restraints on violence offered by Faraj and others has enabled Islamic activists all over the world to now legitimately proclaim individual *Fatwas*, religious verdicts, and threaten violence against anyone these activists define as “enemies of Islam.”²⁴ The past obligation for consultation with recognized religious authorities served to limit violence and constrain *jihad*, but in this new decentralized and individuated understanding of *jihad*, there is increased likelihood for greater violent confrontation. The Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, under the influence of the new theology, has now enlarged its active *jihad* activities and given its theological imprimatur to terrorist activity.²⁵ The Palestinian Authority and its supporters, once given to political and liberation movement rhetoric, has now appropriated the rhetoric of sacred terrorism associated with Islamic groups.²⁶ The current Palestinian Authority appointed mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine, Sheik Ikrima Sabri, explained that when mothers “willingly sacrifice their offspring for the sake of freedom, it is a great display of the power of belief. The mother is participating in the great reward of *jihad*. . . .”²⁷

Western observers and diplomats are often shocked and scandalized by the growing legitimization of violence in the Islamic world. Muslims see things differently. Militant Islam and the new ideologies of “sacred terror,” aimed at transforming political and social reality in accordance with Islamic injunctions, has released Muslims from the psychological stresses of religious inconsistency and cognitive dissonance. Islam is different and the transformative approach including violence and armed struggle emerges from classical texts and the lived history of Islam. We see here a spectacle of “realities in conflict.” What, to outsiders, appears to be violence and terror is, from an Islamic perspective, an obligatory and ethical response to paganism, infidelity, or apostasy.

Westerners have their own ethnocentrism and frequently want to believe, against all evidence, that all religions are the same, that all religions condemn violence and promote tolerance and human brotherhood. Western secular humanists in their embrace of an

ethic of moral relativism and secular nationalism have erroneously assumed that all peoples concur with this unique and unusual approach of modern Western civilization. Modernization and nationalism, along American and European lines, have not worked in the Islamic world.²⁸ While small economic and political elites have welcomed westernization and benefited from it, the bulk of the Muslim world has experienced, in the prescient words of Emanuel Sivan, only “doom and gloom” from an embrace of modernity. The mood now all over the Islamic world — from the Arabian Peninsula to Caucasus, in the Philippines, Indonesia, and among the émigrés to Western Europe and the United States — is for a search for Islamic authenticity. It is at this moment that militant transformative Islam has much to offer to Muslim seekers. It is a religion anchored in the sacred texts without apology. It is a bulwark against globalization and moral homelessness and it has a clear program to achieve the Muslim vision of “there is no God but Allah” throughout the world.

Endnotes

- 1 Charles Kutzman, editor, *Liberal Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 3–26.
- 2 Bruce Lawrence, *Defenders of God* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. 189–226.
- 3 Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p.21.
- 4 Leon Festinger et. al., *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 25.
- 5 Peter L. Berger, “Some Sociological Comments on Theological Education,” *Perspective* (Summer 1968).
- 6 Quoted in Mustonsi Mir, “*Jihad* in Islam,” in Hadia Dajani-Shakeel and Ronald A. Massier, editors, *The Jihad and Its Times* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center For Near Eastern and North African Studies, The University of Michigan, 1991), p. 119.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Adams, op. cit., p.115. (THERE IS NO PREVIOUS ADAMS FOOT-NOTE)
- 9 See “A Jewish Temple Under Al-Aqsa?” *Jewish Voice and Opinion*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Oct. 2000): p. 10–12. Abdul Hadi Palazzi, a leader of the Italian-Muslim community, argues for the legitimacy of the State of Israel and moreover sees no religious requirement for the Jewish state to give up sovereignty over Muslim holy places like the Al-Aqsa mosque, providing that respect for the sanctity of Muslim sites is maintained.

- 10 This term is taken from Peter L. Berger, "Some Sociological Comments on Theological Education," *Perspective* 9 (Summer 1968): p. 129–141.
- 11 Anas B. Malik, "Understanding The Political Behavior of Islamists: The Implications of Socialization, Modernization, and Rationalist Approaches," *Studies in Contemporary Islam*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Spring 1999): p. 19.
- 12 Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 31.
- 13 For the process of reinterpretation of Jewish eschatological expectations see Charles Selengut, "By Torah Alone: Yeshivah Fundamentalism in Jewish Society," M. Marty and S. Appleby, *Accounting for Fundamentalism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- 14 For an interesting discussion of this phenomenon, see the extended introduction in Adams, op. cit. (**THERE IS NO PREVIOUS ADAMS FOOT-NOTE**)
- 15 A.S. Abraham and George Haddad, *The Warriors of God* (Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, 1989), p. 1.
- 16 Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), chapter 3.
- 17 Ibid, p. 24, quoting Qutb.
- 18 Ibid., p. 68.
- 19 Quoted in Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideology of Islamic Revival," in John L. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).
- 20 For a discussion and translation, see Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: MacMillan, 1986).
- 21 I am using the term "sacred terror" to highlight the twin aspect of the phenomenon. The murder and mayhem caused by militant Islam is certainly terroristic, but the religious motivation and definition given to these activities renders them also as sacred activity, at least from the perpetrators' point of view. I later refer to this issue as one of "realities in conflict."
- 22 Muslim informants from Islamic areas of the former Soviet Union have reported that militant authors are read and discussed widely — there are no translations into native languages — and that the newly pious are particularly moved by these ideas.
- 23 See English translation of *Al-Faridah al-Gha'ibah* in Jensen, Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East*, p. 188. I have used "nonsense" instead of Jensen's "strange ideas."
- 24 "Killing for the Glory of God in a Land Far from Home," *New York Times*, January 16, 2001, p. 1 reports on the growing number of *jihad* activists and their international networks.
- 25 Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad*.
- 26 Jeffrey Goldberg, "Arafat's Gift," *New Yorker*, January 29, 2001, p. 52–67.

- 27 "An Interview with the Grand Mufti About the Pope's Visit," *Al-Abram Al-Arabi* (Egypt), March 29, 2000. Translated by the Middle East Media and Research Institute <www.memri.org>.
- 28 Bill Musk, *Passionate Believing* (Turnbridge Wells: Monarch Publications, 1992), points out that in Muslim areas such as Yemen, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, statistics show that high levels of education are correlated with high levels of involvement in militant groups. The expectation that high levels of education would lead to lower levels of religiosity was proved wrong in Muslim countries. This has also been pointed out in Joyce M. Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997).