

JIHAD in the Koran

Second Edition

"In law, according to general doctrine and in historical tradition, the jihad consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, of its defence" *Encyclopedia of Islam*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Bernard Payeur

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Cover image is of a saber above which, in Arabic, is the Shahadah, the Muslim declaration of faith. Both can be found on the Saudi flag, serving as a reminder that Islam was born in war and that this war will not end until everyone either swears the allegiance the sword underscores, or has been put to death.

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Dedication

To the brave men and women who fought and died in Afghanistan and whose sacrifice was rendered in vain by a stupid man who could not appreciate that they were fighting for our very survival.

After centuries of strife, the West has learned to separate religion and politics – to establish the legitimacy of its leaders without referring to divine command. There is little reason to expect the rest of the world – the Islamic world in particular – will follow.

We in the West find it incomprehensible that theological ideas still inflame the minds of men, stirring up messianic passions that can leave societies in ruin. We had assumed that this was no longer possible, that human beings had learned to separate religious questions from political ones, that political theology died in 16th-century Europe. We were wrong. It's we who are the fragile exception.

Mark Lilla, Professor of Humanities at Columbia University

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REALITY

Love, Sex and Islam

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Foreword

48:28 It is He Who sent forth His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may exalt it above every other religion. Allah suffices as Witness.

War's First Casualty

4:71 O believers, be on your guard; so march in detachments or march altogether.

4:72 Indeed, among you is one who will stay behind, so that if a disaster befalls you, he will say: "Allah has favoured me, since I have not been a martyr with them."

4:73 If, however, a bounty from God comes to you, he will say, as though there was no friendship between you and him: "Would that I had been with them; then I would have won a great victory."

Revelations and Generalizations

THE PEOPLE

114 An-Nâs

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

114:1 Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the People,

114:2 "The King of the people,

114:3 "The God of the people,

114:5 "From the evil of the slinking whisperer [Satan],

114:6 "Who whispers in the breasts of people,

114:7 "Both jinn and men."

Both jinn and men. That is it, the last verse of the Koran. What a read! What a revelation! What is a jinn? It is a spirit that inhabits another dimension. There are good and evil jinns. The caricature of the genie is probably based on this creature of the Koran.

When I decided to read and study the Koran with the intention of writing about it, I was determined to get a Muslim's interpretation, one that could only be viewed as favourable to Islam. I also wanted a translation that was easy to read and understand. The edition that seemed to satisfy these requirements was a translation by Majid Fakhry, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the American University of Beirut. In the translator's own words, "We have tried to express ourselves in a simple, readable English idiom."

Publishers Weekly wrote of Fakhry's notable accomplishment that it "succeeds in expressing the meanings of the original Arabic in simple readable English."

My goals in reading the Koran were diverse. At the top of my list was gaining an understanding of what makes this book so special; to understand what makes the religion based on its content so attractive to so many; and yes, to satisfy my curiosity about what God sounds

like, or more accurately, reads like. I also read the Koran in the hope of dispelling prejudices and apprehensions I had developed after reading about Islam from authors--devoted Muslims, most of them--who had nothing but praise for Allah and His "perfect religion."

In these books on the Koran, I prefer letting Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, speak for themselves, offering only an informed layman's opinion, or an expert's explanation, where I feel one is warranted. When Fakhry's crisp translation is not sufficient, it is Moududi I most often turn to. Abul A'la Moududi's (also spelt Maududi) [1903-1979] credentials as a pre-eminent Islamic scholar are impeccable: journalist, theologian, Muslim revivalist, Islamist philosopher, and first recipient of the *King Faisal International Award* for his services to Islam and Islamic studies. Of the more than 120 books he wrote, he is most famous for his magnum opus, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*.

The Koran is the book upon which the Taliban, the Islamist fundamentalist movement that ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001, based their concept of God's government on Earth. The Taliban, like all believers, are required to at least attempt to commit to memory the entire Koran. Believers are also expected to accept Allah's Revelations in their totality without question. This has not been my approach in presenting my impressions, as a former Catholic, now an agnostic, upon first reading the Koran.

As an unbeliever, I hope I can safely express my opinions about the Koran and the Prophet Muhammad, although nothing is certain. It is an unfortunate fact of life that authors who choose to write about Islam, the Koran or the life of the Prophet must tread carefully lest believers perceive their writings as an insult to Islam. I hope that I have achieved that fine balance of respect and critique, if such an equilibrium is even possible where religion is the topic.

Translations of the Koran are usually called interpretations because believers claim that only the Arabic version of the Koran can convey the true meaning of God's words. If you can't read the Koran in the original, they say, you are bound to misinterpret Allah's words. Do they have a point, or is this just pre-emptive rationalisation, a ready excuse for some of the frightening revelations contained within the Muslim Holy Book, revelations that may leave some unbelievers wondering if these are the words of God or those of His nemesis?

The Koran is written in verses or ayats, therefore it is true that you cannot appreciate the rhythm and rhyme that only the original can convey; however, any good translation will be able to communicate the

original meaning of the poet's words, and the meaning of the words is what you should be concerned with.

An English translation of the Koran will run to about 77,700 words, the approximate size of a standard 300-page book. This is a book, Allah reveals, in which you can study "whatever you choose."

68:35 Shall We consider those who submit like those who are criminals?

68:36 What is the matter with you; how do you judge?

68:37 Or do you have a Book in which you study?

68:38 Wherein there is whatever you choose.

It is a bold statement for a relatively small book where boundless repetitions occupy space that could, perhaps, be put to better use. The Koran is made up of 114 chapters; when referring to these, I use the Arabic transliteration (conversion from one alphabet to another) of chapter, which is surah. Each surah is further divided into verses, a term I have chosen to retain over the Arabic transliteration of ayat.

There are 6,346 verses in the Koran if you include the 112 unnumbered Basmalahs, the formulaic invocation "in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful," which appears at the beginning of every surah except the first and the ninth.

I refer to passages by the surah and verse numbers—for example, 2:282 is Chapter 2, Verse 282—or by surah name and verse: *The Cow, Verse 282*. A verse can be just a few words long or more than 200 words, such as the aforementioned, the longest verse in the Koran that addresses the virtue of good bookkeeping practices and why, when it comes to transactions involving money or chattel, women cannot be trusted.

Just a few editorial notes before we get down to business and let God speak for Himself. All quotes from the Koran are from Majid Fakhry's interpretation unless otherwise indicated. Text added by Fakhry within a quoted verse to improve understanding is enclosed within square "[]" parentheses or brackets. Other clarifications by Fakhry, including footnotes, are enclosed in round "()" brackets.

On rare occasions, you will find italicised bracketed comments within a verse: these are the author's, usually included to identify someone whom Allah does not explicitly name and, when it is not evident to the casual reader, whom He is informing when He tells Muhammad how to respond to questions and observations. Any underlining for emphasis is also my doing, not Fakhry's. I hope Majid

will forgive my use of the more familiar Koran instead of his preferred spelling, Qur'an.

Where warranted, verses are accompanied by the Prophet's recorded sayings or descriptions of actions, called *hadiths*. (A*hadith*, often used to indicate the plural form of *hadith*, is not used herein.) *Hadiths*, of which there are more than ten thousand, are hearsay evidence collected approximately 200 years after the Prophet's passing that describe what Muhammad said and did, including the silent approval of actions done in his presence. An authentic (*sahih*) or good (*hasan*) *hadith*, i.e., one that can be traced to a legitimate witness, passed down via of chain of reliable transmitters, is usually considered a legal precedent so long as it does not contradict the Koran¹.

When you encounter 'say' followed by a colon in a revelation (with no other qualifier, e.g., "they say" or, on rare occasions, "you said"), assume this is Allah directing His Messenger.

All quoted verses have been carefully reviewed to ensure that Fakhry's interpretation has been faithfully rendered. Many verses, such as 44:43-44, must be read together to form a complete sentence or thought; therefore, do not assume a typographical (typo) or grammatical error if a verse does not end with the expected punctuation.

44:43 The Tree of Zaqqum (the Tree of Bitterness) will certainly be

44:44 The food of the sinner.

Some of the quoted verses from Fakhry's interpretation of the Koran have no end quotations due to an often misunderstood rule of English grammar. If a quote is more than one paragraph long, i.e., verses, opening quotation marks ("") will appear at the beginning of each verse but closing quotation marks (") are only required at the end of the complete quotation. Finally, all translations consulted are from recognized Islamic scholars of the Koran.

¹ Sunni Islam gives credence to the *hadiths* collected by six men (al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, At-Tirmidi, Ibn Majah, Abu Dawood and An-Nisa'i), with the largest the al-Bukhari collection considered the most authoritative of the "six canonical collections." Imam Bukhari (d. 870) is said to have gathered over 600,000 *hadiths*, of which 7,275 are considered authentic. The Koran and these "hadith collections" inform every facet of a believer's existence.

THE ENEMY

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

60:1 O believers, do not take My enemy and your enemy for supporters, showing them friendship, when they have disbelieved what has come to you for the Truth. They expel the Messenger and expel you because you have believed in Allah, your Lord. If you have gone out to struggle in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure secretly showing them friendship, while I know very well what you conceal and what you reveal. He who does that among you has surely strayed from the Right Path.

60:2 If they come upon you, they will be enemies of yours and will stretch out their hands and tongues against you with malice, and they wish that you would disbelieve.

Generations long gone and new generations of sceptics who continue to reject God's Revelations and would rather He kept them to Himself are many; for them, the Compassionate harbours a singular animosity.

1. The Antagonizers
2. The Meccans and Their Allies
3. Hypocrites and Apostates
4. The Reluctant Immigrants
5. Jews
6. Christians
7. Polytheists
8. Reformers
9. The True Unbelievers
10. Conscientious Objectors

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11. Atheists
12. The Niggardly
13. Your Flesh and Blood

The list God established of those you must hate (to the death, in many instances) is considered as valid today, except for perhaps *The Antagonizers*, as when Muhammad was in charge of day-to-day combat operations. The focus of the hatred and violence Allah intended for the Prophet's contemporaries has been refocused on future generations.

The Antagonizers

The antagonizers may be long gone but the Koran remembers them well. Allah is not a god who forgives or forgets. His Koran serves as a useful platform to vent, for the ages, His vitriolic anger at the contemporaries of His last and greatest spokesman who caused him so much anguish and tribulations by refusing to accept that he had been visited by an angel and given God's latest immutable instructions for mankind.

58:5 Those who antagonize Allah and His Messenger shall be abased by Allah, as He abased those who preceded them. We have, indeed, sent down very clear Signs; and the unbelievers shall have a demeaning punishment.

58:6 On the Day when Allah shall raise them all from the dead, then inform them of what they did. Allah has kept count of it, but they have forgotten it. Allah is a witness of everything.

The antagonizers are people who talked behind Muhammad's back; who held secret talks of which the Prophet was not aware. You would think that God would tell His Messenger what he needed to know in a timely manner instead of waiting until Judgement Day; after all, *He* was party to the secret discussions.

58:7 Have you not considered that Allah knows what is in the heavens and on the earth. No three conspire in secret, but He is the fourth of them; nor five but he is the six of them; nor even less than that or more but He is with them wherever they are. Then He shall inform them of what they did on the Day of Resurrection. Allah, indeed, has knowledge of everything.

Muhammad had forbidden secret meetings to make it more difficult for his and God's enemies to plot against them. A sensible precaution!

58:8 Have you not considered those who were forbidden to converse secretly, then they return to what they were

forbidden from and converse secretly in sin and aggression and the disobedience of the Messenger? Then, when they come to you, they greet you with a greeting that Allah never greeted you with. They say within themselves: "If only Allah were to punish us for what we say!" May Hell suffice them; and what a wretched fate!

The interdiction also applied to the believers in whom Muhammad may not have had complete confidence.

58:9 O believers, if you converse secretly among yourselves, do not converse in sin, aggression and disobedience of the Messenger; but converse in righteousness and piety, and fear Allah unto Whom you shall be mustered.

58:10 Conversing in secret is an act of Satan, so as to sadden the believers, but that will not harm them in the least, except with Allah's Leave. Let the believers put their trust in Allah.

A reminder that antagonizers are weak and God is strong.

58:20 Those who antagonize Allah and His Messenger are surely among the lowliest.

58:21 Allah has written: "I shall certainly vanquish, I and My Messengers." Surely Allah is Strong, All-Mighty.

And for God's Sake, don't take them as friends even if they are part of your family, close relatives or clan members, lest Allah accuse you of being an unbeliever, with all the pain and suffering that entails.

58:22 You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day befriending those who antagonize Allah and His Messenger, even if they are their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their clansmen. Those, Allah has inscribed faith upon their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself, and He will admit them into Gardens, beneath which rivers flow, dwelling therein forever. Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with him. Those are Allah's Party; surely Allah's Party shall be the prosperous.

The Meccans and Their Allies

The Koran is very much the story of one man's struggle to get his Meccan kin to accept him as spokesperson for the Almighty, with the absolute powers that the titled conveyed.

33:36 It is not up to any believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have passed a judgement, to have any choice in their affairs. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger have gone astray in a manifest manner.

God admits that the Meccans suspected that their kin's claim of being His Messenger was only because he wanted to rule over them.

38:6 And the dignitaries among them went forth saying: "Go on and be steadfast regarding your gods. This is indeed a matter premeditated (Muhammad... [wants] to subjugate us and rule us as his subjects, Moududi).

Muhammad was your typical doomsday prophet. He expected the world to end before his death or shortly thereafter. This is confirmed in many revelations, probably the most significant being revealed truth 15:99—and, of course, in the hadiths by the man himself.

15:98 So (Muhammad), celebrate the praise of your Lord and be one of those who prostrate themselves.

15:99 And worship your Lord, till the certain [Hour] overtakes you!

Narrated Sahl bin Sad As-Sa'idi:

Allah's Apostle, holding out his middle and index fingers, said, "My advent and the Hour are like this (or like these)," namely, the period between his era and the Hour is like the distance between those two fingers, i.e., very short.

Bukhari 63.221

When that did not happen, writes Stephen J. Shoemaker, the message was changed from "repent, the end of the world is at hand" to

“conquer the world and I will bring it to an end and welcome you into Paradise” to reflect this new reality.

When Muhammad died before the eschaton's (the end of the world) arrival and the Hour continued to be delayed, the early Muslims had to radically reorient their religious vision. The Hour was thus increasingly deferred into the distant future, and in less than a century Islam swiftly transformed itself from a religion expecting the end of the world to a religion that aimed to rule the world.

Stephen J. Shoemaker, The Death of a Prophet - The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012

This meant that all unbelievers became the target of verses initially aimed at getting the Meccans to convert before God brought an end to His Creation.

44:34 Truly, these people (the Quraysh and their ilk who questioned Muhammad's prophetic call) will say:

44:35 “It is only our first death and we will not be raised from the dead.

44:36 “Bring then back our fathers if you are truthful.”

44:37 Are they any better than the people of Tubba' (Tubba' refers originally to the kings of southern Arabia, in pre-Islamic times) and those who preceded them? We destroyed them all; for they were criminals².

44:38 We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in jest.

44:39 We only created them in truth, but most of them do not know.

44:40 The Day of Decision is truly their appointed time all together.

44:41 The Day when no master shall profit a client a whit, and they will not be supported;

² Tubba is one of a handful of civilizations God brags about obliterating in His Koran. It is typical of Allah, when challenged to put up or shut up, to have His spokesman answer the challenge by pointing out His prior acts of mass murder and destruction of people who had the temerity to question His abilities, as he does here.

44:42 Except for him upon whom Allah has Mercy. He is indeed the All-Mighty, the Merciful.

Before his movement attracted a critical mass of followers, which enabled the believers to considerably improve their living conditions, mainly through pillaging caravans, Muhammad faced difficult questions. One had to be about why the Meccans and their allies were rich, and the believers, who had the God of the Universe on their side, were poor and persecuted. They may be winners in the here-and-now, explained Allah, but in the Hereafter they will be the losers.

11:15 Whoever desires the life of this world and its finery, We will reward them [during it] for their [good] works, and they will not be given less than their due.

11:16 [Yet] those [are the people] who shall have nothing in the Hereafter except the Fire, and what they did [here] will go there to waste, and their works will be in vain.

11:17 Are those then [like these] who have a clear proof (the Qur'an) from their Lord recited by a witness from Him, and preceded by the book of Moses as a guide and mercy? Those believe in it; but those who disbelieve in it from among the parties (the Meccans and neighbouring tribes who opposed the Prophet) – their appointed place is the Fire. So do not be in doubt about it. It is indeed the truth from your Lord; but most people do not believe.

11:18 And who is more perverse than he who invents lies about Allah? Those shall be brought before their Lord and the witnesses (the angels) shall say: "These are the ones who lied about their Lord. May Allah's curse be upon the wrongdoers!"

11:19 Those who bar people from the Path of Allah, and wish it to be crooked; they truly disbelieve in the Hereafter.

11:20 Those will not escape on earth and they have, apart from Allah, no protectors. Their punishment will be doubled; they were unable to hear, nor did they perceive.

11:21 Those are the ones who lost their souls and that which they invented (the associates they assign to Allah) strayed away from them.

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11:22 Without doubt, they will be, in the Hereafter, the greatest losers.

They may also be losers in the here-and-now if God decides to do to them what He has done to previous generations who were even better off.

19:73 And when Our Revelations are clearly recited to them, the unbelievers will say to the believers: "Which of the two parties is better in position and fairer in company?"

19:74 How many generations before them We have destroyed, who had better furnishings and appearance?

19:75 Say: "Whoever is in error, let the Compassionate prolong his term; so that when they see what they are threatened with, whether it be the punishment or the Hour, they will know who is worse in position and weaker in supporters."

If the unbelievers have more than you, consider it a favour from God.

42:25 It is He Who accepts the repentance of His servants, pardons the evil deeds and knows what you do.

42:26 And He answers those who believe and do the righteous deeds and increases them of His Bounty; but the unbelievers will suffer a terrible punishment.

42:27 Had Allah expanded provision for His servants, they would have exceeded the bounds of injustice in the land; but He sends down in measure whatever He wishes. He is truly Well-Informed about His servants, All-Seeing.

Hypocrites and Apostates

33:61 Accursed, wherever they are encountered they will be seized and slaughtered.

Revelations about hypocrites have again to do with the Meccans to whom God revealed most of His Koran, but are as valid today, if not more so, as they were then. In revelations pertaining to hypocrites and apostates, the likes of the Islamic State finds justification for the mass murder of coreligionists, as witnessed during its short tenure as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.



An image grab taken from a propaganda video released on November 16, 2014 by al-Furqan Media allegedly shows members of the ISIL jihadists preparing the simultaneous beheadings of at least 15 men described as Syrian military personnel. AFP Photo

Notice the composure of those who are about to kill, with their bare hands and a knife, the human being they are holding like a sheep ready to have its throat cut. They are totally unperturbed; they know how it's done. The appalling cruelty found throughout the Koran may condition holy warriors to kill without remorse, but how to slaughter their prisoners is mostly learnt behavior. Where that method of killing is most often demonstrated is during the *Feast of Sacrifice* marking the end of the Hajj, where Muslim fathers and sons all over the world, in

front of their families and with only a knife, butcher sheep, goats and other domestic animals in their millions in a manner similar to what the Islamic State does with these captives.

More mass killings of hypocrites and possibly apostates, if some of those about to be shot by ISIS are Shias—but this time with more efficient rifles and machine guns—is not in contravention of Muhammad's damning of innovation³ as they are used to further the interest of God.



God's hypocrites come in many varieties and include, depending on the circumstances, the following:

1. those who mocked Allah's Messenger and/or His Revelations;
2. those who believed then disbelieved, i.e., the apostates;
3. those who changed sides during the battle;
4. those who spread lies about Allah and His Messenger, e.g., doubters and cynics;
5. the lukewarm believers who grudgingly said the prayers, did not spend enough in the Cause of Allah and were always

³ Every innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance goes to Hell fire.

coming up with excuses not to join the fight against the unbelievers.

God repeatedly makes no distinction between hypocrites and apostates, as in Revelation 63:3.

63:1 When the hypocrites come to you, they say: "We bear witness that you are indeed Allah's Messenger." Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.

63:2 They take their oaths as a shield and so they bar other people from the Path of Allah. Evil is what they used to do.

63:3 That is because they believed, then disbelieved; and so a seal was set upon their hearts. Therefore, they do not understand at all.

Apostates or hypocrites, it does not matter, seize and kill them without hesitation as is Allah's Way and always will be.

33:60 If the hypocrites, those in whose hearts is a sickness and those who spread lies in the city, do not desist, We will certainly urge you against them and then they will not dwell with you therein as neighbours but for a short time.

33:61 Accursed, wherever they are encountered they will be seized and slaughtered.

33:62 That is Allah's Way of dealing with those who have gone before, and you will never find any alteration of Allah's Way.

Kill them, but perhaps not before informing them of the painful punishment God looks forward to inflicting on them.

4:137 Those who believe, then disbelieve, then again believe, then disbelieve, then grow in disbelief, Allah shall not forgive them nor guide them to the Right Path.

4:138 Announce to the hypocrites that a very painful punishment is reserved for them.

Don't bother asking forgiveness for the hypocrites, you will just be wasting your time.

63:6 It is the same for them whether you seek forgiveness for them or you do not seek forgiveness. Allah will not forgive them. Surely, Allah will not guide the sinful people.

Hypocrites supposedly feared that God would send down a chapter of His Koran in which He would reveal what was really on their minds.

9:64 The hypocrites fear that a Surah will be revealed informing them of what is in their hearts. Say: "Go on mocking, Allah will surely bring into the open what you fear."

9:65 And should you ask them, they would surely say: "We were only talking idly and playing." Say: "Were you then mocking Allah, His Revelations and His Messenger?"

Some believers may have wondered why people they knew to be hypocrites were not punished, compelling God to send the following revelation about balancing things out.

9:66 Make no excuses; you have disbelieved after believing. If We pardon a group of you, We shall punish another group, because they were wicked sinners.

Hypocrites are all alike and they will get what they deserve, if not now, then later.

9:67 The hypocrites, males and females, are all alike. They enjoin evil and forbid what is good and close their fist (they do not spend in Allah's way). They have forgotten Allah (they have been disobedient), and so He has forgotten them (He has deprived them of His Mercy). The hypocrites are the wicked sinners.

9:68 Allah has promised the hypocrites, males and females, and the unbelievers, the Fire of Hell, abiding in it forever. It is sufficient unto them. He has also cursed them, and a lasting punishment awaits them.

9:69 Like those who came before you (the hypocrites); they were mightier than you and had more wealth and children. So they enjoyed their share (of earthly life); then you enjoyed your share as did those before you, and you engaged in idle talk as they did. Those, their works in this world and in the Hereafter are vain; they are the losers.

Hypocrites are good looking, arrogant, speak well and are perhaps paranoid, depending on your interpretation of "they think every cry is aimed at them."

63:4 If you see them, their bodies please you; and if they speak, you listen to their words, as though they were propped-up wooden logs. They think every cry is aimed at them; they are the enemy, so beware of them. May Allah discomfit them, how they are perverted!

63:5 If it is said to them: "Come, that the Messenger of Allah may seek forgiveness for you"; they bend their heads and you see them walking away, waxing proud.

Hypocrites take credit for others' accomplishments, including God's.

4:141 Those who wait for [misfortune to befall] you. And if a victory is accorded to you from Allah, they will say: "Were we not on your side?"; and if the unbelievers have a share [in victory], they will say: "Did we not subdue you, and thus protect you from the believers?" Allah shall judge between you on the Day of Resurrection; and Allah will not give the unbelievers the upper hand over the believers.

Hypocrites are deceivers and lazy show-offs.

4:142 Surely, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, but Allah causes their deceit to backfire. And if they rise to perform the prayer, they rise lazily, trying to show off in public and they remember Allah but little.

Hypocrites keep an open mind.

4:143 Vacillating between the two (belief and disbelief), inclining neither to these nor to those (neither to the believers nor to the unbelievers); and whomever Allah leads astray, you will not find him a way out.

Hypocrites are not charitable towards newcomers. When the Meccan believers (the emigrants referenced below) sought refuge in Medina, the hypocrites encouraged citizens not to give them money so that they would go somewhere else.

63:7 It is they who say: "Do not spend any money on those (the Meccan Emigrants) who side with Allah's Messenger until they disperse." To Allah belong the treasuries of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand.

Hypocrites think they decide who goes and who stays because of their might.

63:8 They say: "If we return to the city (Medina), the mightiest will drive out the lowliest therefrom." Might belongs to Allah, His Messenger and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know.

Some Muslims had difficulty accepting that believers who stayed behind in Mecca, or lived unmolested in the land of the unbelievers, were also hypocrites that God had deliberately caused to revert back to disbelief.

4:88 How is it that you are divided into two parties regarding the hypocrites, when Allah turned them back (to disbelief) on account of what they earned (on account of their sins and disbelief)? Do you wish to guide those whom Allah leads astray? He whom Allah leads astray, you will not find a way out for him.

Moududi:

They had outwardly embraced Islam in Makka and in other parts of Arabia, but instead of migrating to the Domain of Islam they continued to live among their own people who were unbelievers, taking part in all their hostile machinations against Islam and the Muslims. It was not easy for the Muslims to decide how to deal with such people. Some were of the opinion that since they professed Islam, performed Prayers, fasted and recited the Qur'an they could not be treated as unbelievers. Here God pronounces His judgement on this issue (Revelation 4:88).

The Reluctant Immigrants

The revelations about Muslim sympathizers “who could have accepted the faith and emigrated, but did not” are interpreted today as encouraging believers to emigrate to the Land of War – the land of the unbelievers – so as to facilitate its eventual conquest in Allah’s Cause.

2:218 Those who believed and those who emigrated and strove for the Cause of Allah are those who may surely hope for Allah’s Mercy. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

For God, the Meccans who, during the war between Mecca and Medina (to be covered later), were tempted to convert to Islam but didn’t because they did not want to leave were as despicable as those who fought His Messenger, and deserving of the same fate.

4:97 Those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to themselves (the reference is to those Meccans who could have accepted the faith and emigrated, but did not) will be asked [by the angels]: “What were you doing?” They will say: “We were oppressed in the land.” They (the angels) will add saying: “Was not Allah’s Land spacious enough for you to emigrate to some other part?” Those people – their refuge is Hell, and what a wretched destiny!

God was not as pitiless towards all who would not actively join the fight for Islam by emigrating.

4:98 Except the oppressed men, women and children who have no recourse and cannot find a way out (the reference here is to those Meccans who were weak and could not emigrate).

4:99 Those, Allah may pardon them; Allah is All Pardoning, All Forgiving.

The stay-put believers of Mecca’s refuge may be in Hell, but they still served as a rallying cry. God invited the believers to join His Messenger’s campaign against Mecca to liberate those who refused to

leave the city even if, as Revelation 4:97 makes quite clear, nothing was stopping them from doing so.

4:75 And why don't you fight for the Cause of God and for the down-trodden, men, women and children, who say: "Lord, bring us out of the city (Mecca) whose inhabitants are unjust and grant us, from you, a protector, and grant us, from You, a supporter."

An invitation to emigrate to the land of the unbelievers so as to further Allah's Cause is as valid today as it was then.

4:100 He who emigrates for the Cause of Allah will find on earth many a place of refuge and abundance; and he who leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and is then overtaken by death, has already earned his reward from Allah. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

If necessary, you may conceal the fact that you are Muslim from your "manifest enemy."

4:101 And when you journey in the land, you are not at fault if you shorten the prayer for fear that the unbelievers will harm you. The unbelievers are your manifest enemy.

Jews

2:211 Ask the Children of Israel how many clear signs did We bring them. He who changes Allah's Grace (turn Allah's clear signs to disbelief) after it has come to him [will find] Allah to be Severe in retribution.

God thought He had a covenant with the Jews, which is why He gave them Palestine.

2:243 Have you not considered those (the Israelites) who fled their homes in thousands for fear of death? Allah said to them: "Die." Then He brought them back to life. Surely Allah is gracious to mankind, but most people do not give thanks.⁴

5:12 Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel, and We raised among them twelve chieftains. And Allah said: "I am with you. Surely, if you perform the prayer, give the alms, believe in my Messengers and support them and lend Allah a fair loan (spend in the way ordered by Allah), I will forgive you your sins and admit you into Gardens, beneath which rivers flow. But if any one of you disbelieves afterwards, he certainly strays from the right path.

Disbelieve, they obviously did, though Allah forgave a few of them.

5:13 And on account of them violating their covenant, We cursed them and caused their hearts to harden; they take the words (the words in the Torah) out of their context and forget

⁴ Moududi:

This refers to the exodus of the Israelites. The Israelites had left Egypt in large numbers and were wandering in the desert, eager to find a home. But when at God's command Moses ordered them to drive the Canaanites out of Palestine and conquer that land, they showed cowardice and refused to proceed. Eventually God let them wander about for forty years till one full generation of Israelites had died and been replaced by a new one reared in the tough conditions of desert life. It was only, then that God enabled the Israelites to overcome the Canaanites. Their former condition is described as death, whereas the later development is seen as their restoration to life.

part of what they were enjoined, and you do not cease to find them treacherous, except for a few of them. Yet, pardon them and forgive; Allah surely loves those who do good to others.

He would forgive a few more Jews if they were to repent and mend their ways.

2:159 Those (the Jews) who conceal the clear proofs and guidance We sent down, after making them clear to mankind in the Book (the Torah), shall be cursed by Allah and the cursers.

2:160 Except those who repent, mend their ways and reveal [the truth (which they had concealed)]; these I shall pardon. I am the Pardoner, the Merciful.

Pardoning some while, according to Muhammad, being an accomplice to the eventual genocide of the vast majority. It is only a matter of time; God does not break a promise.

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar:

I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "The Jews will fight with you, and you will be given victory over them so that a stone will say, 'O Muslim! There is a Jew behind me; kill him!'"

Bukhari 56.791

The Jews did not start the jihad that, in the absence of a miracle, may see them exterminated. The irony is that, if it had not been for the Jews of Medina, Islam would probably have been stillborn.

The Jews of the Hijaz

The Hijaz is the so-called Holy Land of Islam. The area comprises most of the western part of modern-day Saudi Arabia and is centered on Mecca and Medina. In Medina lived three Jewish Tribes. When Muhammad sought refuge in the oasis city to escape his Meccan kin, who wanted to kill him for promoting what they considered a hateful intolerant religion, he was welcomed by the Jews, in part, because of his preaching that the god of the Torah was the one and only god⁵.

⁵ Perhaps unbeknownst to the Jews of Medina, the two largest Arab tribes with which they shared the city, the Aws and the Khazraj, had already converted to Islam and pledged loyalty to Muhammad in a secret undertaking known as the Second Pledge of al-Aqaba (also referred to as the Pledge of War), which committed them to fight the enemies of God and His Messenger. This has led some to speculate that the good things

They even entered into a covenant to come to his (the Muslims') aid if he was ever attacked. In return, he signed a promise of non-aggression.

When Muhammad came to Medina, Muslims were required to prostrate themselves in the direction of Jerusalem during their daily prayers, but that would change as mistrust and animosity developed between the two Semite people. The disagreement first led to the trading of insults.

Narrated Aisha:

Once the Jews came to the Prophet and said, "Death be upon you." So I cursed them.

The Prophet said, "What is the matter?"

I said, "Have you not heard what they said?"

The Prophet said, "Have you not heard what I replied (to them)? (I said), ('The same is upon you.')"

Bukhari 42.186

The reason for this growing hostility towards the people who were instrumental in ensuring the survival of the Muslims was that the Jews did not accept Muhammad as a legitimate spokesperson of the Almighty. The Jews of Medina undoubtedly tried to impress upon him, to no avail, that, according to their system of beliefs, God only communicated His instructions for mankind via the Jewish people.

God did not agree and began cursing the Jews, promising the demeaning punishment He reserves for all unbelievers who would not accept His *Chosen One* as a legitimate emissary of His Eminence and what he revealed.

2:89 And when a book (the Qur'an) came to them from Allah confirming that which they had (the Torah), and though they used hitherto to pray for assistance against those who disbelieved; yet when there came to them what they already knew (that Muhammad would be sent as the Messenger of Allah), they disbelieved in it. So may Allah's curse be on the unbelievers.

2:90 Evil is that for which they sold their souls when they disbelieved in what Allah sent down, out of envy that He should send down from His Bounty (reveal to them) on

God initially said about the Jews was to lure them into a false sense of security until they could be dealt with.

whomsoever of His servants He pleases. Thus they incurred wrath upon wrath. And there is a demeaning punishment for the unbelievers.

Until this unfortunate misunderstanding, all was well between Muslims and Jews. In fact, in the following revelations you may detect a note of sadness about the way things turned out.

3:69 A party of the people of the Book (the Jews) wish that they would lead you astray; they only lead themselves astray without perceiving it.

3:70 O people of the Book, why do you disbelieve in Allah's Revelations while you yourselves know that they are true?

3:71 People of the Book, why do you confound truth with error and knowingly conceal the truth.

3:72 Some of the people of the Book say: "Believe in what has been revealed to the believers at the beginning of the day, and disbelieve in it at its end; perchance they (the believers) will turn back!"

3:73 "And do not believe except in him who follows your religion." Say: "True guidance is Allah's Guidance. [Do not believe] that anyone would be given what you have been given, or they will dispute with you before Your Lord." Say: "Bounty is in Allah's Hands; He gives to whom He pleases, and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

3:74 He favours with His Mercy whomever He pleases. Allah's Bounty is unlimited!

The Jews' questioning of Muhammad, who was not always comfortable with people asking him pointed questions about what God had revealed, became most insistent. Adding insult to injury, they often phrased their enquiry in a way meant to upset him. It may have been more upsetting for Muhammad's patron, judging from God's Response.

4:44 Have you not considered those who have received a portion of the Book, procuring error and wanting you to go astray?

4:45 Allah knows best your enemies; Allah suffices as Protector, Allah suffices as Supporter!

4:46 Some of the Jews take words out of their context and say: "We have heard, but disobey; and hear as though you hear

not." And [they] say "ra'ina" (a word of abuse), twisting their tongues and slandering religion. Had they said: "We have heard and we obey; hear and look at us", it would have been better for them and more upright; but Allah has cursed them on account of their disbelief, so they – except for a few – do not believe.

4:47 O People of the Book, believe in what We have revealed confirming what you already possess, before We obliterate faces, turning them on their backs, or curse them as we have cursed the Sabbath-breakers, and Allah's command was accomplished!

The breakup would prove acrimonious in the extreme, with God now accusing the Jews of being evildoers.

5:61 When they (the Jewish hypocrites) come to you, they say: "We believe", although they come in as unbelievers and leave as unbelievers. Allah knows best what they conceal.

5:62 And you will see many of them hastening to perpetrate sin and aggression and the devouring of unlawful gain. Evil is what they have been doing!

5:63 Why do not the rabbis and masters forbid them from uttering sinful things and devouring unlawful gain? Evil indeed is what they used to do!

5:64 The Jews say: "Allah's Hand is tied" (Allah is not generous in bestowing His Bounties on them); may their own hands be tied and may they be damned for what they say. His Hands are rather outstretched; He grants freely as He pleases. And what has been sent down to you from your Lord will certainly increase many of them in arrogance and unbelief. And We have cast in their midst animosity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection. Whenever they kindle a fire for war, Allah extinguishes it; and they go about spreading mischief, but Allah does not like the mischief makers.

A people whom Muhammad respected when they first met became a people only deserving of punishment in the Hereafter and an unusual punishment in the here-and-now, the Sabbath, a tradition dating back to ancient Israel.

16:124 The Sabbath was ordained only for those who differed with respect to it (the Jews). Your Lord shall decide between

them on the Day of Resurrection, regarding that wherein they differed.

Moududi:

Obviously, there was no need to state that the restrictions about the Sabbath applied only to the Jews and had nothing to do with the law of Prophet Abraham, because they themselves knew it. The restrictions were imposed upon the Jews because of their mischiefs and violations of the law.

This breakup would prove disastrous for the Jews of the Hijaz in the war between Mecca and Medina, which had become the stronghold of the Muslims; it was a disaster with effects still felt to this day.

Christians

9:30 The Jews say: "Ezra is the son of Allah"⁶, and the Christians say: "The Messiah is the son of Allah." That is their statement, by their mouths; they emulate the statement of the unbelievers of yore. May Allah damn them; how they are perverted!

The largest assembly of perverts in the Koran are not Jews but Christians who believe God has a son, an 'associate'. To associate Allah with other gods, to accuse Him of consorting with females or of having a son, is the sin of shirk. It is, along with the sin of kufr, i.e., disbelief, the worst sin a person can commit and one that will not be forgiven!

4:48 Allah will not forgive associating [other gods] with him, but will forgive anything less than that to whom He pleases. And he who associates other gods with Allah has committed a grave sin.

4:49 Have you considered those who regard themselves as pure (*through baptism*)? Rather, only Allah will purify those whom He pleases, and they will not be wronged a whit.

4:50 Behold, how they invent falsehood about Allah (*having a son*); and that in itself is a manifest sin!

Honesty is good, but it will not get you into heaven if you continue insulting God with your claim that He has a son with whom He shares power.

3:75 And among the People of the Book there are those who, if you entrust them with a heap of gold will return it to you; and there are those who, if you entrust them with one dinar,

⁶ The Jews used to "confer the title of 'son of God' to a person whose piety has placed him in a very near relationship to God" (*Encyclopedia of Judaism*). Ezra is such a figure, having brought the Torah back to Jerusalem from Babylon. It does not in any way imply that the person is a direct descendent of the Almighty. Either Allah confused the meaning of sons of God in Genesis or heard the Jews referring to one of their own as a son of God and assumed the worst.

will not return it to you, unless you keep on demanding it. That is because they say: "We have no obligations towards the Gentiles (Al-Ummiyun)"; and they knowingly speak falsehood against Allah.

In verses about the birth of Christ, some of the first words to come out of Jesus' mouth, only a few hours after His birth, are to announce that he is not the Son of God and God to echo Jesus' claim.

19:27 Then she brought him (the child) to her people, carrying him. They said: "O Mary, you have surely committed a strange thing.

19:28 "Sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man and your mother was not unchaste."

19:29 Whereupon she pointed to him. They said: "How will we talk to one who is still an infant in the cradle?"

19:30 He (Jesus) said: "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah, Who gave me the Book and made me a Prophet.

19:31 "And He made me blessed wherever I am, and has commanded me to pray and to give the alms, so long as I live;

19:32 "And be devoted to my mother; and He did not make me arrogant and mischievous.

19:33 "Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I rise from the dead."

19:34 Such was Jesus, son of Mary; it is the truth which they (the Christians) dispute.

19:35 It is not fitting for Allah to have a son. Glory be to Him; when He decrees a thing, He simply says: "Be", and it comes to be.

Jesus said, later in life is assumed, that those who associate him with Allah, according to Allah, are evildoers whose "dwelling is Hell."

5:72 Those who say that Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary, are unbelievers. The Messiah said: "O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Surely, he who associates other gods with Allah, Allah forbids him access to Paradise and his dwelling is Hell. The evildoers have no supporters!"

What does God think about those who believe in the Trinity, and what will happen to them for spreading this perversion?

5:73 Unbelievers too are those who have said that Allah is the third of three. For there is no god except the one God; and if they will not refrain from what they say, those of them who have disbelieved will be severely punished.

5:74 Will they not repent to Allah and ask His Forgiveness? For Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

Jesus is just another prophet – the Koran contains references to twenty-five others who came before the Prophet Muhammad and it is clear that there are many more – whose words were misunderstood or perverted.

5:75 The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger before whom other Messengers had gone; and his mother was a godly woman. They both ate [earthly] food. Look how We make clear Our Revelations to them; then look how they are perverted!

5:76 Say: "Will you worship, instead of Allah, that which cannot hurt or profit you? Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

God also had a covenant with the Christians that He maintains was also broken and about which, unlike His understanding with the Jews, He won't provide specifics as to what part of His covenant Christians did not respect until Judgement Day.

5:14 And with some of those who say: "We are Christians", we made a covenant; but they forgot part of what they were reminded of; so We stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection. Allah will let them know what they did.

If the following authenticated saying of the Prophet is any indication, the explanation will be brief and to the point!

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri:

The Prophet then said, "Somebody will then announce, 'Let every nation follow what they used to worship.' So the companions of the cross will go with their cross, and the idolaters (will go) with their idols, and the companions of every god (false deities) (will go) with their god, till there

remain those who used to worship Allah, both the obedient ones and the mischievous ones, and some of the people of the Scripture. Then Hell will be presented to them as if it were a mirage.

Then it will be said to the Christians, 'What did you use to worship?'

They will reply, 'We used to worship the Messiah, the son of Allah.'

It will be said, 'You are liars, for Allah has neither a wife nor a son. What do you want (now)?'

They will say, 'We want You to provide us with water.'

It will be said to them, 'Drink,' and they will fall down in Hell (instead)."

Bukhari 93.532

Polytheists

There is no hope for those who believe in more than one god, e.g., Hindus.

9:113 It is not for the Prophet and those who believe to ask for forgiveness for the polytheists even if they are near relatives, after it becomes clear to [the believers] that they are the people of the Fire.⁷

God would not even forgive Abraham's father, a polytheist.

9:114 Abraham asked forgiveness for his father, only because of a promise he had made to him; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. Indeed Abraham was compassionate, forbearing.

God, on Judgement Day, will use Muhammad's request not to be disgraced to display how vicious He can be with polytheists.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "On the Day of Resurrection Abraham will meet his father Azar whose face will be dark and covered

⁷ **Narrated Al-Musaiyab:**

When Abu Talib was in his death bed, the Prophet went to him while Abu Jahl was sitting beside him. The Prophet said, "O my uncle! Say: None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, an expression I will defend your case with, before Allah."

Abu Jahl and Abdullah bin Umaya said, "O Abu Talib! Will you leave the religion of Abdul Muttalib (the Prophet's grandfather)?"

So they kept on saying this to him so that the last statement he said to them (before he died) was: "I am on the religion of Abdul Muttalib."

Then the Prophet said, "I will keep on asking for Allah's Forgiveness for you unless I am forbidden to do so."

Then the following Verse was revealed:-- "It is not fitting for the Prophet and the believers to ask Allah's Forgiveness for the pagans, even if they were their near relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the (Hell) Fire."

with dust. (The Prophet Abraham will say to him): 'Didn't I tell you not to disobey me?'

His father will reply: 'Today I will not disobey you.'

Abraham will say: 'O Lord! You promised me not to disgrace me on the Day of Resurrection; and what will be more disgraceful to me than cursing and dishonoring my father?'

Then Allah will say (to him): 'I have forbidden Paradise for the disbelievers.'

Then he will be addressed, 'O Abraham! Look! What is underneath your feet?'

He will look and there he will see a Dhabh (an animal), blood-stained, which will be caught by the legs and thrown in the (Hell) Fire."

Bukhari 55.569

The believers in more than one god were deliberately led astray because they did not fear the God of the Messengers, the ultimate insult to the ultimate God to Whom belongs everything, the one Who decides who lives and who dies.

9:115 Allah would not lead any people astray after He has guided them, until He makes clear to them what they should fear. Allah, indeed, has knowledge of everything.

9:116 To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He gives life and causes death and, apart from Allah you have no friend or supporter.

Reformers

Muslims who wish to reform their religion face an uphill battle and risk death at the hands of coreligionists for questioning orthodoxy.

2:8 There are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day;" but they are not real believers.

2:9 They seek to deceive Allah and the believers, but deceive none other than themselves, though they are not aware of that.

2:10 In their hearts is a sickness; so Allah has increased their sickness. A painful punishment awaits them because of their lying.

2:11 And when they are told: "Do not sow mischief in the land", they say: "We are only doing good."

2:12 It is they who make mischief, but they are unaware of that.

In case the meaning of God's words is not clear in Fakhry's interpretation, a translation by Sheikh Muhammad Sarwar of Verses 2:11 and 2:12 follows.

2:11 When they are told not to commit corruption in the land, they reply, "We are only reformers."

2:12 They, certainly, are corrupt but do not realize it.

Rashad Khalifa's translation of Revelation 2:12 is even more adamant that reformers are evildoers.

2:12 In fact, they are evildoers, but they do not perceive.

As is often the case when Muhammad cannot get people to believe and behave the way he would like, God reassures His Messenger that it is actually His doing; in this instance, that He is deliberately giving the *reformers* "the latitude" (2:15) to make fools of themselves.

2:13 And when they are told: "Believe as the others have believed", they say: "Shall we believe as the fools (the ignorant) have believed?" It is they who are the fools, though they do not know it.

2:14 And when they meet the believers, they say: "We believe", but when they are alone with their devils (their chiefs) they say: "We are with you; we were only mocking."

2:15 Allah mocks them and gives them the latitude to wonder aimlessly in their intransigence (disbelief).

2:16 Those are the people who traded away guidance for error; but their trade made no gains and they have not found the right way.

2:17 They are like one who kindled a fire, but when it lit all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in total darkness unable to see;

2:18 Deaf, dumb, blind; they shall never return (return to the right path).

No, we are not finished with condemning reformers with confusing comparisons.

2:19 Or like those who in the midst of a cloudburst from the sky accompanied by darkness, thunder and lightning put their fingers in the ears to guard against thunderbolts for fear of death. And Allah encompasses (surpasses them in knowledge and power) the disbelievers.

2:20 The lighting almost takes away their sight; when it flashes they walk on, but when it darkens they stand still. If Allah had willed, He would have taken away their hearing and sight. Surely Allah has power over all things.

Normal people will not stumble through the dark if they can avoid it. God's point is unclear.

The True Unbelievers

Allah does not encourage believers to make value judgements, or express a preference for the Message conveyed by one of His Messengers over the Message conveyed by another. A believer who makes value judgements pertaining to His Messages, in God's eyes, is not a believer at all. He or she is worse than a regular unbeliever, more or less in the same league as believers who don't remain steadfast in their beliefs.

Allah always tries to make the punishment fit the crime, so you can be sure that the "demeaning punishment" promised to true unbelievers will be commensurate with their much diminished status in God's Eyes.

4:150 Those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and want to make a distinction between Allah and His Messengers, and say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in the others", wanting to take a middle course in between,

4:151 Those are the true unbelievers, and we have prepared for the unbelievers a demeaning punishment.

The difference between a true unbeliever and a believer is simple:

4:152 But those who believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not discriminate between any of them those He will grant them their rewards. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful!

3:84 Say: "We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us and has been revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes; and in what Moses, Jesus and the Prophets have received from the Lord. We do not discriminate between any of them, and to Him we Submit."⁸

⁸ Narrated Abu Huraira:

The people of the Scripture used to read the Torah in Hebrew and explain it to the Muslims in Arabic. Then Allah's Apostle said, "Do not believe the people of the Scripture, and do not disbelieve them, but say, 'We believe in Allah and whatever has been revealed...' (3.84) *Bukhari* 93.632

God's reluctance to let the believers think for themselves or to look for a deeper understanding in His Revelations, which on the surface radiate so much hatred, makes reforming the *religion of truth* next to impossible.

Revealed truths, immutable facts revealed to a mortal by a god, tend to reflect the values and traditions of those who first received them. The Koran is no different, as God reminds us:

12:2 We have revealed it as an Arabic Qur'an, that perchance you may understand.

Conscientious Objectors

Some of the early believers, “those in whose heart” God said “is a sickness,” did not care for *fighting surahs* that demanded they go to war and kill to advance His Kingdom on Earth.

47:20 The believers say: “If only a surah is sent down”, but when a sound surah is sent down and fighting is mentioned therein, you will see those in whose heart is a sickness look at you like one who has fainted in the throes of death. Far better for them,

47:21 Would have been obedience and a fair word! So when the matter is resolved, it would have been better for them to be true to Allah.

Others were worried that if they gave Muhammad too much power, he would do what God accuses the unbelievers of doing all the time; that is, “spread corruption in the land.”

47:22 Would you, perhaps, if you were to rule, spread corruption in the land and sever the bonds of your kin?

47:23 Such are those whom Allah has cursed, and has made them deaf and blotted out their eyesight.

47:24 Will they not ponder the Qur’an, or are there locks upon their hearts?

It is Satan who causes those I call *conscientious objectors* to abandon their faith after “the Guidance was manifested to them” or choose to ignore parts of it.

47:25 Surely, those who have turned upon their heels after the Guidance was manifested to them, it was Satan who insinuated to them and deluded them.

47:26 That is because they said to those who disliked what Allah has sent down: “We shall obey you in part of the matter”, but Allah knows their secretiveness.

These conscientious objectors, like so many others who did not show the proper respect for God's Revelations. will be snatched by angels on Judgement Day and flown directly to Hell, and beaten on the buttocks during transit before being dropped into the Fire.

47:27 How, then, will it be when the angels shall carry them off, beating their faces and their buttocks?

47:28 That is because they have followed what has angered Allah and were averse to His good pleasure. So He has foiled their works.

God will disclose the name of these conscientious objectors, but who they are will obviously be revealed on the eve of any battle, or earlier, probably by the objections to going to war that they will raise – “their distorted speech,” Revelation 47:30.

47:29 Or do those in whose hearts is a sickness think that Allah will not bring their rancours (sic) to light.

47:30 Had We wished, We would have shown them to you, so that you might know them by their mark. And you shall surely know them by their distorted speech. Allah knows your works.

47:31 And We shall test you so as to know who are the fighters among you and who are the steadfast, and we shall test your news (ascertain about you, *Moududi*).

These conscientious objectors, like those of any war, will have an influence but not any impact on Allah's War against the unbelievers.

47:32 Indeed, those who have disbelieved and barred (men) from Allah's Path and were at odds with the Messenger, after the Guidance became manifest to them, will not cause Allah any harm, and He will foil their works.

Just like the apostates, God will not forgive the conscientious objectors should they die *before returning to the faith*.

47:33 O believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and do not render your actions vain.

47:34 Indeed, those who have disbelieved and barred from Allah's Path, then died as unbelievers, Allah will not forgive them.

Atheists

What about those who believe that all this god stuff is nonsense? They are not identified in the Koran, per se. This may be because in the Prophet's time there was no such person. Everyone was assumed to believe in one or more gods or goddesses or some form of omnipotent being. Atheists, by definition do not believe that humanity has an all-powerful invisible creator friend running – and often ruining – lives, as God readily admits to doing on many occasions. However, if Allah had deigned to explicitly single them out as a group to warn future generations about denying His existence, they would certainly have been at the top of His Enemies List, and deservedly so. It is one thing for a god to refute the reality of other gods and goddesses; it is quite another for a wretched human being to repudiate any and all gods.

Allah, in His Koran, may not have explicitly singled out atheists, but Muhammad's son-in-law Ali certainly did; he burnt them, even if God's Messenger disapproved of the method used, though not the killing.

Narrated Ikrima:

Some Zanadiqa (atheists) were brought to Ali and he burnt them. The news of this event, reached Ibn 'Abbas who said, "If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah's Apostle forbade it, saying, 'Do not punish anybody with Allah's punishment (fire).' I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah's Apostle, 'Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him.'"

Bukhari 84.57

The Niggardly

Then there are those who do not spend enough in support of the war effort. In the following revelations, God uses a word to describe this lack of monetary commitment to His Cause that is controversial "because of its phonetic similarity to the racial slur nigger" although, "etymologically the two words are unrelated." Allah, of course, is not a god to shy away from controversy.

47:37 Were He to ask you for them and press you, you will surely be niggardly, and he will bring your rancours (sic) to light.

47:38 There you are; you are called upon to spend freely in Allah's Cause, but some of you are niggardly. Yet he who is niggardly is only niggardly unto himself. Allah is the All-Sufficient and you are the destitute. If you turn back, He will replace you by a people other than you, and they will not be like you at all.

3:180 And let not those who are niggardly in spending what God has given them of His Bounty suppose that it is good for them. No, it is evil; they shall carry what they stinted around their necks on the Day of Resurrection. And to Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth. Allah is Aware of what you do!

4:39 And what would it cost them were they to believe in Allah and the Last Day and spend part of what Allah has provided for them? Allah knows them very well!

17:100 Say: "Even if you possess the treasures of My Lord's Mercy, you would still withhold them for fear of spending." Man has ever been niggardly.

Your Flesh and Blood

What about children? God will not spare them in the Hereafter, so you should not spare them in the here-and-now if you don't want to join your progeny in Hell.

60:3 Your kinsmen or your children will not profit you on the Day of Resurrection. He shall separate you one from the other; and Allah perceives well what you do.

God's poster child for hating your flesh and blood is Abraham, who, as aforementioned, disowned his own father.

9:114 Abraham asked forgiveness for his father, only because of a promise he had made to him; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. Indeed Abraham was compassionate, forbearing.

60:4 You have had a good example in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people: "We are quit of you and what you worship apart from Allah. We disbelieve in you. Enmity and hatred have arisen between you and us forever, till you believe in Allah alone; except for Abraham's word to his father: 'I will ask forgiveness for you, although I have no power from Allah to do anything for you.' Lord, in You we trust, to you we turn and unto you is the ultimate resort.

60:5 "Lord, do not cause us to be a temptation for those who have disbelieved, and forgive us. Our Lord, You are indeed the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

60:6 You have indeed in them a good example; that is for whoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day. Whoever repents, surely Allah is the All-Mighty, All-Praiseworthy.

The enemy is in the house!

64:14 O believers, in the midst of your wives and children, there is an enemy of yours, so beware of them. Yet, if you pardon, overlook and forgive, surely Allah is forgiving, All-Merciful.

64:15 Your possessions and children are surely a temptation, and with Allah is a great reward.

Moududi on the enemy within:

[One meaning] relates to those special circumstances which most of the Muslims were facing at the time these verses were sent down, and today also they are faced by every person who embraces Islam in a non-Muslim society. At that time in Makkah and in other parts of Arabia a situation that was commonly being experienced was that a man would embrace Islam, but his wife and children would not only be disinclined to accept it but would try their best to press him to give up Islam.

Then, it is said: "Beware of them." That is, "You should not ruin your eternal life for the sake of their worldly life."

You may forgive your children for being a temptation to you wanting the present life instead of the Hereafter, but not if they will not accept Islam. This makes them a bad influence that can only be removed by killing them, and in that you have the example of Khidr who was, for a time, Moses' spiritual adviser. On a journey to the Red Sea, he would kill a boy in cold blood, leaving Moses somewhat perplexed.

18:74 Then they departed; but when they met a boy, he (Khidr) killed him. Moses said: "Have you killed an innocent person who has not killed another? You have surely committed a horrible deed."

Later during their journey, before going their separate ways, Khidr would explain why he killed the boy, and why God approves.

18:80 "As for the boy, his parents were believers; so we feared that he might overwhelm them with oppression and unbelief.

18:81 "So we wanted that their Lord might replace him with someone better in purity and closer to mercy.

Before the murder of the boy, Khidr also caused the death of “some poor fellows who worked upon the sea.”

18:71 So, they set out; but no sooner had they boarded the ship that he made a hole in it. He (Moses) said: “Have you made a hole in it so as to drown its passengers? You have indeed done a grievous thing.”

Khidr, God’s mouthpiece in these acts of cold-blooded killings, justifies the mass murder of innocent people because it would deny an enemy a sought-after prize.

18:79 “As for the ship, it belonged to some poor fellows who worked upon the sea. I wanted to damage it, because, on their trail, there was a king, who was seizing every ship by force.

RULES AND REWARDS

Narrated Abu Huraira:

A man came to Allah's Apostle and said, "Instruct me as to such a deed as equals Jihad (in reward)."

He replied, "I do not find such a deed..."

Bukhari 52.44

Killing Unbelievers Haram

Idolaters

Only an immediate conversion will save an idolater or a polytheist from a swift and certain death. That said, there are three overriding conditions where an unrepentant idolater's life is not yours for the taking at your discretion:

- 1) during the sacred months, if they don't pose a threat, real or imagined;
- 2) if you have a compact, i.e., treaty, with a group of them;
- 3) if they seek refuge with you for the purpose of learning about Allah.

REPENTANCE

9 At- Tawbah

The surah *Repentance* is mainly about war, a reason for the lack of the ubiquitous formula-invocation "in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful."

9:1 This is an immunity from Allah and His Messenger to those idolaters with whom you made compacts.

9:2 Travel, then, in the land freely for four months, and know that you will never be able to thwart Allah, and that Allah shall disgrace the unbelievers.

9:3 This is a proclamation from Allah and His Messenger to mankind on the day of the great pilgrimage (10th of Dhul Hijjah), that Allah is absolved of the idolaters, as is His Messenger. If you repent, it will be better for you; but if you turn away, know that you shall never thwart Allah. Proclaim to those who disbelieve a grievous punishment.

9:4 Except for those idolaters with whom you made a compact, then they did not fail you in anything and did not

lend support to anybody against you. Honour your compact with them until the end of its term. Allah loves the righteous.

9:5 Then, when the Sacred Months (four months during which war was prohibited in pre-Islamic time) are over, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, take them [as captives], besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every point of observation. If they repent afterwards, perform the prayer and pay the alms, then release them. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

If an idolater seeks refuge with the believers for the purpose of learning about the one-and-only God, it must be granted. If, after learning about Allah, the idolater is still not convinced they want to submit to His Will, believers are expected to return him unharmed to where they cannot immediately harm him, i.e., "his place of security."

9:6 And if any one of the idolaters should seek refuge with you, give him refuge, so that he may hear the Word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who do not know.

Compacts with idolaters must be honoured if etiquette has been observed, such as the agreement being signed within the precinct of the Sacred Mosque at Mecca. But beware: idolaters are liars (Revelation 9:8) who will take advantage of any opportunity to overcome you, at which time you must insist that they do what a believer does (Revelation 9:11); that is, become Muslims. If they break that oath, more fighting must ensue (Revelation 9:12).

9:7 How can the idolaters have a compact with Allah and His Messenger, except for those you made a compact (*a formal treaty*) with at the Sacred Mosque? So long as these honour their obligations to you, honour yours to them. Allah loves the righteous.

9:8 How [can that be]? If they overcome you, they will observe neither kingship nor compact with you. They only give you satisfaction with their mouths, while their hearts refuse, and most of them are sinners.

9:9 They have sold Allah's Revelations for a small price⁹, and have barred [others] from His Path. Evil indeed is what they do!

9:10 They observe with the believers neither kingship nor compact. Those are the real transgressors.

9:11 Yet, if they repent, perform the prayer and pay the alms, they will be your brethren in religion. We expound the revelations to a people who know.

9:12 But if they break their oaths after their pledge [is made] and abuse your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief; for they have no regards for oaths, and that perchance they may desist.

In God's revelations about violence, the unbelievers are always those who started it.

9:13 Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and intended to drive the Messenger out, seeing that they attack you first? Do you fear them? Surely, you ought to fear Allah more, if you are real believers.

9:14 Fight them, Allah will punish them at your hands, will disgrace them, give you victory over them, and heal the hearts of a believing people.

9:15 And He will remove the rage from their hearts. Allah shows mercy to whomever He pleases, and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

Christians and Jews

For Jews and Christians and the illusive Sabians, the so-called People of the Book, it's a little more complicated. People of the Book are not to be killed "wherever you find them" unless they don't believe in the God of Abraham—as unlikely as that is—as long as they are submissive,

⁹ The words "sell it for a small price" or variations thereof appear in a handful of revelations in most translations. Taken literally, "sell it for a small price" would imply that a trade in revelations existed while the Koran was being revealed to Muhammad, unless you subscribe to Moududi's interpretation that it means "rejecting God's directives."

and willing to humbly pay, in the form of a poll-tax (a tax levied on people rather than on property), so that their lives might be spared¹⁰.

9:29 Fight those among the People of the Book who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden and do not profess the true religion, till they pay the poll-tax out of hand and submissively.

Allah quickly reminds the believers, in the verse immediately following, that while He is willing to spare the lives of Christians and Jews who are ready-and-able to dutifully pay his life-saving-tax while acknowledging His pre-eminence, they are still a perverted people for saying that He has a son.

9:30 The Jews say: "Ezra is the son of Allah", and the Christians say: "The Messiah is the son of Allah." That is their statement, by their mouths; they emulate the statement of the unbelievers of yore. May Allah damn them; how they are perverted!

This is after telling them that only He should be worshipped.

9:31 They take their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah, as well as the Messiah, son of Mary, although they are commanded to worship none but One God. There is no god but He; exalted He is above what they associate with Him.

Why would they do this?

9:32 They wish to put out Allah's Light with their mouths, and Allah allows nothing less than perfecting His Light, even if the unbelievers should resent it.

9:33 It is He Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion, in order to make it triumph over every religion, even if the polytheist should resent it.

There are times when you should strike at their necks with your sword (as in battle), and if they survive, take them as prisoners; after the war is over, you can "release them freely or for a ransom."

47:4 So when you meet the unbelievers, strike their necks¹¹ till

¹⁰ Muhammad first tried to impose the jizya after the battle of Badr. The Jews ridiculed his proposal, saying that Allah could not be so poor as to require their money. The jizya became a fact of life for the People of the Book after the defeat of the Jews at the battle of Khaybar.

you have bloodied them, then fasten the shackles. Thereupon, release them freely or for a ransom, till the war is over. So be it. Yet had Allah wished, He would have taken vengeance upon them, but he wanted to test you by one another. Those who die in the Cause of Allah, He will not render their works perverse.

47:5 He shall guide them and set their minds aright;

47:6 And shall admit them into Paradise which He has made known to them.

47:7 O believers, if you support Allah, He will support you and steady your footsteps.

47:8 But as to the unbelievers, wretched are they and perverse are their works.

47:9 That is because they despised what Allah has sent down; so He foiled their actions.

I have killed the likes of them before and I will do so again!

47:10 Did they not travel in the land and see what was the fate of those who preceded them? Allah brought utter destruction on them; and the like of this awaits the unbelievers.

47:11 That is because Allah is the Protector of the believers, but the unbelievers shall have no protector.

¹¹ The more verbose Mohsin Khan translation is unambiguous as to what “strike their necks” means, among other things.

47:4 So, when you meet (in fight - Jihad in Allah's Cause) those who disbelieve, smite (their) necks till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly (on them, i.e. take them as captives). Thereafter (is the time) either for generosity (i.e. free them without ransom) or ransom (according to what benefits Islam), until the war lays down its burden. Thus [you are ordered by Allah to continue in carrying out Jihad against the disbelievers till they embrace Islam and are saved from the punishment in the Hell-fire or at least come under your protection], but if it had been Allah's Will, He Himself could certainly have punished them (without you). But (He lets you fight) in order to test some of you with others. But those who are killed in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.

Killing Unbelievers Halal

2:153 O you who believe, seek assistance through forbearance and prayer. Allah is with the steadfast.

2:154 And do not says of those who are killed for the Cause of Allah that they are dead. They are alive, but you are unaware [of them].

THE BATTLE ARRAY

61 As-Saff

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

61:1 Everything in the heavens and on the earth glorifies Allah. He is the Al-Mighty, the Wise.

61:2 O believers, why do you profess what you do not practice?

61:3 It is very hateful in Allah's Sight that you profess what you do not practice.

61:4 Allah loves those who fight in His Cause arrayed in battle, as though they were a compact structure.

22:38 Allah will defend the believers; Allah surely does not like any thankless traitor.

22:39 Permission is given to those who fight because they are wronged. Surely Allah is Capable of giving them victory.

David Cook, author of *Understanding Jihad*, defines jihad as "'Warfare with spiritual significance' [and this] is the primary and root meaning of the term as it has been defined by classical Muslim jurists and legal scholars." *The Encyclopedia of Islam* agrees: "In law, according to general doctrine and in historical tradition, the jihad consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, of its defence."

According to Cook, modern-day Islamic jurists have interpreted the so-called “Verse of the Sword”, Revelation 9:5, which is said to supersede all other verses on the subject of war and peace, along with Revelation 9:111, the “Salvific Covenant” –do this for me and I will do this for you, save you, give you Paradise—as announcing a universal war, a jihad, against all unbelievers.

9:5 Then, when the Sacred Months (these are the four months during which war was prohibited in pre-Islamic times) are over, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, take them [as captives], besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every point of observation. If they repent afterwards, perform the prayer and pay the alms then release them. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful¹².

9:111 Allah has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in return for Paradise; they fight in the Way of Allah, kill and get killed. That is a true promise from Him in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur’an; and who fulfills his promise better than Allah? Rejoice then at the bargain you have made with Him; for that is the great triumph.

God's demand for an all-out war—for the purpose of making believers out of unbelievers and infidels—has today been restated in more acceptable terms, such as ‘a fight to rid the world of oppressors’, and who does not hate oppressors? The following are the modern conditions under which Muslims may be asked to engage in jihad:

1. To defend your community or nation from aggressors.
2. To liberate people living under oppressive regimes.
3. To remove any government that will not allow the free practice of Islam within its borders.

A respected cleric or a community leader must make the determination that at least one of the above conditions has been met before the bloodletting can begin.

Does God agree with the purported majority view, especially the intimidating threat “to remove any government that will not allow the free practice of Islam within its borders.” Allah’s clearest, though still ambiguous, instructions as to what the believers can do to the

¹² “If they repent afterwards, perform the prayer and pay the alms then release them. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful” is equivalent to saying that they have accepted to become Muslims.

unbelievers—if you are a believer that does not subscribe to the more radical interpretation of Verse 9:5—are contained in the second surah, *The Cow*.

Allah is a pragmatic, patient god. It was this same pragmatic, patient approach that allowed the Ottoman Turks to conquer the Balkans and almost all of Europe. They freed a grateful peasantry from the onerous yoke of feudalism and were willing to wait for the next generation to adopt Islam, which many did. In Islamic terms, it was a mostly bloodless conquest.

God's sensible, patient nature is evident in a verse where He counsels His followers to pardon "the people of the Book" and continue doing what they do until He figures out what to do with them or "makes known His Will":

2:109 Many of the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) wish, out of envy, to turn you back into unbelievers after the Truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and overlook, until Allah makes known His Will. Surely Allah has the power over all things.

In Revelation 2:190, Allah appears to be willing to wait for the unbelievers to die from natural causes before getting "the fuel for his fire," and there is no need for the faithful to expedite the delivery of the combustible unless...*unless the combustible becomes aggressive*.

2:190. And fight for the Cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not be aggressive. Surely Allah does not like the aggressors.

Then it gets a little more complicated. Verse 2:191, the *Salvific Covenant*, expresses many of the same sentiments found in the *Verse of the Sword*. The main differences appear to have to do with killing within the precinct of a mosque and mass killings—my understanding of 'slaughter'—to quell an insurrection, i.e., sedition.

2:191 Kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from wherever they drove you out (from Mecca). Sedition is worse than slaughter. Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight you at it. If they fight you there, kill them. Such is the reward of the unbelievers.

Perhaps a line by line reading of Verse 2:191, followed by a presentation of the short Verses 2:192 and 2:193, which have a direct

impact on instructions contained in 2:191, would provide a richer insight into the mind of God when he sent down this revelation.

Kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from wherever they drove you out.

Majid Fakhry, in a footnote, explains that this line refers to the Meccans who wanted nothing to do with Muhammad's brand of religion, which denied the gods of their ancestors, and drove him out of Mecca. This sentence could also easily be interpreted as Allah's command that, once Islam has established a beachhead anywhere, to try to remove it or limit its expansion is to invite death and destruction at the hands of the believers who have no choice in the matter; God's instructions are unambiguous: "Kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from wherever they drove you out."

Sedition is worse than slaughter.

The web definition of sedition is "an illegal action inciting resistance to lawful authority and tending to cause the disruption or overthrow of the government." My interpretation is that Allah expects those who would plot or participate in actions to overthrow an Islamic government to be slaughtered. God is, in effect, telling the believers that He would rather see entire communities put to death rather than have them abandon Islam¹³.

Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight you at it.

Allah is referring to the Mosque in Mecca, but I suspect it could be any mosque.

If they fight you there, kill them.

If they fight you at the Mosque, show them no mercy. This additional command I consider superfluous or simply God's way of reminding the believers that he means business when it comes to killing the

¹³ The Old Testament recommends more or less the same thing – that everyone be slaughtered, including the livestock:

Deuteronomy 13:12-16 "If you hear it said about one of your cities the LORD your God is giving you to live in, that wicked men have sprung up among you, led the inhabitants of their city astray, and said, 'Let us go and worship other gods,' which you have not known, you are to inquire, investigate, and interrogate thoroughly. If the report turns out to be true that this detestable thing has happened among you, you must strike down the inhabitants of that city with the sword. Completely destroy everyone in it as well as its livestock with the sword."

unbelievers, having already commanded them to “Kill them wherever you find them” in the first line of this verse.

Such is the reward for the unbelievers.

This is just Allah being Allah when it comes to unbelievers. Death is the usual reward unbelievers can expect for resisting Islam *unless they desist*.

2:192 But if they desist, Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

If they accept Islam as their religion you may spare their lives but not the lives of the “evildoers.”

2:193 Fight them until there is no sedition and the religion becomes that of Allah. But if they desist, there will be no aggression except against the evildoers¹⁴.

If you are a Wahhabi Muslim like Bin Laden, Verse 2:193 and Verse 9:5, the *Verse of the Sword*, mean that the war against unbelievers is never-ending until Islam is triumphant everywhere. “Fight them until there is no sedition and the religion becomes that of Allah.” Forget about “if they desist, there will be no aggression except against the evildoers” being a sign that God puts a limit on killing unbelievers. For Allah, evildoers and unbelievers are synonymous (underlining mine):

3:151 We will cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers on account of their associating with Allah that for which He sent down no authority. Their abode is the Fire and wretched is the dwelling-place of the evildoers!

To paraphrase George W. Bush who said, “I am not a nuance type of guy,” Allah is not a nuance type of god. You’re either with Him or against Him. If you are against Him, you have allied yourself with the Devil and are fighting on the Devil’s behalf. Fighting with the Devil against Allah, *the Compassionate, the Merciful*—could an unbeliever be more evil?

¹⁴ You will find other verses where Allah forbids aggression, such as the following:

16:90 Allah enjoins justice, charity and the giving to kindred; He forbids indecency, evil and aggression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.

Remember, when you encounter such verses, that this applies to believers only. In Allah’s Book, unbelievers and evildoers are generally synonymous, and against evildoers, aggression is not only permitted but encouraged.

4:76 Those who believe fight for the Cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight on behalf of the Devil. Fight then the followers of the Devil. Surely the guile of the Devil is weak.

In the surah *The Spoils*, which is, in many ways, even more menacing than *Repentance* (commonly referred to as the *War Surah*), God decrees that unbelievers be beheaded (still the favourite form of execution in countries dominated by the Koran, e.g., Saudi Arabia).

8:12 And when your Lord revealed to the angels¹⁵: "I am with you; so support those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve; so strike upon the necks and strike every fingertip of theirs."¹⁶

8:13 That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger; and he who opposes Allah and His Messenger [will find] Allah's Punishment very severe.

8:14 This is how it will be; so taste it; the torture of the Fire is awaiting the unbelievers.

In this surah, Allah lets slip that He considers humanity nothing more than beasts, the worst of which are the unbelievers who figuratively can't hear and can't speak. Yes, God could have made them hear, for He is All-Powerful; however, the Compassionate did not do this because He knew beforehand that it would not make a difference.

8:22 The worst beasts in Allah's Sight are the deaf and dumb who do not understand.

8:23 If Allah knew any good in them, He would have made them hear; and had He made them hear, they would still have turned away defiantly

How beasts that can't speak express their disbelief is unclear. Nonetheless, you should treat them harshly as an example to other deaf and dumb animals.

¹⁵ At the battle of Badr, God revealed that He sent down angels to help the believers. However, Moududi writes that "we presume that the angels did not take part in the actual fighting. What we may suggest is that the angels helped the Muslims and as a result their blows became more accurate and effective in removing heads and fingers."

¹⁶ Shakir's translation leaves no doubt as to what God meant, whether it was instructions for His angels or the believers:

8:12 When your Lord revealed to the angels: I am with you, therefore make firm those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them.

8:55 The worst beasts in the Sight of Allah are those who disbelieve, because they will never believe.

8:56 Those, who each time you make a covenant with them, break it, and do not fear God.

8:57 So, if you should come upon them in the war, scatter (punish them severely) them with those behind them, that perchance they may pay heed¹⁷.

Can unbelievers expect any mercy, e.g., to be allowed to escape battle with the believers? God's response is unequivocal!

8:59 Let not the unbelievers think that they can escape [Us]. They will never be able to escape.

He followed these merciless instructions with advice on seventh century terror tactics, and how His soldiers will be repaid in full for their investment in the war.

8:60 And make ready for them whatever you can of fighting men and horses, to terrify thereby the enemies of Allah and your enemy, as well as others besides them whom you do not know, but Allah knows well. Everything you spend in the Path of Allah will be repaid in full, and you will never be wronged.

He just won't let up with killing the unbelievers, encouraging first the believers, then their leader, His Messenger, to kill them in the most cruel manner (my understanding of the meaning of 'harsh', which is born out of Verse 5:33 and other pitiless verses already quoted and those to come).

9:123 O you who believe, fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let them see how harsh you can be. Know that Allah is with the righteous.

¹⁷ Other translations of Verse 8:57 are even more to the point.

8:57 If thou find them at war [with you], make of them a fearsome example for those who follow them, so that they might take it to heart.

Muhammad Assad

8:57 If thou comest (sic) on them in the war, deal with them so as to strike fear in those who are behind them, that haply they may remember.

M. M. Pickthall

66:9 O Prophet, struggle with the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and deal harshly with them. Their refuge shall be Hell, and what an evil resort!

5:33 Indeed, the punishment of those who fight Allah and His Messenger and go around corrupting the land is to be killed, crucified, have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides, or to be banished from the land. That is a disgrace for them in this life, and in the life to come theirs will be a terrible punishment.

Then a ray of hope: unbelievers may be spared if they convert before they are put to death.

5:34 Except for those who repent before you overpower them. Know, then, that Allah is All Forgiving, Merciful.

Skip a verse¹⁸ and Allah reverts to form.

5:36 As to the unbelievers, even if they had all there is on earth and the like of it too, to redeem themselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection therewith, it will not be accepted from them, and a very painful punishment shall be in store for them.

5:37 They will then wish to come out of the Fire, but they will never come out, and theirs is an everlasting punishment!

¹⁸ 5:35 O believers fear Allah and seek the means to win His Favour. Fight in His Way so that you may prosper.

Killing During the Sacred Months

In pre-Islamic times there was a four-month-long festival centered on Mecca, a festival referred to as the Sacred Months (not to be confused with the Sacred Months of the Islamic Calendar¹⁹). The Sacred Months allowed pilgrims to make their way to Mecca unmolested. During this period, all faiths came together; all wars and petty quarrels had to stop.

Mecca, before Muhammad made Islam the only acceptable religion on the Peninsula, was not only special to Allah, but also to all the other gods and goddesses in the Arabian pantheon. In fact, anyone from anywhere who made the journey to Mecca could place a figure of his god or goddess on the altar of the Ka'ba, the structure that still shelters the stone that Adam is said to have grabbed onto when he and Eve were cast out of Paradise.

After the Prophet fled to Medina, the Meccans, having decided that Muhammad was too big a threat to the way of life on the Peninsula to leave alone, marched on the city and demanded that its citizens surrender him. They refused. Rather than risk the lives of the innocent, the Meccans, as was their custom, imposed what authors refer to as "the blockade of Medina" but was more like a trade embargo.

Many of God's revelations to His Messenger during his stay in Medina, unlike the revelations Muhammad received while in Mecca, have a blood-thirsty, pitiless war-like quality about them. It was during his stay in Medina that Muhammad decided that, if his fellow Arabs would not accept him as Allah's mouthpiece and the Koran as the Word of God on his say-so, he would make them see the light by force.

Even with the so-called blockade in place, Muhammad's raiding parties, his response to the embargo, left and entered Medina at will. The Muslim raiders, however, were too few to effectively challenge the large Meccan caravans passing between Medina and the Red Sea on their way to and from Syria.

Minor setbacks, like the initial inability to plunder at will the

¹⁹ Dhu'l-Qa'dah (11 - The Month of Rest), Dhu'l-Hijjah (12 - The Month of Pilgrimage), Muharram, (1 - The Sacred Month, beginning of the Islamic New Year) and Rajab (7 - The Month of Respect).

Meccan caravans passing by Medina, did not deter the Prophet. Unlike his adversaries, Muhammad had a clear vision of what he wanted to accomplish, and more importantly, the wherewithal to outwit his opponents at almost every turn combined with a single-minded ruthlessness that knew no bounds, including ordering a raid that would lead to the killing of a farmer during the Sacred Months.

Virgil Gheorghiu, in his admiring biography *Le Prophet Mahomet*, condones the attack, repeating the same canard as author, former nun and unabashed admirer of Muhammad Karen Armstrong: that it was out of necessity that he ordered a raid during a sacred month because the believers in Medina were starving to death. Starving in an oasis city famous for its orchards of dates and other fruit bearing trees, where the inhabitants more than lived up to the Arab reputation for hospitality, stretches credibly.

It is possible that the cunning, farsighted Muhammad planned for the attack to occur when it did so as to do away, once and for all, with the interdiction against warfare during the Sacred Months. He could foresee this interdiction playing havoc with his plans to Islamize (sic) the Peninsula by force.

In November 623, having failed to plunder a single Meccan caravan passing between the Red Sea and Medina, Muhammad changed tactics and decided to attack non-Meccan caravans plying another route. It was all very hush-hush. Even the men who would carry out the raid didn't know their ultimate target.

The attack on a farmer's caravan occurred more than 250 miles south east of Medina. The attackers' instructions were contained in a letter from Muhammad which they were told not to read until they had reached a well some distance west of Medina. What follows is a summary of how it went down based on Virgil Gheorghiu's account.

Abdallah-ibn-Djach, the leader of an eight-man raiding party, was given a letter by God's Messenger which he was told not to read until he arrived at a famous well west of Medina, two days ride by camel. Muhammad's instructions for the group were to head in the opposite direction. Two weeks later, they arrived at their destination on the trade route between Mecca and Ta'if where they waited for a caravan making its way from Ta'if to Mecca. Ta'if is a small city about 46 miles or (74 km) south east of Mecca. At an elevation of 6,165 ft. (1,879 m) on the slopes of the Sarawat Mountains, the area is conducive to the production of agricultural products such as grapes, roses and honey.

There was still a day left in the Sacred Month of Rajab when they spotted four men on their way to Mecca with a cargo of raisins, wine

and animal skins. If they waited until the end of Rajab to attack, the small caravan would have reached the precinct of Mecca and be inviolate. What to do? Follow Muhammad's instructions, which they believed to be from God, or respect God's Sacred Months? They decided to attack, and one of the four people with the caravan was killed. Amr-ben-al Hadra'mi became the first person murdered in the cause of Islam.

When they returned to Medina, the story of the murder of Hadra'mi during a sacred month had spread far and wide. A scandal had erupted. Believers and unbelievers alike were aghast that this sacrilege could be tolerated. Muhammad's reputation and his quest were at stake.

God's Messenger was surprised by the uproar but remained unperturbed. He ordered that the puny plunder for which a man was killed (raisins, wine and animal skins) be set aside and not distributed until he had heard from God. A few days later, the Angel Gabriel delivered to Muhammad revelations from Allah intended to clarify the rules regarding this killing business during a sacred month.

First, God established, as a general principal, that killing in retaliation for a killing is allowed during a sacred month, and that killing those who would violate things that are sacred to the believers is justified year round.

2:194 A sacred month for a sacred month; and retaliation [is allowed] when sacred things [are violated]. Thus, whoever commits aggression against you, retaliate against him in the same way. Fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.

Furthermore, don't let this stop you from spending money and fighting in Allah's Cause, lest you cause your own destruction.

2:195 Spend [money] for the Cause of Allah and do not cast yourselves with your own hands into destruction (do not stop fighting for the Cause of Allah), and be charitable. Surely Allah loves the charitable.

What about killing during the Sacred Months where there is no apparent provocation or reason, as in the murder of Amr-ben-al Hadra'mi? In a fine piece of hair splitting, God both condemns and condones the murder of Hadra'mi. In doing so He implicitly, if not explicitly, gives the believers a licence to kill anyone, anywhere, at any time if they honestly believe it will advance His Cause, such as killing

those who would “debar people from Allah’s Way,” which could be anyone, even other Muslims.

He does not stop there! He reminds the believers who would rather live in peace that fighting “is good for you” and that they should kill anyone at any time, even entire communities, if they fear they will leave Islam; this is the meaning of “Sedition is worse than murder”²⁰ in Revelation 2:217.

2:216 You are enjoined to fight, though it is something you dislike. For it may well be that you dislike a thing, although it is good for you; or like something although it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not.

2:217 They ask you about the sacred month: “Is there fighting in it?” Say: “Fighting in it is a great sin; but to debar people from Allah’s Way and to deny Him and the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people out of it is a greater sin in Allah’s Sight. Sedition is worse than murder.” Nor will they cease to fight you until they make you, if they can, renounce your religion. Those of you who renounce their religion and die, while they are unbelievers, are those whose works come to grief, [both] in this world and in the Hereafter. And they are the people of the Fire, abiding in it forever.

The murder of Hadra’mi, and God's failure to categorically condemn the killing during a sacred month, meant that jihad could be conducted throughout the year. This could have been the farsighted Muhammad's objective all along.

Ta'if would prove a difficult conquest, even for experienced holy warriors, during the campaign to convert the people of the Arabian Peninsula by force.

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar:

When Allah Apostle was in Ta'if (trying to conquer it), he said to his companions, "Tomorrow we will return (to Medina), if Allah wills."

Some of the companions of Allah's Apostle said, "We will not leave till we conquer it."

²⁰ The Koran is somewhat unique in the way it elevates murder—or mass murder—into a virtue, as in revealed truths 2:217 "sedition is worse than murder" and 2:191 "Sedition is worse than slaughter."

The Prophet said, "Therefore, be ready to fight tomorrow."

On the following day, they (Muslims) fought fiercely (with the people of Ta'if) and suffered many wounds.

Then Allah's Apostle said, "Tomorrow we will return (to Medina), if Allah wills."

His companions kept quiet this time. Allah's Apostle then smiled.

Bukhari 73.109

Jihad as Penance

The concept of jihad and the promise of a “great reward” for killing and dying for God have fascinated Islamic scholars and writers from the earliest military conquests carried out during Muhammad’s life, and after his death, to this day.

4:74 So let those who sell the present for the life to come fight in the Way of Allah. Whoever fights in the Way of Allah and is killed or conquers, We shall accord him a great reward.

The earliest known writer on jihad, according to Cook, is Abdallah b. al-Mubarak [726-797 author of the *Kitab al-Jihad* (Book of Holy War). Mubarak summarized the redemptive value of killing and dying in the name of God as follows:

The slain [in jihad] are three [types of] men. A believer, who struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God, such that when he meets the enemy [in battle] he fights them until he is killed. This martyr (*shahid*) is tested, [and is] in the camp of God under His throne; the prophets do not exceed him [in merit] except by the level of prophecy. [Then] a believer, committing offences and sins against himself, who struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God; such that when he meets the enemy [in battle] he fights until he is killed. This cleansing wipes away his offences and his sins – behold the sword wipes [away] sins! – and he will be let into heaven by whatever gate he wishes. ... [Then] a hypocrite who struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God; such that when he meets the enemy [in battle] he fights until he is killed. This [man] is in hell since the sword does not wipe away hypocrisy.

David Cook, cf. Ibn al-Mubarak, Understanding Jihad, p.14.

Later writings would expand on his concept that killing and being killed “in the path of Allah” has two redeeming features: atonement for

your sins and rank in heaven²¹. In the Christian gospels, Jesus of Nazareth shed his blood to redeem the sins of mankind; in the Islamic variation, it is the shedding of one's own blood while killing the enemies of God that wipes away sins, the exception being one who dies in "the path of Allah" but whose loyalty was not always constant—the hypocrite.

There is a man who fights in the path of Allah and does not want to kill or be killed, but is struck by an arrow. The first drop of blood from him is atonement for every sin he has committed; for every drop he sheds he gains levels in paradise. The second type of man is one who fights desiring to kill but not to be killed, and is struck by an arrow. The first drop of blood from him is for every sin; for every drop he sheds he gains a level in paradise until he bumps Abraham's knee. The third type of man is one who fights in the path of Allah desiring to kill and be killed and is struck by an arrow. The first drop of blood from him is atonement for every sin; he will come to the Day of Resurrection with a drawn sword [able to] intercede.

David Cook, cf. Ibn al-Mubarak, Understanding Jihad, p.15.

This belief in the atonement properties of killing and dying for God and the way you died having an influence on your ranking in heaven could, according to the author of *Understanding Jihad*, have been responsible for "inspiring the conquest of so much territory and achieving what the early Muslims achieved."

Killing and the way you die atoning for your sins is doubly effective in that it appeals to both the exemplary and the born-again believer. For example, a suicide bomber: the exemplary believer who has led a life according to the dictates of the Koran and the Prophet's Sunnah, by his murderous self-immolation, not only offers a last honour and proof of his loyalty to God and His Messenger but is also assured of a higher ranking in heaven. The born-again believer, on the other hand, can—in one irrational, destructive act—atone for a life of

²¹ Heaven has seven levels. The highest level is where Allah sits on His Throne with His Messenger and Abraham at His side.

sinful behaviour, including premeditated murder²², to gain immediate, unrestricted access to Paradise. Add to this the promise of unlimited sex with houris and “blushing maidens”²³ and it’s a wonder that there are not more young Muslims willing to take on the role of the grim reaper.

God may have wanted the believers to kill and die on his behalf and be handsomely rewarded for doing so, but he does not want them to get themselves killed fighting each other.

4:29 O believers, do not consume your wealth illegally, unless there be trading by mutual agreement among you; and do not kill yourselves. Allah is indeed merciful to you!

If only the next verse in this series was also a warning to the believers not to act aggressively against those who don’t share their religious obsessions.

4:30 And whoever acts aggressively and wrongfully, We shall cast him in the Fire; this being an easy matter for Allah.

Holy Wars

9 tropes about Muslims that are a product of Islamophobia²⁴

By Mirna Alsharif, CNN, September 11, 2021

4. The Quran encourages Muslims to commit acts of violence against non-Muslims

Claims that Islam encourages violence against non-Muslims are usually the result of people isolating

²² **Narrated Abu Huraira:**

Allah's Apostle said, "Allah welcomes two men with a smile; one of whom kills the other and both of them enter Paradise. One fights in Allah's Cause and gets killed. Later on Allah forgives the killer who also get martyred (In Allah's Cause)."

Bukhari 52.80

²³ 37:48 And they also shall have wide-eyed maidens averting their gaze.

²⁴ A fear of Islam is a legitimate fear, not a phobia. Fear is what non-believers who get close and personal with the Koran and Allah’s unrestrained visceral hatred and cruelty for their kind will experience, for that is the intent. It is a fear nourished and amplified by the Author’s demands of believers when it comes to dealing with those for whom He has nothing but contempt: from avoiding them, to enslaving them, to killing them. Fear is what terrorism in the name of Allah is all about. Instead of dealing with this fear in a forthright manner, Western governments prefer spreading the Islamic slander that a fear of Islam is an irrational fear, that of Islamophobia.

verses from the religious texts that grant Muslims the right to defend themselves...

In fact the Quran is very clear about violence. Chapter 5, Verse 32 states: "Whosoever kills an innocent human being, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind, and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind."

5. Muslims want to wage holy war by way of Jihad

In the West, the term "jihad" is often used interchangeably with "holy war." But that's not what it means. Jihad is an Arabic term meaning "to strive" or "to struggle." In the context of Islam, it means to work toward becoming a better Muslim.

There are two types of jihad, inner and outer, with the former being known as the "greater jihad," and can encompass anything from not giving into temptations or making a greater effort to pray.

Outer jihad, or "lesser jihad," can refer to a military struggle, but more commonly refers to actions like being kind to others or being a good representative of the faith.

Dalia Mogahed (director of research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding) points out that the term "holy war" originated from The Crusades, a series of wars initiated by the Christian church, and does not originate in Arabic or the Muslim tradition at all.

The concept and conduct of holy war originated with Islam in spite of a falsehood, repeated here by CNN, that *holy wars* are a Christian invention. The Koran, the definitive text, was revealed in the 7th century and al-Mubarak's *Book of Holy War* written in the 8th, 400 and 300 years respectively before the first crusade. As to that other assertion; if you have read this far the misrepresentation should be self-evident, except for perhaps the reference to Verse 5:32.

5:32 For that reason, We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul, not in retaliation for a soul or corruption in the land, is like one who has killed the whole of mankind; and whoever saves a life is like one who saves the lives of all mankind. Our Messengers came to them with the clear proofs; but

afterwards many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.

After the attacks of 9/11, Muslim community leaders said that those who caused the deaths of thousands in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania were not true Muslims because in Verse 5:32 Allah said that “whoever kills a soul is like killing all of mankind”, therefore no Muslim could have done this. They conveniently left out, as the CNN contributor does here, the part about the killing being justified if the murder is “in retaliation” for a previous murder or “corruption in the land” of which anyone who opposes Islam is guilty, and for whom the Compassionate sanctions the most gruesome of punishment.

5:33 Indeed, the punishment of those who fight Allah and His Messenger and go around corrupting the land is to be killed, crucified, have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides, or to be banished from the land. That is a disgrace for them in this life, and in the life to come theirs will be a terrible punishment.

Stay-at-Home Warriors and Female Jihadists

Ibn al-Mubarak came up with a ranking for those who kill and die for Allah. What about your stay-at-home warriors? Perhaps surprisingly, God and His Messenger do not damn them to an eternity in Hell. Their rank in heaven, however, will definitely be lower than a believer who kills and risks his life in the fight to extend God's domain, and the rewards stay-at-home warriors can expect in heaven are somewhat diminished.

4:95 Those of the believers who stay at home while suffering from no injury are not equal to those who fight for the Cause of Allah with their possessions and persons. Allah has raised those who fight with their possessions and persons one degree over those who stay at home; and to each Allah has promised the fairest good. Yet Allah has granted a great reward to those who fight and not to those who stay behind.

As you may have come to expect, verses about killing in the cause of Allah followed by verses extolling the virtues of an "All-Forgiving, Merciful" God.

4:96 Degrees of honour from Him, Forgiveness and Mercy. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

What rewards can a female jihadist expect from God for killing and dying to extend his dominion on Earth? Again, according to David Cook, a question was posed on the Hamas website by a prospective female suicide bomber as to what are the "rewards for a female martyr." Would she get the equivalent of the male suicide bombers who are promised a "fairly extensive harem of women in return for martyrdom"?

[Question] I wanted to ask: what is the reward of a female martyr who performs a martyrdom operation; does she marry 72 of the houris?

[Answer] ... the female martyr gains the same rewards as does the male, with the exception of this one aspect [the *houris*], so that the female martyr will be with the same husband with whom she dies. "And those who have believed and their progeny, followed them in belief. We shall join their progeny to them. We shall not deprive them of any of their work; every man shall be bound by what he has earned" [52:21]. The one who is martyred and has no husband will be married to one of the people of Paradise.

David Cook, Understanding Jihad, p.146

Unless I am mistaken, that would be the same reward that a stay-at-home housewife could expect from Allah, therefore there is nothing to be gained by a chaste girl or a pious married woman blowing herself up, killing herself and a bunch of innocent people for God.

Emigrating in the Cause of Allah

8:72 Those who have believed and emigrated and struggled with their wealth and their lives in the Path of Allah, and those who gave refuge and support – those are friends of one another; but those who have believed, yet did not emigrate, you will not be responsible for their protection until they emigrate. Should they seek your support for religion's sake, you ought to support them, but not against a people with whom you have a compact. Allah is Fully Aware of what you do.

8:74 And those who believed, emigrated and struggled in the Path of Allah, and those who have given refuge and support – those are the true believers. They will have forgiveness and bountiful provision.

8:75 And those who believed afterwards, emigrated and struggle with you – those are part of you. And the blood relatives are closer to one another in Allah's Book. Allah is truly Cognizant of everything.

9:20 Those who have believed, emigrated and fought in the Path of Allah with their lives are higher in rank in Allah's Sight; and those are the winners.

9:21 Their Lord announces to them the good news of a mercy from Him, good pleasure and Gardens wherein they have everlasting bliss;

9:22 Abiding therein forever. With Allah is a great reward.

9:100 The early Emigrants (the early Muslims who emigrated to Medina) and the Helpers (the Muslims of Medina who supported the Emigrants) and those who followed them up in beneficence – Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are

well-pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. That is the great triumph!

16:41 To those who emigrated for Allah's Sake, after they had been oppressed, We shall provide a good life in this world; but the reward of the Hereafter is greater, if only they knew.

16:42 [They are] those who are patient, and in their Lord they put their trust.

16:110 As for those who emigrated after they had been persecuted, then fought in the Way of Allah and stood fast, your Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.

16:111 The Day every soul shall come pleading for itself, and every soul shall be paid in full for what it did, they shall not be dealt with unjustly.

The previous revelations were meant to encourage converts to Islam to emigrate out of pagan-controlled areas and join Muhammad's forces at Medina and fight to the death, if necessary, for the advancement of Islam, or emigrate into areas controlled by the pagan Arabs as a means of weakening the opposition to the Prophet's takeover of the Peninsula. Today, these verses are interpreted, as aforementioned, as inviting believers to emigrate where unbelievers are the majority as a means of weakening the opposition in the struggle to get all of mankind to submit to Allah's Will. This would also be in keeping with the Prophet's instructions:

I charge you with five of what Allah has charged me with; to assemble, to listen, to obey, to immigrate and to wage Jihad for the sake of Allah.

Tirmidi

Migration cannot be ended as long as there is Kufr (unbelief) or as long as there is an enemy that resists.

Kenz al Umal 46274

Someone's Gotta Die

In inviting the emigrants to die for Him, God brings a new twist to Talion law.

22:58 And those who emigrated in the Path of Allah, then were killed or died, Allah shall provide them with a fair provision. Allah is surely the Best Provider.

22:59 He will admit them into a place with which they will be well-pleased. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, Clement.

22:60 All that; and he who chastises in the same way he was chastised, then he is wronged, Allah shall support him. Allah is surely a Pardoner, All-Forgiver.

At least two schools of Sharia law disagree on the exact meaning of Revelation 22:60, but both agree that someone's gotta die; it's a matter of how, as Moududi explains:

The reference is to those victims of persecution who could fight back. From this verse, Imam Shafi'i has concluded that "retaliation" will be effected in the way as life was taken in the original act. If a person is killed by immersion in water, the killer also should be put to death by immersion in water; or if a person is burnt to death, the killer also will be burnt to death.

The Hanafites dispute this. According to them, retaliation against a murderer will be incurred in one and the same established way no matter how life was taken by the culprit in the original act.

Calling for Peace

Writers on Islam like Fouad Laroui, would disagree with what appears to be God's sanctioning of extreme measures to establish His kingdom on Earth in many of the verses presented so far. In his book *On Islamic Fundamentalism – A personal denunciation of religious extremism* (my interpretation of *De L'Islamisme – Une réfutation personnelle du totalitarisme religieux*), Laroui quotes from Verse 4:171 to support his argument that God does not approve of violence to get others to accept Islam as their religion.

4:171 O People of the Book, do not exceed the bounds of your religion...

So far so good—but, like in so many revelations, God muddles the message by qualifying his instructions about not exceeding “the bounds of your religion” by adding that you must still tell the truth, your religion's unassailable truth, which contradicts another religion's unassailable truth.

4:171 ... nor say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only Allah's Messenger and His Word, which he imparted to Mary, and is a spirit from Him! So believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not say “three” [gods]. Refrain; it is better for you. Allah is truly One God. How – Glory be to Him – could He have a son? To Him belongs what is in Heaven and on earth. Allah suffices as a Guardian!

In the never-ending war to spread Allah's unassailable truth and make Islam “triumph over every religion,” should you seek peace with the unbelievers? *Only if you are losing* or they call for peace, as per Revelation 8:61, but be wary, warns Revelation 8:62.

47:35 So do not weaken and call for peace, while you have the upper hand and Allah is with you. He will not stint you your actions.

47:36 Indeed, this present life is but sport and amusement; and if you believe and are God-fearing, He will give you your wages and will not ask you for your possessions.

8:61 And if they incline to peace, incline to it too, and put your trust in a Allah. He is truly the Hearer, the Knower.

8:62 And if they wish to deceive you, then Allah is Sufficient for you and so are the believers, it is He who has strengthened you with His Support and with the believers;

8:63 He brought their hearts together. Had you spent all there is on earth, you could not have brought their hearts together, but Allah has brought them together. He is Mighty and Wise.

Moududi:

Here the allusion is to that strong bond of love and brotherhood that developed among the Arabs who embraced Islam and whose conversion brought them solidarity. This strong solidarity existed despite the fact that they came from a variety of tribes which had long-standing traditions of mutual enmity.

Considering the superiority of believers as warriors and the fact that they have the only god that matters on their side, the call for peace was and would remain a call seldom made.

8:64 O Prophet, Allah is Sufficient for you and so are the believers who follow you.

8:65 O Prophet, urge the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast men among you, they will defeat two hundred; and if there are a hundred, they will defeat a thousand of the unbelievers, because they are a people who do not understand.

8:66 Now Allah has lightened your burden; He knows that there is a weakness in you. So, if there are a hundred steadfast men among you, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are a thousand men among you, they will overcome two thousand, by Allah's Leave. Allah is with the steadfast.

The Booty

Booty, which includes the wives and daughters of the unbelievers you killed or enslaved, played a significant part in attracting men to Islam.

Narrated Marwan bin Al-Hakam and Al-Miswar bin Makhrama:

When the delegates of the tribe of Hawazin after embracing Islam, came to Allah's Apostle, he got up. They appealed to him to return their properties and their captives.

Allah's Apostle said to them, "The most beloved statement to me is the true one. So, you have the option of restoring your properties or your captives, for I have delayed distributing them."

The narrator added, Allah's Apostle had been waiting for them for more than ten days on his return from Taif.

When they realized that Allah's Apostle would return to them only one of two things, they said, "We choose our captives."

So, Allah's Apostle got up in the gathering of the Muslims, praised Allah as He deserved, and said, "Then after! These brethren of yours have come to you with repentance and I see it proper to return their captives to them. So, whoever amongst you likes to do that as a favor, then he can do it, and whoever of you wants to stick to his share till we pay him from the very first booty which Allah will give us then he can do so."

The people replied, "We agree to give up our shares willingly as a favor for Allah's Apostle."

Then Allah's Apostle said, "We don't know who amongst you has agreed and who hasn't. Go back and your chiefs may tell us your opinion."

So, all of them returned and their chiefs discussed the matter with them and then they (i.e. their chiefs) came to Allah's Apostle to tell him that they (i.e. the people) had given up their shares gladly and willingly.

Bukhari 38.503

In making war on the unbelievers, God reminded the believers not to let the booty distract them from their immediate goal: shedding the blood of those who refused to submit to His Will.

8:67 It is not up to any Prophet to take captives except after too much blood is shed (after the enemy is hard hit and subdued) in the land. You desire the fleeting goods of this world, but Allah desires the Hereafter, and Allah is Mighty, Wise.

A revealed truth confirmed the inalienable right of a believer to the property of an unbeliever he has slaughtered or enslaved, including his wives and daughters.

8:68 But for a prior ordinance of Allah, you would have been afflicted on account of what you have taken (an ordinance which made it lawful for Muslims to take spoils and captives) by a terrible punishment.

If sharing in the booty is not sufficient to convince you to submit to Allah's Will, remember that in God's eyes you are traitors, with all the horrifying consequences that implies, with your continued enslavement the best that you can hope for.

8:70 O Prophet, tell those captives in your keeping: "If Allah knows of any good in your hearts, He will give you in return better than what has been taken from you and forgive you." Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

8:71 But if they wish to betray you, they have previously betrayed Allah, and so He subdued them. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

Sex and the Booty

It was a given that you could have sex with your female booty, with or without consent. However, until Muhammad offered his considered opinion, some holy warriors were unsure about whether coitus interruptus was halal. They consulted with the Prophet who made

his—and what has to be assumed is God's view—clear on a believer withdrawing from his captive prior to ejaculation.

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri:

... that while he was sitting with Allah's Apostle he said, "O Allah's Apostle! We get female captives as our share of booty, and we are interested in their prices, what is your opinion about coitus interruptus?"

The Prophet said, "Do you really do that? It is better for you not to do it²⁵. No soul that which Allah has destined to exist, but will surely come into existence."

Bukhari 77.600

A revealed truth within a hadith (both reinforcing each other) was meant to reduce the resistance of the believers to raping their female captives in front of their husbands.

The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) sent a military expedition to Awtas on the occasion of the battle of Hunain. They met their enemy and fought with them. They defeated them and took them captives.

Some of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) were reluctant to have intercourse with the female captives in the presence of their husbands who were unbelievers. So Allah, the Exalted, sent down the Qur'anic verse: (4:24) "And all married women (are forbidden) unto you save those (captives) whom your right hands possess."

Abu Dawud 2.215

The revelation in question:

4:24 Or married women except those your right hands possess (captives of war or slave-girls). This is Allah's decree for you. Beyond these it is lawful for you to seek, by means of your wealth, any women, to marry and not to debauch. Those

²⁵ As reported by the BBC, Muhammad's views on coitus interruptus and by extension contraception have encouraged "more conservative Islamic leaders have [to] openly campaigned against the use of condoms or other birth control methods, thus making population planning in many countries ineffective." While a majority of Islamic Schools of Law allow contraceptives within a marriage setting, all are against men having a vasectomy or women a tubal ligation for this would be interfering with Allah's right to schedule a pregnancy at some point in the future.

of them you have enjoyed, you should give them their dowry as a matter of obligation; but you are not liable to reproach for whatever you mutually agree upon, apart from the obligatory payment (the dowry). Allah is indeed All-Knowing, Wise.

Greetings and the Booty

4:86 And when you are greeted with a certain greeting, greet back with a better one or return it; for Allah keeps count of everything!

4:94 O believers, if you journey in the Way of Allah, be discerning and do not say to him who greets you: "You are not a believer", seeking the fleeting goods of the present life. For with Allah are abundant gains. This is how you were before and Allah has been gracious to you; so discern well. Allah is indeed fully aware of what you do!

Moududi:

In the early days of Islam the greeting as-salam 'alaykum ('peace be on you') was a distinguishing symbol of the Muslims. When a Muslim greeted another Muslim with this expression it signified that he was a member of the same community... from whom he need entertain no fear of hostility and towards whom, in return, he should not behave with hostility.

[This caused a problem] on the battlefield. Whenever a Muslim was in danger of being harmed inadvertently by other Muslims during the fighting, he resorted to either the Islamic greeting (as-salam 'alaykum) or the Islamic creed There is no god save Allah' (ili-Jl^y) in order to indicate that he was their brother-in-faith.

The Muslims, however, often suspected this to be merely a ruse of the enemy and therefore sometimes disregarded the utterance of the Islamic greeting or of the Islamic creed, and killed such people and seized their belongings as booty.

God solved the problem by revelation. The purport of the verse is that no one has the right summarily to judge those who profess to be Muslims, and assume them to be lying for

fear of their lives. The error of letting an unbeliever go unpunished is preferable to that of killing a true believer.

War, the Life-Giver

The implication of the revelation about war as a life-giver, Revelation 8:24, is that life really begins in the Hereafter, i.e., once you are dead. This was revealed a short time after the battle of Badr, the first military-style confrontation between the Meccans and the believers which would mark the beginning of the first Arab civil war²⁶. The war would end with Muhammad in almost absolute control of the entire Peninsula.

8:24 O believers, respond to Allah and to the Messenger if he calls you to that which will give you life; and know that Allah stands between a man and his heart, and that unto Him you shall be gathered.

8:25 And fear a calamity which will not only afflict the wrongdoers among you; and know that Allah is Severe in retribution.

8:26 And remember when you were few and were deemed weak in the land, fearing that the people will snatch you away; but He gave you a shelter²⁷, strengthened you with His support and provided you with the good things²⁸, that perchance you may give thanks.

Life in the Hereafter is even better than life in the here-and-now complete with wealth and children.

8:27 O you who believe, do not betray Allah and the Messenger, nor betray your trusts knowingly.

²⁶ The death of Muhammad would ignite another civil war known as the *War of the Apostates*. Most of the opposition were not apostates but Muslims who refused to pay the Zakat, the mandatory charity, which they considered extortion. It didn't matter; they were slaughtered along with those who saw the Prophet's passing as an opportunity to recover their freedom.

²⁷ The reference is to the oasis city of Medina where Muhammad and his followers took refuge after being driven out of Mecca.

²⁸ The good things being the plunder from the raids on the Meccan caravans.

8:28 And know that your wealth and your children are a temptation, and with Allah is a great reward.

God promises those who fear that what He and His Messenger are asking them to do is wrong, that, not only will He provide them with the means to know the difference between right and wrong, but also absolve them of any sins and forgive them should they die fighting on His and His Messenger's behalf.

8:29 O you who believe, if you fear Allah, He will provide you with a criteria [to distinguish right from wrong], and absolve you from your sins and forgive you. Allah's Bounty is great.

Sedition: A New Definition

It was at the battle of Badr or shortly thereafter that God added to the definition of sedition, to include the crime of taking a religion other than Islam.

8:38 Say to those who disbelieve (including Abu Sufyan, the Meccan leader, and his companions): "If they desist, He will forgive them what is already done; but if they go back, then [they should remember] what befell those before them."

8:39 And fight them, so that sedition might end and the only religion will be that of Allah. Then, if they desist, Allah is fully aware of what they do.

8:40 But if they turn away, then know that Allah is your Protector; and what an Excellent Protector and Supporter He is!

GENESIS

48:28 It is He Who sent forth His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may exalt it above every other religion. Allah suffices as Witness.

A civil war was the genesis for the ongoing bloody wars to exalt Islam above every other religion. The first religion trampled under a supremacist religious doctrine was that of the pagan of the Peninsula, 'the idolaters'.

61:9 It is He Who sent His Messenger forth with the guidance and the religion of truth, to make it triumph over every religion, even though the idolaters may be averse.

It was a nasty business, as civil wars tend to be. In civil wars kin will kill or injure kin, and the Arab civil war was no different, except that a vengeful and pitiless god took a personal interest in the conflict, thereby making it worse than it needed be. This was to be expected; after all, the war was about Him.

The Arab civil war would expand into an all-out war by the fanatics of the supremacist religion that is Islam against all unbelievers, wherever they might be and whatever religion they belong to.

Women Choose Sides

The wives of non-Muslim men were not prisoners in their husband's household like those of the believers. They accompanied their husbands to war; any fighting was also about them—mainly about them in the Arab civil war, as it would turn out—therefore they exposed themselves to many of the same risks. They urged their husbands on from the sidelines, all the while shouting insults at the enemy.

Not the shy retiring type, at the battle of Uhud, which was one of the few battles the Meccans won, many of them stripped to the waist, giving their husbands a clear indication of what and for whom they were fighting. Many of these women must have left their husbands when their partner joined a religion that considers them no more than chattel to be bartered over between believing men, for God to send a revelation that the husbands whose wives deserted them should be compensated.

60:11 If any of your wives desert you to the unbelievers, and you decide to penalize them, then give those [husbands] whose wives have gone away the like of what they have spent (*the dowry*), and fear Allah in whom you believe.

Why would such women become believers, which of course some did? God rightly questioned their loyalty and motives and demanded that their faith be tested. In the same revelation, Allah established that a believing female could never be married to an unbeliever.

60:10 O believers, if believing women come to you as Emigrants, then test them; Allah knows better their faith. If you find them to be believers, do not send them back to the unbelievers. They are neither lawful to the unbelieving men, nor are those men lawful to them. Give them what they [the unbelieving husbands] had paid in dowry; and you are not at fault if you marry them, provided you pay them their dowries. Do not hold fast to unbelieving women; demand what you have spent and let them demand what they have

spent. That is Allah's Judgement. He judges between you,
and Allah is All-Knowing and Wise

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Battle of Badr

Muhammad and his followers, after being run out of Mecca, took refuge in Medina, from which they attacked the caravans passing between the Red Sea and the oasis city on their way to and from Mecca, igniting a civil war. The first real battle of what would become a bloody fratricidal war was an attack on a force of an estimated one thousand Meccans sent to protect a large caravan which the Muslims intended to plunder.

Narrated Jabir:

The Prophet sent us as an army unit of three hundred warriors under the command of Abu Ubaida to ambush a caravan of the Quraish...

Bukhari 67.402

The Prophet initially wanted to attack the caravan before the Meccan forces could intervene, but Allah promised him a victory no matter which he chose to attack. With God's guarantee, Muhammad decided on the Meccan armed detachment, a decision which did not meet with unanimous approval.

8:5 Just as when your (meaning Muhammad) Lord brought you out in truth from your house (*to fight*)²⁹, though a group of the believers disliked it.

8:6 They disputed with you concerning the Truth after it had become manifest, as though they were being led to their deaths while looking on.

8:7 And [remember] how Allah promised you that one of the two [enemy] groups (the Meccan caravan of the Quraysh and the army which was sent to defend it) would be yours, and

²⁹ Moududi quotes a different translation where it's all about the spoils:

8:5 (Now with regard to the spoils the same situation exists as when) your Lord brought you forth from your home in a righteous cause while a party among the believers were much averse to it.

you wanted the unarmed one (the caravan) to be yours. Allah, however, willed the Truth to triumph in accordance with His Words and to cut off the remnants of the unbelievers.

8:8 So that He may cause the Truth to triumph and nullify falsehood, even though the wicked sinner dislike it.

To avoid His Messenger getting cold feet the night before the battle, in a dream Allah made the enemy appear to be much fewer, then repeated the same illusion the next day to a fully awake Prophet.

8:43 [Remember] when Allah showed them [O Muhammad] in your sleep as few. Had He showed them to you as many, you would have lost heart and you would have differed over the matter. But Allah saved you. He knows what is hidden in the hearts.

8:44 And [remember] when He showed them to you, as you met, few in your eyes, and made you few in their eyes; so that Allah might bring about a matter already decreed. And unto Allah shall all matters return.

If only Muhammad was subjected to the illusion of a small Meccan army, then the following verse, where the believers saw themselves outnumbered two to one³⁰, makes sense:

3:13 There surely was a sign for you in the two armies that confronted each other (at the Battle of Badr); the one side fighting for the cause of Allah, and the others consisting of unbelievers. The believers saw them with their very eyes to be twice their actual number. God will strengthen with His Might whomever He pleases. Surely, there is in this a lesson for those who are possessed of vision.

No matter their relative strength, the believers held the high ground. They would have abandoned that strategic position and attacked the

³⁰ The Mohsin Khan Saudi-sponsored, supremacist, anti-Semitic translation disputes Allah's estimate, making it 3-to-1, and the sign was for the Jews.

3:13 There has already been a sign for you (O Jews) in the two armies that met (in combat i.e. the Battle of Badr). One was fighting in the Cause of Allah, and as for the other, (they) were disbelievers. They (the believers) saw them (the disbelievers) with their own eyes twice their number (although they were thrice their number). And Allah supports with His Victory whom He wills. Verily, in this is a lesson for those who understand.

caravan ("cavalcade" in Revelation 8:42) with disastrous results, had God not already decided how the battle should unfold.

8:42 While you were on the nearer side [of the valley] and they were on the farther side, with the cavalcade beneath you. Had you made an appointment, you would surely have failed to keep the appointment. But [this happened] so that Allah might bring about a matter already decreed, and that those who were to perish would perish after a clear proof [had been given], and those who were to survive would survive after a clear proof [had been given]. And surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

The Muslim army defeated the Meccans at the famous battle of Badr, with Allah taking credit for the victory. And why shouldn't He? After all, He did send an army of invisible angels to help the Muslims defeat their enemy, and made it possible for the believers to fall asleep, in an atypical rain, the night before the battle.

8:9 And when you called upon your Lord for help, He answered you: "I will reinforce you with a thousand angels following one another."

8:10 Allah did this only as good tidings and that your hearts might be assured thereby. Victory comes only from Allah; Allah is indeed Mighty and Wise.

8:11 [Remember] when He allowed slumber to overcome you as an assurance from Him, and sent you water down from heaven so as to purify you, relieve you of the Devil's temptation, fortify your hearts and steady your feet therewith.

Words of encouragement for His angels:

8:12 And when your Lord revealed to the angels: "I am with you; so support those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve; so strike upon the necks and strike every fingertip of theirs."

8:13 That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger; and he who opposes Allah and His Messenger [will find] Allah's Punishment very severe.

8:14 This is how it will be; so taste it; the torture of the Fire is awaiting the unbelievers.

Words of encouragement for the believers:

8:15 O believers, if you meet the unbelievers on the march, do not turn your backs upon them.

8:16 Whoever turns his back on that day, unless preparing to resume fighting, or joining another group, incurs Allah's Wrath and his refuge is Hell; and what an evil fate!

8:45 O believers, if you encounter an enemy host, stand fast and remember Allah frequently, that perchance you may prosper.

8:46 And obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel among yourselves lest you lose heart and your strength dissipates. And stand fast, for Allah is on the side of those who stand fast.

8:47 And do not be like those who went out of their homes boastfully showing off in front of the people³¹, while they barred others from the Path of Allah. Allah is fully aware of what they do.

Words of encouragement from Satan for the unbelievers. The Devil fled the battlefield before any actual engagement, which probably demoralized the opponents of the believers somewhat.

8:48 And the Devil made their [foul] deeds look fair to them saying: "No man shall overcome you today; and I am indeed by your side." But when the two hosts sighed each other, he turned on his heels saying: "I am quit of you; I see what you do not see; I fear Allah, and Allah is stern in retribution."

What about the hypocrites?

8:49 And the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a sickness said: "Their religion has mislead those people (the Muslims)." But he who trusts in Allah will find Allah is Mighty and Wise.

³¹ This alludes to the army of the disbelieving Quraysh, which, when it proceeded on a military expedition against the Muslims, was accompanied by singing and dancing minstrels.

Strong winds lashed the battlefield. One wind blast, the Prophet told his fighters, was one thousand angels led by the archangel Gabriel coming to their aid.

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

The Prophet said on the day (of the battle) of Badr, "This is Gabriel holding the head of his horse and equipped with arms for the battle.

Bukhari 59.330

The angels were not only there to fight, but also to carry the souls of the dead unbelievers to Hell.

8:50 And if you could only see when the angels carry off the unbelievers, striking their faces and their rears [saying]: "Taste the punishment of the Fire."

8:51 That is on account of what you have done, and Allah is not unjust to His servants.

What did the Pharaoh's people and the dead unbelievers at Badr have in common?

8:52 Just like the wont of Pharaoh's people and those who preceded them; they disbelieved in their Lord's Revelations; so Allah punished them for their sins. Allah is Strong and Stern in retribution.

8:53 That is because Allah never changes a favour He confers on a people unless they change what is in their hearts, and because Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

8:54 Just like the wont of Pharaoh's people and those who preceded them; they denied Allah's Revelations, so We destroyed them because of their sins and We drowned Pharaoh's people. They were all wrongdoers.

The total number of enemy dead at the Battle of Badr was 70³², though as God reminds the believers, it was not they who slew them.

³² **Narrated Al-Bara' bin 'Azib:**

On the day of Uhud the Prophet appointed 'Abdullah bin Jubair as chief of the archers, and seventy among us were injured and martyred. On the day (of the battle) of Badr, the Prophet and his companions had inflicted 140 casualties on the pagans, 70 were taken prisoners, and 70 were killed..."

Bukhari 56.322

8:17 It was not you (those addressed are the Muslims) who slew them, but Allah; and when you (Muhammad) threw (the pebbles or a handful of dust at the enemy in retaliation) it was actually Allah who threw; so that He might generously reward the believers. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Why Allah threw the dust:

8:18 That was done, so that Allah might foil the machinations of the unbelievers.

God again makes it clear that He is on the side of the believers.

8:19 If you seek victory, the victory has been granted you; and if you desist, it will be better for you; but if you come back, We will come back (We will again support the believers) and your forces will avail you nothing, however numerous they are. Allah is on the side of the believers.

Muhammad had one of his most vocal critics, the poet al-Nadr whom he spotted after the battle, beheaded on the spot, but he did show mercy to sixty or more other prisoners. He ignored demands that each be killed by a relative to avoid a blood feud, that they be burnt alive, and ordered that they be ransomed. He was exercising Allah's prerogative.

3:127 That He may cut off a group of the unbelievers or humiliate them, so that they may turn away completely baffled.

3:128 It is no business of yours whether Allah forgives them or punishes them; for they are indeed evil-doers!

Spoils of Badr

Narrated Ibn Shihab:

These were the battles of Allah's Apostle (which he fought), and while mentioning (the Badr battle) he said, while the corpses of the pagans were being thrown into the well, Allah's Apostle said (to them), "Have you found what your Lord promised true?"

Abdullah said, "Some of the Prophet's companions said, "O Allah's Apostle! You are addressing dead people."

Allah's Apostle replied, "You do not hear what I am saying, better than they."

The total number of Muslim fighters from Quraish who fought in the battle of Badr and were given their share of the booty, were 81 men."

Az-Zubair said, "When their shares were distributed, their number was 101 men. But Allah knows it better."

Bukhari 59.360

After the battle there are the spoils and a discussion ensued as to who gets what. Those familiar with Jesus' response in the Gospel of Luke to the question posed by the scribes, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" will see a similarity in the Prophet's response to the question, "Who gets what?" The big difference is that Muhammad, as Allah's Overseer on Earth, is entitled to both Allah's and Caesar's share.

THE SPOILS

8 Al-Anfāl

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

8:1 They ask you about the spoils (taken by the Muslims after the Battle of Badr), say: "The spoils belong to Allah and to the Messenger. So fear Allah and settle your differences." Obey Allah and His Messenger if you are true believers.

There is, of course, more to being a believer than simply being entitled to an unbeliever's possessions, as Allah quickly reminds those whose focus is on the booty.

8:2 The true believers are whose hearts, upon the mention of Allah, quiver with fear; and when His Revelations are recited to them, they strengthen their faith. They put their trust in their Lord.

8:3 Those who perform the prayer, and spend of what We provided for them.

8:4 Those are in truth the believers; they shall enjoy with their Lord a high station and receive forgiveness and a generous provision.

God, in a subsequent revelation, opts for a more even-handed distribution of the booty.

8:41 And know that whatever booty you take, the fifth thereof is for Allah, the Messenger, the near of kin, the orphan and the wayfarer, if you really believe in Allah and in what We revealed to our Servant on the day of decision (the Battle of Badr), the day when the two hosts met. Allah has power over everything.

Dead pagans down the well and booty for the believers. What a God! This did not, however, stop the grumbling about how the alms were distributed.

9:58 And some of them disparage your handling of the alms. If they are given part of it they are satisfied, but if they are not given any, they turn away angrily.

9:59 And would that they were satisfied with what Allah and His Messenger gave them and said: "Allah suffices us; Allah will give us of His Bounty, as will His Messenger. We turn humbly to Him."

The dissatisfaction may have had to do with the wealth that Muhammad spent in *Allah's Way* which, as God explains in Revelation 9:60, is a legitimate charitable expense. It costs a lot of money to maintain an army fighting in Allah's Path.

9:60 The alms are for the poor, the needy, their collectors and those whose hearts are bound together³³, as well as for the freeing of slaves, [repaying] the debtors, spending in Allah's Path, and for the wayfarer. Thus Allah commands. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

³³ 'those whose hearts are to be won over'

A portion of Zakat Funds may also be given to win over to Islam those who might be engaged in anti-Islamic activities or to those in the camp of the unbelievers who might be brought to help the Muslims or to those newly converted Muslims, who might be inclined to revert to kufr if no monetary help was extended to them. It is permissible to award pensions to them or give them lump sums of money to make them helpers of Islam or submissive to it or at least to render them into harmless enemies.

Sparrows at War

The Koran does mention another A.D. confrontation in which God spectacularly interfered with the outcome. In this battle He sent sparrows, not angels, to defeat His enemies. The following story about birds defeating an army on elephants is from Virgil Gheorghiu's *La vie de Mahomet*, with supporting verses from the Koran.

The inhabitants of the Peninsula knew that Mecca was special to God even before the Prophet made it official. It is reported in the *Traditions* that in 570, the year of Muhammad's birth, Abraha, the Christian ruler of the principality of Saba in Yemen (then part of the Abyssinian Empire), marched on Mecca after the Meccans allegedly tried to burn down a church he had built and which the Meccans feared would attract more converts to Christianity.

On the approach to Mecca, the elephant that Abraha was riding stopped and knelt on the ground, refusing to go any further. Suddenly, out of the sky appeared squadron after squadron of sparrows armed with pebbles with which they stoned the army of Abraha, killing all the estimated 60,000 men, their elephants, camels and horses. As an example of how pre-Islamic mythology made its way into the Koran, one of the last surahs is dedicated to this unlikely encounter of which history has no record.

THE ELEPHANT

105 Al-Fi1

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

105:1 Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the
Companions of the Elephant?

105:2 Did he not turn their cunning into perdition?

105:3 And send upon them swarms of birds;

105:4 Hurling upon them stones of clay;

105:5 And so He reduced them to munched blades of grass.

Battle of Uhud

Narrated Al-Bara bin Azib:

The Prophet appointed Abdullah bin Jubair as the commander of the infantry men (archers) who were fifty on the day (of the battle) of Uhud. He instructed them, "Stick to your place, and don't leave it even if you see birds snatching us, till I send for you; and if you see that we have defeated the infidels and made them flee, even then you should not leave your place till I send for you."

Then the infidels were defeated.

By Allah, I saw the women fleeing lifting up their clothes revealing their leg-bangles and their legs. So, the companions of Abdullah bin Jubair said, "The booty! O people, the booty! Your companions have become victorious, what are you waiting for now?"

Abdullah bin Jubair said, "Have you forgotten what Allah's Apostle said to you?"

They replied, "By Allah! We will go to the people (i.e. the enemy) and collect our share from the war booty." But when they went to them, they were forced to turn back defeated.

Bukhari 52.276

The believers were well on their way to winning their second encounter with the Meccans – this battle taking place on the slopes and flats of Mount Uhud – when the Muslim archers left the battle early, thinking it was already won, to be the first to plunder the undefended Meccan camp. The Meccan cavalry counter-attacked, seriously wounding the Prophet and routing the Muslim forces. Had they pressed on, they would have completely crushed the believers. Revelations 3:121-122 are about this near-disaster at Uhud, which Allah initially takes credit for averting through His *moral* support of the two battalions commanded by His Messenger.

3:121 [And remember] when you (Muhammad) went at daybreak, away from your family, in order to lead the believers to their battle stations (at the Battle of Uhud); Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing!

3:122 Two of your battalions³⁴ were about to lose heart, and Allah was their Protector. In Allah let the believers put their trust!

3:123 Allah had already given you victory at Badr, at a time when you were still powerless; so fear Allah that perchance you might thankful!

3:124 When you were telling the believers: "Is it not enough that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down?"³⁵

3:125 Yes, if you forbear and fear Allah and the enemy attack you at once, Your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand marked angels.³⁶

3:126 Allah has not intended this except as good news to you and that your hearts might be reassured thereby. Victory comes only from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise!

The lure of the booty overwhelmed the need to keep on killing. How the near-disaster unfolded and what happened next, in God's own words:

3:152 Allah fulfilled His Promise to you when, by His Leave, you went on killing them; until you lost heart and dissented about the affair and disobeyed (the Muslims were victorious until the archers disobeyed the Prophet's orders), after He had shown you what you cherished. Some of you desired this world (left their position to get a share of the booty), others the Hereafter. Then, He turned you away from them (the

³⁴ "They belonged to Banu Salamah and Banu Harithah who formed the two wings of the Muslim army which was led by the Prophet." *Fakhry*

³⁵ In the Traditions, God did not just send a thousand angels warriors to help the Muslims at Badr but three thousand. The first contingent of a thousand angels, as reported earlier, was led by the archangel Michael, the second by the archangel Michael and the third by the archangel Saraphel.

³⁶ It was an idle boast. God would not send any angels to help his beleaguered believers at Uhud as He did at Badr.

Qurashite foes of the Muslims) in order to test you, and He has forgiven you. Allah is Gracious to the believers!

Even with the departure of the archers, the Muslims might still have been able to withstand the renewed assault of the Meccans if someone by the name of Suraqah had not shouted that Muhammad, who had been wounded in the encounter, was dead, causing consternation in the believers' ranks and prompting many to flee in disarray in what became a rout.

3:153 [Remember] how you fled and paid heed to no one, while the Messenger was calling you from the rear. Thus He rewarded you with grief upon grief, lest you should not be sorry for what you missed or what befell you. Allah is Aware of what you do!

"After the grief," God caused some who could still not be trusted in battle, "as a security" to fall asleep, and still others to express doubts about what they were fighting for – was it worth risking their lives? – thereby providing Allah with an opportunity for rebuttal.

3:154 Then He sent down upon you, after the grief, as a security, slumber overcoming a group of you, whereas another group were only concerned about themselves, entertaining untrue thoughts about Allah, like the thoughts of the pagans. They say: "Do we have any part in the affair?" Say: "The whole affair is Allah's." They conceal in their hearts what they do not reveal to you. They say: "Had we had any part in the affair, we would not have been killed here." Say: "Had you been in your homes, those who were destined to be killed would have sallied forth to the places where they would be slain; so that Allah might purify what is in your hearts. Allah knows well what is hidden in the breasts."

Suraqah would deny, until his dying day, that he was the one who shouted that Muhammad had been killed. God did not blame him; He blamed the Devil.

3:155 Those of you, who fled on the day the two armies met, were made to slip by the Devil, on account of something they had done. However, Allah has forgiven them; Allah is indeed Forgiving and Merciful.

Don't be like the unbelievers and think that you can escape death by playing it safe.

3:156 O believers, do not be like the unbelievers, who say about their brethren when they [die] while travelling abroad or fighting: "Had they stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed." Allah wished to make that a cause of anguish in their hearts. It is Allah who causes men to live and die, and Allah has Knowledge of what you do!

Dying fighting for God is much better than whatever the unbelievers can amass in this life.

3:157 And were you to be killed or to die in the Way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than what they amass.

A reminder: those who die fighting for God immediately join Him in Paradise—no life in the grave³⁷ awaiting Judgement day for these brave men.

3:158 And were you to die or to be killed, it is unto Allah that you will be gathered.

Praise for how His Messenger handled the aftermath of Uhud, and some advice:

3:159 It was by a mercy from Allah that you dealt leniently with them (the Muslim fighters who flinched in the midst of the battle); for had you been cruel and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So, pardon them, ask Allah's Forgiveness for them and consult them in the conduct of affairs. Then, when you are resolved, trust in Allah; Allah indeed loves those who trust [in Him].

In Allah we trust!

3:160 If Allah supports you, no one will overcome you; but if He forsakes you, then who will be able to support you after Him? And in Allah let the believers put their trust!

³⁷ Islam teaches that our existence has four stages: life in the womb, life in the world, life in the grave where the undead can be found, and the afterlife. Islam teaches that when a person dies, his zombie essence, you might say, sinks into the ground to rest in a cavity in what was thought to be a massively honeycombed earth waiting for Judgement Day. Even Muhammad will not escape life in the grave, but martyrs do.

There may not have been much booty to be had at Uhud, but even at Uhud, booty reared its ugly head.

3:161 It does not benefit any Prophet to cheat [in handling the booty]; for whoever cheats will bring the fruit of his dishonesty with him on the Day of Resurrection. Then, each soul shall be paid in full for what it earned (its works); and they will not be wronged.

Who's to Blame for the Defeat?

Muhammad forgave, on God's recommendation, those who fled the battlefield – Allah needed them to fight another day. Nonetheless, God will grade the believers on their performance at Uhud, even if it is He who contrived the defeat for His own ends.

3:162 What, is he who follows Allah's good Pleasure like him who brings upon himself God's Wrath? Hell is his refuge, and what a wretched destiny!

3:163 They (the believers) have different grades in Allah's Sight; and Allah has knowledge of what they do!

3:164 Allah has been gracious to the believers, sending them a Messenger from among themselves to recite to them His Revelations, to purify them and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom, though they had been in manifest error before that.

3:165 And when a misfortune befell you (in the Battle of Uhud) after you had inflicted twice as much (in the Battle of Badr), you said: "Whence is this?"; say: "It is from yourselves." Surely Allah has power over everything!

3:166 And what befell you on that day the two armies met (in the Battle of Uhud) was by Allah's Leave, that He might know the true believers;

If God knows what is in men's hearts, was the defeat at Uhud really necessary?

3:167 And that He might know the hypocrites. When it was said to them: "Come, fight in the way of Allah or defend yourselves", they replied: "If only we knew how to fight, we would have followed you." On that day, they were closer to

disbelief than to belief. They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts; and Allah knows best what they conceal!

The following revelations are a reminder from God that those who died at the battle of Uhud are well taken care of. Those who "stayed at home" should be so lucky.

3:168 Those who said to their brethren, while they themselves stayed at home: "Had they obeyed us they would not have been killed?" Say: "Then ward off death from yourselves, if you are truthful."

3:169 And do not think those who have been killed in the Way of Allah as dead; they are rather living with their Lord, well provided for.

3:170 Rejoicing in what their Lord has given them of His bounty, and they rejoice for those who stayed behind and did not join them; knowing that they have nothing to fear and that they shall not grieve.

3:171 They rejoice in the Grace of Allah and His Favour, and that Allah will not withhold the reward of the faithful;

There is great reward for those who, after being wounded, keep on doing "what is right," fighting and killing unbelievers.

3:172 Those who responded to Allah's Call and the Messenger's after they had incurred many wounds. To those of them who do what is right and fear Allah, a great reward is in store.

Bring it on!

3:173 Those to whom the people said: "The people have been arrayed against you; so fear them." But this increased their faith and so they said: "Allah is Sufficient for us. He is the Best Guardian!"

3:174 Thus they came back with a Grace and a Bounty from Allah. No harm touched them; and they complied with Allah's good Pleasure. Allah's Bounty is great!

Don't be afraid of the enemy; be afraid of Me!

3:175 That indeed is the Devil frightening his followers; but do not fear them and fear Me, if you are true believers!

Do not grieve for your relatives who died in the Battle of Uhud. If they died as unbelievers or apostatised “those who trade belief for disbelief” (Revelation 3:177), not only are they not deserving of your tears, but the painful death they may have just suffered is only the beginning of an eternity of pain.

3:176 And do not let those who hasten to disbelieve make you grieve. They will certainly not cause Allah any harm. Allah wishes not to give them any share in the Hereafter, and a terrible punishment awaits them!

3:177 Those who trade belief for disbelief will not cause Allah any harm, and a painful punishment awaits them!

The unbelievers who survived the battle of Uhud, because of God’s scheming, may regret their good luck.

3:178 Let the unbelievers not suppose that Our prolonging their days is better for them. We only prolong their days so that they may grow in sin, and a humbling punishment awaits them.

One more reminder as to why God engineered the defeat of the Muslims at Uhud; it was about “separating the vile from the decent.”

3:179 Allah will not leave the faithful in the state in which you are, until He separates the vile from the decent. Nor will Allah make known to you the unseen; but Allah chooses of His Messengers whomever He pleases. Believe then in Allah and His Messengers; and if you believe and fear Allah, you will have a great reward.

God would use Muhammad’s exaggerated death to remind the believers that their leader is mortal and that should he be killed – which is highly unlikely, since He decides who lives and who dies – He expects them to continue to kill and die on His behalf like the followers of earlier prophets for which, He reminds them for the umpteenth time, they will be amply rewarded.

3:144 Muhammad is merely a Messenger, before whom many Messengers have come and gone. If then he dies or gets killed, you will turn on your heels? Should any man turn on his heels, he will not cause Allah any harm; and Allah will reward the thankful.

3:145 It is not given to any soul to die, except with Allah's Leave, at a fixed time. He who desires the reward of this world, We will give him [part] of it, and he who desires the reward of the life to come, We will give him [part] of it; and We shall reward the thankful.

3:146 How many Prophets with whom large multitudes have fought; they were not daunted on account of what befell them in the Cause of Allah. They did not weaken or cringe; and Allah loves the steadfast!

3:147 Their only words were: "Lord, forgive us our sins and our excess in our affairs. Make firm our feet and grant us victory over the unbelieving people."

3:148 Therefore Allah granted them the reward of this life and the excellent reward (Paradise) of the life to come, and Allah loves the beneficent.

Medina

The Jews of Medina

The three Jewish tribes of Medina did not see the rise of Islam as a threat until the Muslims developed an appetite for booty and started raiding the caravans that passed by the city on their way to and from Mecca. These raids were sanctioned by the Koran since the booty the Muslims were taking was from unbelievers.

The Muslim victory over the Meccans at Badr particularly unnerved the Jews. At the Battle of Badr, Muhammad not only demonstrated an unnatural bloodlust and thirst for revenge, but also gave reason to question his sanity. It was at Badr that he first informed his followers of the concept of life in the grave. After the battle, the Muslim dead were given a proper burial while the Meccan casualties were simply thrown down a well. God's Messenger was seen shouting at the corpses in the well. This left some of his followers perplexed, but the Prophet had an explanation.

Narrated Ibn Umar:

The Prophet looked at the people of the well and said, "Have you found true what your Lord promised you?"

Somebody said to him, "You are addressing dead people."

He replied, "You do not hear better than they but they cannot reply."

Bukhari 23.452

It was not questions as to Muhammad's sanity that most alarmed the Jews of Medina, but what God's Messenger did after he returned victorious to their city. The victory at Badr and the prestige and wealth that came with it emboldened the Prophet to silence his most vocal and persistent critics, the poets.

As aforementioned, he had the poet al-Nadr beheaded at Badr. The next to die was the oldest poet, if not the oldest man, of Medina, centenarian Abu Afak.

He waited for an opportunity until a hot night came, and Abu Afak slept in an open place. Salim b. 'Umayr knew it, so he placed the sword on his liver and pressed it till it reached his bed. The enemy of Allah screamed and the people, who were his followers rushed him, took him to his house and interred him.

Ibn S'ad, a companion of the Prophet

The next to be assassinated at Muhammad's insistence was the poetess Asma bint Marwan. She had condemned, in verse, the murder of the old wordsmith. In the tradition of every despot through the ages, she then became the target of the assassin's blade. With an infant suckling at her breast, whom her killer pushed aside, she too was stabbed to death while sleeping. After every murder, the assassin would return to the mosque to inform Muhammad and be praised for what had been done at his insistence.

Umayr Ibn Adi came to her in the night and entered her house. Her children were sleeping around her. There was one whom she was suckling. He searched her with his hand because he was blind, and separated the child from her. He thrust his sword in her chest till it pierced up to her back. Then he offered the morning prayers with the Prophet at Medina.

The apostle of Allah said to him: "Have you slain the daughter of Marwan?"

When Umayr replied that the job had been carried out with success, Muhammad said, "You have helped God and His apostle, O 'Umayr!"

When Umayr asked if he would have to bear any evil consequences, the apostle said, "Two goats won't butt their heads about her."

Muhammad then praised Umayr in front of all gathered for prayer for his act of murder, and Umayr went back to his people.

Ibn S'ad, a companion of the Prophet

God's Messenger dared the men of her tribe to seek revenge for her murder, as was the custom. Knowing that there was nothing this man was not capable of, they avoided their own destruction by becoming

Muslims. The next unfortunate poet murdered per Muhammad's instructions was Abu-Rafi.

Narrated Al-Bara bin Azib:

Allah's Apostle sent a group of Ansari men to kill Abu-Rafi. One of them set out and entered their (i.e. the enemies) fort. That man said, "I hid myself in a stable for their animals. They closed the fort gate. Later they lost a donkey of theirs, so they went out in its search. I, too, went out along with them, pretending to look for it. They found the donkey and entered their fort. And I, too, entered along with them.

They closed the gate of the fort at night, and kept its keys in a small window where I could see them. When those people slept, I took the keys and opened the gate of the fort and came upon Abu Rafi and said, 'O Abu Rafi.'

When he replied me, I proceeded towards the voice and hit him. He shouted and I came out to come back, pretending to be a helper.

I said, 'O Abu Rafi', changing the tone of my voice.

He asked me, 'What do you want; woe to your mother?'

I asked him, 'What has happened to you?'

He said, 'I don't know who came to me and hit me.' Then I drove my sword into his belly and pushed it forcibly till it touched the bone. Then I came out, filled with puzzlement and went towards a ladder of theirs in order to get down but I fell down and sprained my foot. I came to my companions and said, 'I will not leave till I hear the wailing of the women.'

So, I did not leave till I heard the women bewailing Abu Rafi, the merchant of Hijaz. Then I got up, feeling no ailment, (and we proceeded) till we came upon the Prophet and informed him."

Bukhari 52.264

The murder of the poet Ka'b bin Al-Ashraf:

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah:

Allah's Apostle said, "Who would kill Ka'b bin Al-Ashraf (Ka'b, a poet, who wrote poems lampooning of Allah's

Messenger) as he has harmed Allah and His Apostle?"

Muhammad bin Maslama (got up and) said, "I will kill him."

So, Muhammad bin Maslama went to Ka'b and said, "I want a loan of one or two Wasqs of food grains."

Ka'b said, "Mortgage your women to me."

Muhammad bin Maslama said, "How can we mortgage our women, and you are the most handsome among the Arabs?"

He said, "Then mortgage your sons to me."

Muhammad said, "How can we mortgage our sons, as the people will abuse them for being mortgaged for one or two Wasqs of food grains? It is shameful for us. But we will mortgage our arms to you."

So, Muhammad bin Maslama promised him that he would come to him next time. They (Muhammad bin Maslama and his companions) came to him as promised and murdered him. Then they went to the Prophet and told him about it.

Bukhari 45.687

Adding to the Jews of Medina's uneasiness was a revelation Muhammad received at the time of the killings allowing him to effectively renounce any treaty at his discretion.

8:58 And should you fear treachery from any people, throw back their treaty to them in like manner. Allah does not like the treacherous.

After Badr, the Prophet not only felt his position secure enough to have his critics permanently silenced but also to put his newfound prestige on the line by seeking to impose a head tax, the *jizya*, on the Jews and Christians. The Jews ridiculed his proposal, saying that Allah could not be so poor as to require their money.

Muhammad swallowed his pride and patiently waited for an opportunity to make the Jews pay, and pay dearly, for their insolence, as was his way. An irresistible opportunity for revenge and for plunder presented itself with the retaliation killing of a Muslim by a Jew of the Banu Qaynuqa, the smallest of the three Jewish tribes of Medina. Here is the story as told by Abul Kasem, a former Muslim and author of *A Complete Guide to Allah*:

An Arab girl, married to a Muslim convert of Medina went to the Jewish shop of a goldsmith in the market place of Qaynuqa. While waiting for some ornaments, she sat down. A silly neighbour secretly pinned the lower hem of her skirt. When she arose, the awkward expose made everyone laugh. She screamed with shame. A passing Muslim witnessed the incident and killed the offending Jew. The brother of the Jew then killed the Muslim. The family of the murdered Muslim then appealed to the converts of Medina to take revenge.

The skirmish now became general and Muhammad made no attempt to mitigate the situation, nor did he try to bring the offending parties to justice. He immediately gathered his followers under the white banner in the hand of Hamzah and marched forward to attack the Jewish tribe. The Jews took shelter in their fortified apartments. So, Muhammad laid a siege and a full blockade was imposed. The siege lasted for fifteen days... [the] Jews had no choice but to surrender to Muhammad. Their hands were tied behind their backs and preparations were made for their execution.

At this time, Abd Allah ibn Ubay, a new convert to Islam begged Muhammad for mercy, but Muhammad turned his face away. Abd Allah persisted. Finally, Muhammad yielded and let the prisoners escape execution. He then cursed the Jews and Abd Allah ibn Ubay with Allah's punishment. Then Muhammad ordered the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa to leave Medina within three days.

After the exile of the Banu Qaynuqa, Muhammad legalized the killing of Jews.

The messenger of God said, "Whoever of the Jews falls into your hands, kill him."

Tabari

The next to be forced out were the Banu Nadir. The Banu Nadir Jews owned large tracks of land on the outskirts of Medina on which they cultivated date palms. They too took refuge in their fortress when they ran afoul of the Prophet. God's Messenger then besieged their fortifications.

There was always a chance that the remaining Jewish tribe would come to their aid. The Muslims were not yet strong enough to

withstand a concerted effort by the Jews to defend themselves, therefore the siege had to be ended as quickly as possible. To dishearten and convince the Banu Nadir that there was no future for them in Medina, even if the siege was lifted, Muhammad ordered that all their date palms be cut down. This early version of scorched-earth warfare was taboo for both the Arabs and Jews. The Prophet justified his breaking of this long-standing prohibition with the usual revelation from God.

59:5 Whatever palm trees you cut of or leave standing upon their roots is only by Allah's Leave, and that He might disgrace the sinners.

Muhammad's share of the property of the Banu Nadir may have made some jealous.

59:6 Whatever spoils Allah bestows on His Messenger from them, you did not send against them any horses or other mounts; but Allah confers on His Messengers authority over whoever he pleases. Allah has power over everything.

59:7 And whatever spoils Allah bestows on His Messenger from the inhabitants of the cities belongs to Allah, His Messenger, the kinsmen, the orphans, the destitute and the wayfarers; so that it might not circulate among the rich of you. Whatever the Messenger gives you, take; but whatever he forbids, refrain from. Fear Allah, for Allah is terrible in retribution.

Do unto others as was done to you? Part of the plunder from the siege of the Banu Nadir went to the emigrants from Mecca, and another to supporters in Medina.

59:8 Give to the poor Emigrants who were driven out of their homes and their possessions, seeking bounty from Allah and good pleasure and assisting Allah and His Messenger. Those indeed are the truthful ones.

59:9 And those who had already established themselves and embraced their Faith before them (the people of Medina known as al-Ansar or supporters, as against the Meccans known as al-Muhajirun, or emigrants) love those who emigrated to them; and they do not find in their hearts any need for what had been bestowed upon them and prefer them to themselves, even if they are in dire need. He is

indeed prosperous who is guarded against the avarice of his soul.

The booty from the dispossession of the Badu Nadir, as with all the spoils from unbelievers until Judgement Day, were to be shared among all believers. That is, in essence, Moududi's explanation of Revelation 59:10.

59:10 Those who came after them say: "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in belief and do not instill in our hearts any rancour towards those who believe. Lord, You are indeed Clement and Merciful."

God was not impressed with the remaining Jewish tribe of Medina, the Banu Qurayzah, who promised to come to the aid of the Banu Nadir but never showed up. In any event, it would not have made any difference.

59:11 Have you not considered the hypocrites? They say to their brethren who have disbelieved from the People of the Book; "If you are driven out, we will go out with you and we will never obey anyone against you; and should anyone fight you, we will certainly support you." Allah bears witness that they are liars, indeed.

59:12 If they are driven out, they will not go out with them; and if anyone fights them, they will not support them. Even if they support them, they will turn their backs in flight; then they will not receive any support.

59:13 You are indeed more terrifying in their hearts than Allah. That is because they are a people who do not understand.

59:14 They do not fight you altogether except in fortified cities or from behind walls. Their prowess is great among themselves. You think they are united, yet their hearts are at variance. That is because they are a people who do not understand.

59:15 Like those who, shortly before them, tasted the futility of their action. They shall have a painful punishment.

59:16 Like Satan, when he said to man: "Disbelieve"; then, when he disbelieved, he said: "I am quit of you. Indeed, I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

59:17 Thereupon, their end together was to be in the Fire, dwelling therein forever. That is the reward of the wrongdoer.

With their livelihood gone, the Banu Nadir agreed to go into exile. Muhammad allowed them to take with them whatever their camels could carry. That left the Banu Qurayzah (also referred to as the Beni Qurayzah). This is what Allah had to say about the dispossession of the Banu Qaynuqa and the Banu Nadir:

THE MUSTERING

59 *Al-Hashr*

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

59:1 Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

59:2 It is He Who drove out the unbelievers among the People of the Book from their homes at the first mustering. You did not think that they would be driven out, and they thought that their forts would protect them from Allah. Then, Allah seized them from an unexpected quarter and cast terror into their hearts, so that they destroyed their homes with their own hands, as well as the hands of the believers. Reflect, then, O people of perception!

59:3 Had not Allah decreed dispersion upon them, He would certainly have punished them in the present life, and in the Hereafter, the punishment of the Fire shall be theirs.

59:4 That is because they have opposed Allah and His Messenger, and he who opposes Allah will find Allah terrible in retribution.

Some of the exiled leaders of the Banu Nadir and Banu Qaynuqa went to Mecca and offered to join the Meccans in the fight against Muhammad. At first the Meccans were sceptical. To test their allegiance, they asked the Jews which was better: paganism or Islam? They answered that paganism was preferable to Muhammad's type of monotheism. The Meccans then accepted the Jews of the Banu Nadir and Banu Qaynuqa as their ally, thereby sealing the fate of the Banu Qurayzah. Allah was quick to denounce this new unholy alliance of monotheists and polytheists.

4:51 Have you not considered those who received a portion of the Book? They believe in idols and demons, and they say to the unbelievers: "Those are more rightly guided than those who believe."

4:52 Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed; and whomever Allah curses will have no supporter.

4:53 Or do they have a share in the Kingdom? If so, they will not give the people a speck on a date-stone.

4:54 Or do they envy the people (the Arabs) for what Allah has given them of His Bounty? For we have given Abraham's family the Book and the Wisdom and bestowed on them a great kingdom.

4:55 Some of them believed in him, others rejected him. Sufficient is the scourge of Hell.

The Meccans and their allies, including their Jewish allies, which in the Koran are referred to as the Confederates, shortly thereafter marched on Medina with an army numbering an estimated ten thousand men. At this crucial juncture, the leader of the Banu Qurayzah announced his intention not to honour his commitment to come to the aid of the Prophet if the Muslims were attacked, and entered into negotiations with the Meccans.

Battle of the Ditch

The battle for Medina is usually referred to as the Battle of the Ditch because of a trench that was dug on the flat approaches to the city³⁸. The idea for a trench to counter the superior Meccan cavalry came from a Persian Christian convert to Islam by the name of Salman al Farsi (or Farisi). This *ditch* completely stymied the Meccan forces which

³⁸ No slaves were employed in the digging of the trench.

Narrated Anas:

Allah's Apostle went towards the Khandaq (i.e. Trench) and saw the Emigrants and the Ansar digging in a very cold morning as they did not have slaves to do that for them.

When he noticed their fatigue and hunger he said, "O Allah! The real life is that of the Here-after, (so please) forgive the Ansar and the Emigrants."

In its reply the Emigrants and the Ansar said, "We are those who have given a pledge of allegiance to Muhammad that we will carry on Jihad as long as we live."

Bukhari 52.87

included a 300-horse cavalry unit. For two weeks, an army of ten thousand waited for their hapless and befuddled commander Abu Sufyan to devise a strategy to overcome what should have been a minor obstacle.

In the meantime, the go-between in the negotiations for a joint operation between the Meccans and the remaining Jews of Medina against the Muslims converted to Islam. The quick-thinking Muhammad made Nu'aym ibn Mas'ud his double-agent, asking him to continue negotiations and sow distrust between the would-be allies, thereby delaying any agreement. It worked. Negotiations were at an impasse when God decided to put an end to the siege by sending a vicious sandstorm that wreaked havoc on the exposed Meccan camp, which was already short on supplies. He may also have concealed elements of His Air Force (angels, "the host you did not see" in Revelation 33:9) in the swirling, grinding sand.

33:9 O believers, remember Allah's grace on you when enemy hosts (of confederates allied against Muslims in the Battle of the Ditch (khandaq) during the siege of Medina) came upon you; then We sent against them a wind and hosts you did not actually see. Allah perceives well what you do.

Disconcerted and confused, the Meccans and their allies abandoned the siege of Medina. As at the Battle of Badr, the casualties inflicted by these *hosts* during this desert sitzkrieg were light. Casualties for both sides were eight Meccans dead and six Muslims. However, this is not how Allah saw it:

33:10 When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and your eyes looked askew and your hearts reached your throats, while you entertained false thoughts about Allah.

33:11 Then and there, the believers were sorely tried and shaken very violently.

The following verses may give you an indication of the difficulties faced by Muhammad, the loyalty and commitment of his troops being paramount.

33:12 And when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a sickness were saying: "Allah and His Messenger have only promised us vanity."

33:13 And when a group of them said: "O people of Yathrib (Medina), there is no place for you to abide in, so turn back"; while another group of them were seeking the Prophet's permission, saying: "Our homes are exposed", whereas they were not exposed. They only wanted to flee.

33:14 And were it entered from its different quarters, and then they were asked to apostatize, they would certainly have done so, without lingering but a short while.

33:15 Although they had made a pledge to Allah, before, that they will not turn their backs. Pledges to Allah are always accountable.

33:16 Say: "Flight will not profit you, if you flee from death or murder; for then you will not partake of enjoying life except briefly."

33:17 Say: "Who will defend you against Allah, if He wishes you ill or if He wishes you well." They will find for themselves, apart from Allah, no protectors or supporters.

33:18 Allah would surely know those of you who hinder the others and those who say to their brothers: "Come over to us"; and they do not partake of fighting, except a little.

33:19 They are ever niggardly towards you, but if fear overtakes them, you will see them look at you, with their eyes rolling like one who is in the throes of death. But when fear subsides, they cut you with sharp tongues. They are niggardly in times of prosperity (as a result of the spoils of war); those are no believers. Thus Allah has frustrated their actions, that being for Allah an easy matter.

33:20 They think the Confederates (*the Meccans and their allies*) have not departed, but were the Confederates to show up, they would wish they were desert dwellers with the Bedouins asking about your news. However, were they in your midst, they would fight but little.

33:21 You have had a good example in Allah's Messenger; surely for him who hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often.

33:22 When the believers saw the Confederates, they said: "This is what Allah and His Messenger have promised us,

and Allah and His Messenger are truthful." And it only increased them in faith and submission.

33:23 Of the believers, there are men who fulfilled what they pledged to Allah; some of them have died, some are still waiting, without changing in the least.

33:24 So that Allah might reward the truthful for their truthfulness and punish the hypocrites, if He wishes, or forgive them. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

Allah vanquished the Meccans, denying them any spoils.

33:25 Allah turned back the unbelievers in a state of rage, having not won any good (spoils), and Allah spared the believers battle. Allah is, indeed, Strong and Mighty.

The Massacre of the Banu Qurayzah

With Medina secure for the time being, Muhammad received an order from the angel Gabriel to attack the Banu Qurayzah whose leaders were said to have plotted with the Meccans during the Battle of the Ditch.

Narrated Aisha:

When Allah's Apostle returned on the day (of the battle) of Al-Khandaq (i.e. Trench), he put down his arms and took a bath. Then Gabriel whose head was covered with dust, came to him saying, "You have put down your arms! By Allah, I have not put down my arms yet."

Allah's Apostle said, "Where (to go now)?"

Gabriel said, "This way," pointing towards the tribe of Bani Quraiza. So Allah's Apostle went out towards them.

Bukhari 52.68

Muhammad marched on their fortress just outside Medina with three thousand Jihadists. When he neared the fortress, he called out to its defenders: "O brothers of monkeys and pigs! Fear me, fear me."³⁹ After

³⁹ The simian reference would make its way into the Koran as a persistent reminder of the perfidy of the Jews and an incitement for future generations of the righteous.

2:65 And you surely know those of you who violated the Sabbath; We said to them: "Be [like] dejected apes."

twenty-five days, the Banu Qurayzah asked for a mediator. The Prophet sent Abu Lubabah who matter-of-factly informed the Jews that God's Messenger had slaughter on his mind.

When they saw him (Lubabah), the men rose to meet him, and the women and children rushed to grab hold of him, weeping before him, so that he felt pity for them.

They said to him, "Abu Lubabah, do you think that we should submit to Muhammad's judgment"?

"Yes", he said, but he pointed with his hand to his throat, that it would be slaughter.

Tabari

The Banu Qurayzah asked Muhammad to be allowed to go into exile. He rejected their proposal and insisted that they submit themselves to his judgement. Abu Lubabah would not be a witness to the result of his negotiations with the Jews. It was probably just as well.

Abu Lubabah felt guilty that he had broken his promise of secrecy with Muhammad. To atone for his 'misdeed' he went straight to the mosque and bound himself with ropes to one of the pillars. This pillar is known as the 'pillar of repentance' or the 'pillars of Abu Lubabah'.

Abul Kasem

Lubabah spent six days chained to his pillar. He was freed by Muhammad after he received the following revelations in quick succession:

8:27 O you who believe, do not betray Allah and the Messenger, nor betray your trust knowingly.

9:104 Do they not know that Allah is He who accepts repentance from His servants, and accepts voluntary alms, and that Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful?

2:66 Thus We made that an example to their contemporaries and to those after them, and an admonition to the righteous.

7:166 Then, when they disdained arrogantly what they were forbidden, We said to them: "Be miserable monkeys."

Ignoring Lubabah's warning, the Banu Qurayzah surrendered en-masse. They agreed to a proposal by Muhammad that a mortally wounded believer by the name of Sad bin Mu'adh decide their fate.

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri:

Some people (the Banu Qurayzah) agreed to accept the verdict of Sad bin Mu'adh so the Prophet sent for him.

He came riding a donkey, and when he approached the Mosque, the Prophet said, "Get up for the best amongst you." or said, "Get up for your chief."

Then the Prophet said, "O Sad! These people have agreed to accept your verdict."

Sad said, "I judge that their warriors should be killed and their children and women should be taken as captives."

The Prophet said, "You have given a judgment similar to Allah's Judgment."

Bukhari 58.148

A trench was dug in Medina's marketplace and the estimated seven-hundred male and teenaged boys of the Banu Qurayzah were beheaded with Muhammad looking on. Two nearly identical versions of what took place by Tabari (839-923):

The messenger of God commanded that furrows should be dug in the ground for the B. Qurayzah. Then he sat down, and Ali and al-Zubayr began cutting off their heads in his presence.

The messenger of God went out into the marketplace of Medina and had trenches dug in it; then he sent for them and had them beheaded in those trenches. They were brought out to him in groups. They numbered 600 or 700—the largest estimate says they were between 800 and 900. The affair continued until the Messenger of God had finished with them.

One woman was also beheaded that day. During the siege of the fortress of the Banu Qurayzah, she had killed a Muslim soldier by dropping a millstone on his head. Her death was narrated by Muhammad's child bride Aisha:

Only one of their women was killed. By God, she was by me, talking with me and laughing unrestrainedly while the Messenger of God was killing their men in the marketplace, when suddenly a mysterious voice called out her name, saying, "Where is so and so?"

She said, "I shall be killed."

"Why?" I asked.

She said, "A misdeed that I committed."

She was taken away and beheaded.'

Aisha

Muhammad had ordered that all Jewish males with pubic hair were to be killed, but he did spare one boy who took refuge with a Muslim woman who pleaded with the Prophet to spare the boy's life. Her pleading for mercy may not have been necessary if the following story, as told by the boy in question, is accurate.

Narrated Atiyyah al-Qurazi:

I was among the captives of Banu Qurayzah. They examined us, and those who had begun to grow hair (pubes) were killed, and those who had not were not killed. I was among those who had not grown hair.

Abu Dawud 38.4390

The dead men's wives and daughters were parcelled out among the holy warriors as their reward, as is done to this day by the likes of the Islamic State and its imitators.

After the battle of the Trench [Rayhanah was] marched into the courtyard with the several hundred other women and their children to be claimed as a reward by the Muslim soldiers, while the Qurayzah man were led away to be executed.

Tamam Khan, A History of the Wives of Muhammad

Muhammad took the beautiful widow Rayhanah⁴⁰ as his share of the

⁴⁰ Rayhanah's life with the Prophet was short. Some say she converted to Islam, others that she died as a slave of Muhammad, and still others that she was allowed to rejoin her Jewish community, which is somewhat unlikely as she is buried, along with other wives of God's Messenger, in Baqi cemetery of Medina. She died only two years after the massacre of the men and boys of her tribe. Her age and how she died remains a

booty. She turned down Muhammad's marriage proposal, thinking it unseemly considering the recent slaughter of the men of her tribe that he had engineered.

Sad bin Mu'adh also died that day. God's Messenger said that Allah's throne shook when he died, so moved was the Almighty by the death of a man who had the courage to cold-bloodily send His enemies to their deaths and their wives and daughters into slavery. It should not come as a surprise that God was shaken when he greeted Sad bin Mu'adh in Paradise; after all, not only did He approve of Sad bin Mu'adh's decision, but also of everything that came after: the cold-blooded murder of the men and boys of the Banu Qurayzah, the enslavement of their wives and daughters and the appropriation of everything they owned by His Messenger.

33:26 And He brought those of the People of the Book who supported them from their fortresses and cast terror into their hearts, some of them you slew and some you took captive.

33:27 And He bequeathed to you their lands, their homes and their possessions, together with land you have never trodden. Allah has power over everything.

News of the massacre spread throughout the Peninsula and, not unlike the massacres committed by those who follow the example of Muhammad today, inspired both fear and admiration. One thing the massacre made perfectly clear is that you had to choose a side; you could not remain neutral in the war between the believers and unbelievers, of which the Arab civil war was the opening gambit. You either chose to become a Muslim and agreed to fight and kill to establish Allah's Kingdom on Earth or you became a target of the believers, to be hunted down and killed.

Many converted to Islam after the massacre, not only because they believed that a man who would do such a thing could not be stopped, but to join in the general pillage of the unbelievers' property. All you had to say was "I declare there is no god except God" and you could, with impunity, kill or enslave those who refused to say those magic life-saving words and help yourself to their property, including their wives and their daughters, for your troubles, all while guaranteeing your place in Paradise.

mystery; all that we know is that the beautiful, tragic Rayhanah died young. I would not exclude suicide, for it must have been difficult to be intimate with the man responsible for the death of your father, your husband, your male relatives and the enslavement of your female kin.

An Avoidable Tragedy

The surviving Jews of Medina did not blame God for what happened to them; they blamed Muhammad. They worshipped the same monotheistic deity as the Muslims and that god would not have done what He did to them.

4:77 Have you not seen those to whom it was said: "Hold back your hands, perform the prayer and give the alms-tax"; but when they were ordered to fight, a group of them appeared to fear men just as they fear Allah, or even more. They said: "Lord, why have you ordered us to fight? If only You would grant us respite for a short period." Say: "The pleasure of this world is small and the Hereafter is far better for the God-fearing; and you will not be wronged a whit."

4:78 Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you are in high towers. And if a good fortune befalls them (the Jews) they say: "This is from Allah." But when misfortune befalls them, they say: "It is from you (Muhammad)." Say: "All is from Allah." What is the matter with those people who barely understand any discourse!

4:79 Whatever good visits you, it is from Allah; and whatever evil befalls you, it is from yourself; and We have sent you (Muhammad) forth to mankind as a Messenger. Allah is the All-Sufficient Witness!

That the Jews of Medina bear a large responsibility for what happened is undeniable. They first welcomed and protected Muhammad because they worshipped the same god. They fell out because they could not accept him as a legitimate conduit with the Almighty, that role being reserved for "the chosen people" exclusively.

Muhammad was a Muslim, but also what we would call an Arab nationalist today. The Jews' scriptural position meant that the Muslim Arabs would have to accept the equivalent of Jewish suzerainty, a Jewish supremacy that the Torah maintains will eventually encompass all nations. The Prophet, having borrowed so much from the Torah, borrowed one last communication from the Jewish flavour of their common God: it was the Muslims who were called upon to become rulers of everyone, i.e., "successors in the lands."

35:39 It is He Who made you successors in the lands. Then he who disbelieves, his unbelief will recoil upon him; and their

unbelief will only increase the unbelievers in contempt in the sight of their Lord. No, their unbelief will only increase the unbelievers in perdition.

Realizing that they had been outmaneuvered, and not being able to modify their scriptural position to give the Muslims equal billing before God, the Jews of Medina should have all left the city or fought the good fight. They did neither, and the Battle of the Ditch sealed their faith.

The Broken Covenant

5:12 Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel, and We raised among them twelve chieftains. And Allah said: "I am with you. Surely, if you perform the prayer, give the alms, believe in my Messengers and support them and lend Allah a fair loan (spend in the way ordered by Allah), I will forgive you your sins and admit you into Gardens, beneath which rivers flow. But if any one of you disbelieves afterwards, he certainly strays from the right path.

God reminded the Jews of Medina, some of whom may have converted to Islam, about this covenant while providing additional specifics meant for them alone.

2:83 When We made a covenant with the Children of Israel (saying): "You shall worship none other than Allah; show kindness to your parents, to the near of kin, to the orphans and to the poor; speak to people; perform the prayers, give the alms-tax." But, with the exception of a few, you did not abide by the covenant and you turned away.

2:84 And when We made a covenant with you (saying): "You shall not shed your own blood, nor drive your people away from their homes", you accepted and you bore witness [thereto].

2:85 Yet there you are killing each other and turning some of your folks from their homes, making common cause against them with sin and aggression. But should they come to you as captives you would ransom them. Surely it was unlawful for you to drive them away. Do you, then, believe in one part (paying the ransom) of the Book and disbelieve in another (killing and driving away their people from their homes)?

The reward of those among you who do that is nothing but disgrace in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be turned over to the most severe punishment. Allah is not unaware of what you do.

2:86 Those are the people who have traded the life of this world for the Hereafter. Their punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped.

Moududi's commentary on this covenant with the Jews:

Before the advent of the Prophet (peace be on him) the Jewish tribes who lived on the outskirts of Madina (sic) had concluded an alliance with the Arab tribes of Aws and Khazraj. When the Arab tribes fought against one another each Jewish tribe fought on the side of its allies, which led to fratricide and so to a flagrant violation of the Book of God. Moreover, when the war ended the captives were ransomed. This ransom was justified on the basis of scriptural arguments; they extolled the Word of God when it permitted the ransom of prisoners of war, but attached no significance at all to the same Word of God when it prohibited mutual feuding.

Fakhry, in a footnote, writes that Allah's Covenant included "believing that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Muhammad would, of course, not have been alive when God's Covenant with the Jews was first entered into thousands of years earlier, just before He separated them into twelve tribes. This could indicate that the following revelations about a covenant may also have been meant for Jewish contemporaries of God's Messenger.

2:40 O Children of Israel, remember the grace which I bestowed on you. Fulfil your covenant (by believing that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) and I shall fulfil my Covenant (by rewarding you). And Me alone you should fear.

2:41 Believe in what I have revealed confirming that which is with you (your Scriptures) and do not be the first to deny it. Do not trade My Revelations for a small price; and Me alone you should fear.

2:42 And do not confuse truth with falsehood and do not conceal the truth while you know it.

2:43 Perform the prayer; give the alms-tax and bow down with those who bow down.

2:44 Do you command others to be righteous and forget yourselves while you recite the Book? Do you not understand?

2:45 Seek assistance through patience and prayer. It is hard, except for the truly devout;

2:46 Who believe that they shall meet their Lord, and unto Him they shall return.

The Jews can look forward to spending an eternity burning in Hell, as is the case for all those with whom God is displeased.

62:5 The case of those who were loaded with the Torah, then failed to carry it, is similar to an ass which carries learned books. Wretched is the case of the people who have denounced Allah's Signs. Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

62:6 Say: "O you who have adopted Judaism; if you claim to be Allah's friends, apart from other people, then do wish for death, if you are truthful."

62:7 Yet, they will never wish it, due to what their hands have advanced. Allah knows well the wrongdoers.

62:8 Say: "The death from which you flee will surely overtake you. Then you will be turned over to Him Who knows the Unseen and the Seen, and He will inform you about what you used to do."

A Change of Direction

41:37 Of His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate yourself to the sun or to the moon, but prostrate yourself to Allah Who created them, if it is He you truly worship.

41:38 Should they wax proud (the Meccan pagans), then those with your Lord (the angels, *Moududi*) do glorify him by night and day, without growing weary.

The first Muslims were required to prostrate themselves in the direction of Jerusalem. It was only after Muhammad's falling out with the Jews of Medina that revelations were received from Allah

informing His Messenger about a change of direction. The following are verses where God gives His reasons for this about-face (no pun intended).

2:142 The ignorant among the people (among the Jews and polytheist Arabs) will say: "What caused them (the Prophet Muhammad and the believers) to turn away from the former Qibla towards which they used to turn (Jerusalem)?" Say: "To Allah belongs the East and the West. He guides whom He wills towards the Right Path."

2:143 And thus We have made you (the Muslim nation) a just nation, so that you may bear witness unto the rest of mankind, and that the Messenger may bear witness unto you. We did not ordain your former Qibla except that We may distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels (return to disbelief). It was indeed a hard test except for those whom Allah guided. Allah would not allow your faith to be in vain. He is Clement and Merciful to mankind.

2:144 Surely, We see your face turned towards heaven (yearning for guidance through revelation). We shall turn you towards a Qibla that will please you. Turn your face then towards the Sacred Mosque (the Sacred Mosque of Mecca, the Ka'ba); and wherever you are turn your faces towards it. Those who were given the Book (the Jews and Christians) certainly know this to be the Truth from their Lord. Allah is not unaware of what they do.

2:145 Were you even to come to the People of the Book with every proof, they will not follow your Qibla, nor will you follow their Qibla. Nor will some of them follow the Qibla of the others. And were you to follow their desires after all the knowledge that came to you, surely you would be one of the evil-doers.

2:146 Those to whom We gave the Book know him (Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah) as they know their own sons; but a group of them will knowingly conceal the truth.

2:147 The truth is from your Lord. So do not be one of the doubters.

2:148 To everyone there is a direction towards which he turns. So hasten to do the good works. Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together (in the Hereafter). Surely Allah has power over all things.

God's instructions were not limited to the direction Muslims must face when performing the prayers.

2:149 From whatever place you come out, turn towards the Sacred Mosque. This is indeed the truth from your Lord. Allah is not unaware of what you do.

2:150 From whatever place you come out, turn your faces towards the Sacred Mosque. And wherever you all are, turn your faces towards it, lest people should have cause to argue with you, except for the evil-doers among them. Do not fear them, but fear Me so that I may complete My Grace upon you, and that you be rightly guided.

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah

The victory at Medina did not really solve anything for the Muslims. In fact, it may have left them more vulnerable than before. Many of the Jews Muhammad sent into exile found a new home in the Jewish oasis of Khaybar approximately 153 km north of Medina. Khaybar had a pact with Mecca whereby if either city was attacked, the other was to march on Medina.

Both cities also instituted the equivalent of an economic blockade of Medina. Not only were the Muslim caravans confined to Medina but so were their raiding parties. The believers could no longer depend on plunder to make ends meet. Something had to give. They had no choice: unless they broke the blockade by attacking either Khaybar or Mecca, many of the warriors who became Muslims for the booty would leave or join the Confederates, making the fall of Medina and the defeat of the believers inevitable.

Muhammad, to the astonishment of his companions, decided to go to Mecca, not to fight, but to perform the lesser pilgrimage, the Umrah. He invited all believers to accompany him on this 800-kilometre round-trip religious trek. The Bedouins among his supporters expected hostilities to break out, and not caring to take the war to the holy city of Mecca, refused to go. The majority of believers at Medina had no such qualms and looked forward to marching on the Meccan pagans. They believed the pilgrimage was just a ruse, and that if the Prophet was denied, he would enter Mecca by force.

The men who would accompany God's Messenger were only allowed a sheathed sword as a weapon, and had to follow the ritual preparation, much of it borrowed from the pagans, such as fasting, shaving hair from the head and body, wearing a simple robe without decorations of any kind, and abstaining from sexual relations.

On February 628, Muhammad and an estimated fourteen-hundred male pilgrims left Medina for Mecca. The Meccans sent a small detachment of cavalry to intercept the pilgrims, and all were taken prisoner by the Muslims. The Prophet ordered they be released without conditions. The Meccans then sent a larger detachment to meet

the believers. It arrived only to find the believers prostrated towards Mecca in prayer. Their leader Ikrimah, son of Abu Jahl, chose not to give the order to attack and simply turned back. Muhammad then sent an emissary to the Meccans explaining that they had only come to perform the pilgrimage. His envoy and retinue were intercepted by Ikrimah, who crippled their camels and left them to make their way back to the Prophet on foot.

Ikrimah and his troops then barred the main route into the sacred perimeter of the holy city. Muhammad avoided a confrontation by taking an alternate, dangerously rocky route among the hills overlooking Mecca. With the holy city spread out before him, his camel refused to go any further. The Prophet said that an angel barred its way. It was now obvious to God's Messenger that God did not want them to go any further.

There was no water where the angel forced them to stop. Muhammad raised his arms towards the heavens imploring God for help. A short time later, he was joined by a pilgrim who said to dig beneath his feet and he would find water. He did.

God's Messenger wanted to send another emissary to the Meccans. His companions would rather they simply marched on the city but Uthman, Muhammad's son-in-law, accepted to go and talk to the Meccans. When he was late in returning, rumours started to circulate that he had been killed or was being tortured. The pilgrims were now determined to enter Mecca by force, with or without their Prophet's approval, prompting God's Messenger to demand their unquestioning allegiance at a meeting under one of the few trees. One after the other, the believers approach Muhammad and swore absolute obedience. Two revelations refer to that all-important gathering:

48:18 Allah was well-pleased with the believers, when they paid you homage under the tree; so He knew what was in their hearts and sent down the Serenity upon them and rewarded them with a victory near at hand,

48:19 And with many spoils for them to seize. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

A short time later, a delegation from Mecca arrived. A ten-year non-aggression treaty was signed, the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. Prior to the signing, Muhammad, the alleged illiterate, rewrote a section of the treaty to which the Meccans objected after his scribe refused to make the modification.

Narrated Al-Bara:

When the Prophet intended to perform Umra in the month of Dhul-Qada, the people of Mecca did not let him enter Mecca till he settled the matter with them by promising to stay in it for three days only.

When the document of treaty was written, the following was mentioned: "These are the terms on which Muhammad, Allah's Apostle agreed (to make peace)."

They said, "We will not agree to this, for if we believed that you are Allah's Apostle we would not prevent you, but you are Muhammad bin Abdullah."

The Prophet said, "I am Allah's Apostle and also Muhammad bin Abdullah."

Then he said to Ali, "Rub off (the words) 'Allah's Apostle' ", but Ali said, "No, by Allah, I will never rub off your name."

So, Allah's Apostle took the document and wrote, "This is what Muhammad bin Abdullah has agreed upon: No arms will be brought into Mecca except in their cases, and nobody from the people of Mecca will be allowed to go with him (i.e. the Prophet) even if he wished to follow him and he (the Prophet) will not prevent any of his companions from staying in Mecca if the latter wants to stay."

Bukhari 49.863

Under Hudaibiyah, Muslims would be allowed to perform the pilgrimage the following year and every year during which the treaty was in force. The Prophet's followers were not happy about having to return to Medina without having performed the pilgrimage, and accused Muhammad of selling them out. God's Messenger declared that they had achieved a great victory, and Allah added that He would give them an even greater victory.

THE VICTORY

48 Al-Fath

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

48:1 We have indeed given you a manifest victory,

48:2 That Allah may forgive you your former and your later sins, and complete His Blessing upon you and lead you onto a straight path;

48:3 And that Allah may give you a mighty victory.

God's justification for not allowing the Muslims to take Mecca by force was the presence of believers among the Meccans. He could, of course, have given them a bloody victory (Revelation 48:22) instead of a paper one (Revelation 48:24); however, the guilt they would have felt if they *unwittingly* killed another Muslim was a price too high to pay. If only "they had stood apart" (Revelation 48:25), He "would have inflicted on those who disbelieved a painful punishment."

48:22 Had the unbelievers fought you, they would certainly have turned their backs in flight; then they would have found no friend or supporter.

48:23 It is Allah's Way which has gone before; and you will never find any alteration of Allah's Way.

48:24 It is He Who held their hands back from you, and your hands from them in the valley of Mecca, after He gave you victory over them. Allah observed what you do.

48:25 It is they who disbelieved and barred you from the Sacred Mosque, and the offering was prevented from reaching its sacrificial site. Had it not been for some believing men and some believing women, whom you did not know, lest you should trample them and earn thereby the guilt unwittingly, that Allah might thereby admit into His Mercy whomever He wishes. Had they stood apart, We would have inflicted on those of them who disbelieved a painful punishment.

48:26 When the unbelievers instilled in their hearts fierceness, the fierceness of paganism, Allah then sent down His Serenity upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and imposed on them the word of piety, they being more deserving thereof and worthier. Allah has knowledge of everything.

Battle of Khaybar

Narrated Anas:

The Prophet set out for Khaibar and reached it at night. He used not to attack if he reached the people at night, till the day broke. So, when the day dawned, the Jews came out with their bags and spades. When they saw the Prophet; they said, "Muhammad and his army!"

The Prophet said, "Allahu Akbar! (Allah is Greater) and Khaibar is ruined, for whenever we approach a nation (i.e. enemy to fight) then it will be a miserable morning for those who have been warned."

Bukhari 52.195

That mighty victory would come only two years into the ten-year non-aggression pact. Muhammad used the breathing space provided by the Treaty of Hudaibiyah to complete the encirclement of Mecca. In the meantime, he delivered the spoils promised by Allah in Revelation 48:19 by attacking Khaybar. Under the treaty, Mecca had to remain neutral in disputes between the Muslims and their enemies.

The eight fortresses of Khaybar fell to the Muslims in just ten days. Apart from a tribute of gold, silver and the confiscation of arms, the Jews were allowed to continue to farm the oasis of Khaybar with half of whatever they produced going to the leader of the believers and his successors. A revelation about the conquest of Khaybar:

48:20 Allah has promised you many spoils, for you to take, and He has hastened this one (the spoils of Khaybar) and held the hands of people back of you (*the clause in the Treaty of Hudaibiyah that prevented the Meccans from intervening*), that it may be a sign to the believers and that He might guide you to the straight path.

The Bedouins who refused to accompany Muhammad on his attempted pilgrimage to Mecca were denied Khaybar. The Prophet, always thinking ahead, would give them a chance to redeem

themselves, offered in Revelation 48:16, in what he expects will be a much bigger challenge: the taking of Mecca.

48:11 The Bedouins who stayed behind will say to you: "Our possessions and our families preoccupied us; so ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say: "Who can avail you anything against Allah, if He wishes to harm you or He wishes to profit you? No, Allah is fully aware of what you do.

48:12 "Rather, you thought that the Messenger and the believers will never return to their families; and that was embellished in your hearts and you entertained evil thoughts and were a useless people."

48:13 He who does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, We have, indeed, prepared for the unbelievers a blazing fire.

48:14 To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He forgives whomever He wishes and punishes whomever He wishes. Allah is All-Forgiving and Merciful.

48:15 Those who stayed behind will say, when you set out after certain spoils to seize them: "Let us follow you"; intending to change Allah's Words. Say: "You shall not follow us; thus has Allah said already." They will then say: "No, you are jealous of us." Rather, they understand but a little.

48:16 Say to those who stayed behind: "You shall be called up against a people of great might; you shall fight them or they shall submit. If, then, you obey, He will grant you a fair wage; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will inflict a painful punishment upon you."

Some who did not make the journey were not to blame.

48:17 The blind are not to blame, nor the cripple is to blame, nor the sick are to blame. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him into Gardens beneath which rivers flow; but he who turns away, He will inflict upon him a painful punishment.

There is more to being a believer than simply saying "we submit," as the Bedouins have yet to discover.

49:14 The Bedouins say: "We believe." Say: "You do not believe, but say: 'We submit'; for belief has not yet entered your hearts. If you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not stint you any of your works. Allah is surely All-Forgiving and Merciful."

49:15 Indeed, the believers are those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, then were not in doubt, but struggle with their possessions and themselves in the Cause of Allah. Those are the truthful ones.

49:16 Say: "Will you inform Allah about your religion, while Allah knows what is in the heavens and in the earth? Allah has knowledge of everything."

49:17 They regard it a favour to you that they have submitted. Say: "Do not regard your submission a favour to me; rather Allah has favoured you when He guided you to belief, if you are really truthful.

49:18 "Allah knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth, and Allah sees well the things you do."

Khaibar was the last refuge of the Jews of the Hijaz. The Jews who survived the slaughter were forced out of the area by Caliph Umar, the second successor to the Prophet as leader of the believers.

Narrated Ibn Umar:

Umar bin Al-Khattab expelled all the Jews and Christians from the land of Hijaz. Allah's Apostle after conquering Khaibar, thought of expelling the Jews from the land which, after he conquered it belonged to Allah, Allah's Apostle and the Muslims. But the Jews requested Allah's Apostle to leave them there on the condition that they would do the labor and get half of the fruits (the land would yield).

Allah's Apostle said, "We shall keep you on these terms as long as we wish."

Thus they stayed till the time of Umar's Caliphate when he expelled them to Taima and Ariha.

Bukhari 53.380

Mecca Surrenders

In January 630, on the pretence that the Meccans had been supplying arms to the Banu Bakr, a tribe allied with the Meccans that had been fighting a tribe allied with the Muslims, the Banu Khuzah (the Meccans deny this and offer to compensate the Muslims for any damage the Banu Bakr may have caused, to no avail). Muhammad, at the head of an army numbering at least ten thousand, marched on Mecca which was surrounded by tribes who had converted to Islam or were allies of the Muslims.

Except for a small skirmish, the Meccans, on the advice of their commander Abu Sufyan who told them the situation was hopeless⁴¹, surrendered en masse and agreed to become Muslim, but not before obtaining a concession from Muhammad that they may continue worshipping the goddesses al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat, the so-called *Satanic Verses*.

These are the exalted cranes (al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat)
Whose intercession [with Allah] is to be hoped for.

The next day, after he has complete control of their city, Muhammad informed the Meccans that it was all the devil's doing; that Satan had intruded on his conversations with God the previous night, and that in the morning Allah had set him straight and the verses pertaining to al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat were stricken from the Koran.

22:52 We have not sent a Messenger or Prophet before you
but when he recited the Devil would intrude into his
recitation. Yet Allah annuls what the Devil had cast. Then

⁴¹ When he arrived at nightfall, Muhammad parked his army just outside the city. Countless campfires were lit to confuse the enemy as to the size of his forces. He then invited the hapless Abu Sufyan for a visit. During his time among the believers, The Prophet made sure he was constantly surrounded by thousands of heavily armed holy warriors, some on parade, other executing mock attacks in the shimmering firelight making them even more menacing, spontaneously stopping whatever they were doing to shout that blood-curdling cry, Allahu Akbar, announcing an imminent slaughter in Allah's Cause, as it does today.

Allah establishes His Revelations. Allah is All-Knowing and Wise.

On the night of the city's surrender, Muhammad discretely ordered the murder of six defenceless men (one a fellow by the name of Khatal) and four defenceless women, while pardoning the well-armed, for which he earned the unlikely moniker *Prophet of Mercy*.

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Allah's Apostle entered Mecca in the year of its Conquest wearing an Arabian helmet on his head and when the Prophet took it off, a person came and said, "Ibn Khatal is holding the covering of the Ka'ba (taking refuge in the Ka'ba)."

The Prophet said, "Kill him."

Bukhari 29.72

Khatal was one of the Muhammad's Zakat (charity) collectors who later abandoned Islam and returned to Mecca. Khatal sought the protection of the Ka'ba to no avail. Two of the four women put to death were singers in Khatal's household who, years earlier as girls, had sung satirical songs about God's Messenger. This may, in part, explain Muhammad's pathological aversion to women singers.

Other important business conducted by Muhammad that night included clearing the Ka'ba of idols. Two differing hadiths addressed how that was done:

Narrated Abdullah:

When the Prophet entered Mecca on the day of the Conquest, there were 360 idols around the Ka'ba. The Prophet started striking them with a stick he had in his hand and was saying, "Truth has come and Falsehood will neither start nor will it reappear."

Bukhari 59.583

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

When Allah's Apostle arrived in Mecca, he refused to enter the Ka'ba while there were idols in it. So he ordered that they be taken out.

The pictures of the (Prophets) Abraham and Ishmael, holding arrows of divination in their hands, were carried out.

The Prophet said, "May Allah ruin them (i.e. the infidels) for they knew very well that they (i.e. Abraham and Ishmael) never drew lots by these (divination arrows).

Then the Prophet entered the Ka'ba and said. "Allahu Akbar" in all its directions and came out and not offered any prayer therein.

Bukhari 59.584

After the surrender, God did not object to the believers making friends with the Meccan unbelievers, most of whom were kin who would shortly be compelled to convert to Islam.

60:7 It may be that Allah will establish friendship between you and those of them who were your enemies. Allah is All-Powerful, and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

60:8 Allah does not forbid you, regarding those who did not fight you and did not drive you out of your homes, to be generous to them and deal with them justly. Allah surely loves the just.

60:9 Allah only forbids you, regarding those who fought you in religion and drove you out of your homes and assisted in driving you out, to take them for friends. Those who take them for friends are, indeed, the wrongdoers.

A verse from the appropriately titled surah, *The Victory*, celebrates the fall of Mecca.

48:27 Allah has fulfilled His Messenger's vision in truth: "You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wishes, in security, your heads shaved and your hair cut short, without fear." For He knew what you did not know and gave you prior to that, victory near at hand (Khaybar).

Not long after the Meccan surrendered, Muhammad called upon all inhabitants of the Peninsula to become Muslims within four months otherwise face death or enslavement at the hands of the believers. It did not matter that they had never wished or done any harm to the Muslims. With the Meccans on board, the Prophet liquidated the remaining opposition to Islamic rule on the Peninsula, beginning with a large force that was descending on the newly surrendered city.

Spend Freely and Spend Wisely

The conquest of Mecca is only the beginning, as is evident in God's demand that the believers "spend freely" of what He "has bequeathed."

57:7 Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend freely from what He has bequeathed to you. For those of you who believe and spend freely will have a great wage.

57:8 What is the matter with you? You do not believe in Allah, although the Messenger calls upon you to believe in your Lord, and He has already taken your covenant, if you are true believers?

57:9 It is He Who sends down upon His servant manifest Signs, so as to bring you out from the dark shadows into the light. Allah is indeed All-Clement and Merciful towards you.

Not all who spend freely, however, are equal in rank.

57:10 And why is it that you do not spend freely in the Cause of Allah, when to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth? Not all those of you who spent freely before the Conquest (of Mecca) and have fought are equal. However they are higher in rank than those who spend freely and fought afterwards; and unto each Allah has promised the fairest reward. Allah is Fully Aware of what you do.

How about a loan?

57:11 Who is he that will lend Allah a fair loan, that He might double it for him; and he will have a generous wage.

Battle of Hunayn

Muhammad had entered Mecca a conqueror only two weeks earlier when he received reports of an army of unbelievers marching on the city. He quickly assembled a force of twelve thousand warriors, which included a large detachment of an estimated two thousand Meccans. For the first time, the Muslim army largely outnumbered the unbelievers, a group that consisted of warriors from four tribes: the Thaqif, Hawazin, Sa'd and Jasam. The believers still almost lost the Battle of Hunayn (also spelled Hunain), when upon entering a narrow passage into the valley of Hunayn, situated between Mecca and Ta'if, they were met by a shower of arrows and fled in disarray.

Muhammad stood his ground⁴² and with the help of a believer with a booming voice who shouted his words, reminded the believers of their duty to him and to God. The fleeing warriors returned to the battle, and their superior numbers and newfound determination won the day. God reminded the victors, like at the Battle of Badr, that the victory was His, for it was He who got His Messenger and the believers to return to the fight. And like at the battle of Badr, He sent down invisible warriors, assumed to be angels, to hold back the unbelievers while the Muslims steeled themselves for a successful counter-attack.

9:25 Allah gave you victory in numerous places and on the day of Hunayn (a valley between Mecca and Ta'if) when you were pleased with your large number; but it availed you

⁴² **Narrated Abu Ishaq:**

Somebody asked Al-Bar-a bin 'Azib, "Did you flee deserting Allah's Apostle during the battle of Hunain?"

Al-Bara replied, "But Allah's Apostle did not flee. The people of the Tribe of Hawazin were good archers. When we met them, we attacked them, and they fled. When the Muslims started collecting the war booty, the pagans faced us with arrows, but Allah's Apostle did not flee. No doubt, I saw him on his white mule and Abu Sufyan was holding its reins and the Prophet was saying, 'I am the Prophet in truth: I am the son of 'Abdul Muttalib.'"

Bukhari 52.116

nothing and the land became too straight for you, despite its breath, whereupon you turned back and fled.

9:26 Then Allah sent down His Tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and He sent down soldiers you did not see, and punished the unbelievers. That is the reward of the unbelievers.

The Muslims followed the retreating unbelievers to their Hawazin fortress city of Ta'if about 75 miles from Mecca and laid siege to the town. After about a month, the defenders sent emissaries to the Prophet to ask for peace and beg for mercy, which was granted.

9:27 Then, Allah will pardon thereafter whom He pleases. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

However, there was no question of returning the booty, which some have estimated at six thousand captives, including women and children, forty thousand sheep and goats, four thousand ounces of silver and twenty-four thousand camels. The allocation of the booty led to the usual disagreements; in this instance, it was about the Meccans getting a greater share than those who had been fighting with Muhammad since the beginning⁴³.

The Prophet was using the booty to strengthen the allegiance of the Meccans. As to the complainers, he rebuffed their accusations, in part, by reminding them that: "Were you not poor and God through me made you rich?" To which they replied: "Verily, God and His Prophet have been kind to us." They would get even richer as the campaign to rid the Peninsula, and eventually the known world, of unbelievers took on a new urgency.

⁴³ **Narrated Abu Qatada:**

Allah's Apostle said on the Day of (the battle of) Hunain, "Whoever has killed an infidel and has a proof or a witness for it, then the salb (arms and belongings of that deceased) will be for him."

I stood up to seek a witness to testify that I had killed an infidel but I could not find any witness and then sat down. Then I thought that I should mention the case to Allah's Apostle (and when I did so) a man from those who were sitting with him said, "The arms of the killed person he has mentioned, are with me, so please satisfy him on my behalf."

Abu Bakr said, "No, he will not give the arms to a bird of Quraish and deprive one of Allah's lions of it who fights for the cause of Allah and His Apostle."

Allah's Apostle stood up and gave it to me, and I bought a garden with its price, and that was my first property which I owned through the war booty...

EXPANSION

Announcing a Universal War

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "I have been ordered to fight with the people till they say, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' and whoever says, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' his life and property will be saved by me except for Islamic law, and his accounts will be with Allah, (either to punish him or to forgive him.)"

Bukhari 52.196

41:53 We shall show them Our Signs in the distant regions and in their own souls, until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth. Does it not suffice your Lord that He is a Witness of Everything?

Istanbul's Topkapi Palace, now a museum, was home to all the Ottoman sultans until the reign of Abdulmecid I (1839-1860), a period of nearly four centuries. In the Holy Treasury within the third courtyard of the old palace, there is a letter. The more than one thousand-year-old letter, now a shrunken piece of parchment, is carefully preserved behind glass. It is one of the letters that Muhammad sent to the various rulers of the kingdoms that bordered Arabia at the time of the Muslim conquest of the Peninsula, inviting them, and their subjects, to become Muslims.



Muhammad's ultimatum to his neighbours—to convert or have Islam imposed by force—followed a less formal warning to the remaining tribes of Arabia shortly after the surrender of Mecca. His fellow Arabs

had four months to convert to Islam, after which they stood outside the law—Koranic law—and could be robbed, killed or enslaved by any Muslim.

The letter under glass at the old Topkapi Palace in Istanbul is addressed to the governor of Egypt, a fellow by the name of Muqawqis. The last sentence of the letter God's Messenger sent to Muqawqis has a particularly ominous tone (*italics mine*).

From Muhammad the servant and Prophet of Allah, to Muqawqis, the leader of the Coptic tribe. There is safety and security for those believers who follow the correct path. Therefore I invite you to accept Islam. If you accept it, you shall find security, save your throne, and gain twice as much reward for having introduced Islam to your followers. If you refuse this invitation, let the sin of calamity which awaits your followers be upon you. You too are People of the Book; therefore let us come to a word common between us that we worship none but Allah and shall equalise anything with him. Let us not abandon Allah and take others for lords other than him. *If you do not consent to this invitation, bear witness that we are Muslims.*

If you do not consent, *we are Muslims*; in other words, we do not make idle threats. This is a warning Allah echoes in a revelation.

3:64 Say: "O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between you and us, that we worship none but Allah, do not associate anything with Him and do not set each other as lords besides Allah." If they turn their backs, say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims."

In the letter, the phrase "gain twice as much reward for having introduced Islam to your followers" is a reminder that jihad is very much about plunder, for these additional riches can only come from those who refuse Islam, refuse to submit, and therefore can legally be dispossessed of all they own, then killed or enslaved along with their wives and children.

The intimidating letters did not have the desired effect, so the Prophet and his successors made good on the threat they contained. Within twenty short years after Muhammad's death, Muslim armies, during the period known as the Rashidun (the reign of the first four successors to the Prophet known as the Rightly Guided Caliphs),

imposed Muslim rule on Persia (including modern day Iraq), Syria, Armenia, Egypt and most of North Africa.

Muqawqis “ordered that the letter should be placed in an ivory casket, to be kept safely in the government treasury,” an important first precaution in ensuring its preservation. It is mostly Islamic scholars and historians to whom we are indebted for reporting on what Muqawqis said and did in response to Muhammad’s invitation, which includes the following letter:

From Muqawqis I read your letter and understood what you have written. I know that the coming of a Prophet is still due. But I thought, he would be born in Syria – I have treated your messenger with respect and honor. I am sending two maids (Maria al-Qibtiyya and her sister Sirin) for you as presents. These maids belong to a very respectable family amongst us. In addition I send for you clothes and a Duldul (steed) for riding. May God bestow security on you⁴⁴.

Muqawqis’ response would suggest that he both respected and feared Muhammad—the reason for the tribute of fine Egyptian fabrics, a stallion⁴⁵ and the two slave-girls/sisters⁴⁶—and that he knew what would please him. It was this same Muqawqis, also known as Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who negotiated a separate peace with the Muslims on behalf of the Coptic Christians, which included agreeing to pay the *jizya*⁴⁷, when the believers invaded Egypt about ten years after the ultimatum was received. This early capitulation allowed a relatively small Arab invasion force, later reinforced by desert Bedouins when it became evident that Egypt was ripe for the plunder and followed by veterans of the northern campaigns, e.g., Syria, to

⁴⁴ According to scholar Ibn Sa’d [784-845], Muhammad, upon receiving the letter and tribute, said to a companion: “Miserable man! He would not risk his sovereignty but the sovereignty he loves so much will not remain!”

⁴⁵ Scholars such as Ibn Sayyid [1944-2004] argue that it was a white mule and a donkey, and that the tribute included gold, a crystal glass and perfumes.

⁴⁶ Some have disputed Islam’s account of what Muqawqis said and did after receiving the Prophet’s ultimatum. The two main sticking points appear to be 1) “Why would a Christian bishop send two Christian ladies, belonging to noble Coptic families, as slaves to a non-Christian ruler?” and 2) “Christians believe in the Second Coming, not in the arrival of a new prophet, i.e., the Prophet Muhammad.” One explanation is that Muqawqis was a secret convert to Islam and that would explain what he said and did, including facilitating the Muslim conquest of Egypt.

⁴⁷ People of the Book, Christians and Jews, are not to be killed if they refuse to become Muslims, as long as they are submissive and agree to pay a poll-tax (a tax levied on people rather than on property) called *jizya* so that their lives might be spared.

quickly take complete control of what was then a key province of the Byzantine Empire. Muqawqis, when the Byzantines repudiated his treaty with the Muslims, is said to have asked their commander, Amr ibn al-As, to “not make peace with them, but treat them as captives and slaves,” meaning that the option of the jizya would not be available to the vanquished. Muhammad followed up his declaration of a universal war with a military expedition against Byzantium.

Tabuk

Muhammad gave credence to his plans to take his battle to the unbelievers far and wide with an expedition to Tabuk in northwestern Saudi Arabia, then part of the Byzantine Empire. He assembled an army of more than thirty thousand and marched north 889 kms (552 miles) intending to engage the Byzantine forces at Tabuk. The Byzantine army did not show up. The lesson was not lost on the locals, not only Arabs but also Christians who flocked to the Prophet's banner. When the Muslims returned, there would be no stopping them. The expedition to Tabuk was one battle too far for many of the believers. They asked to stay behind and, to God's initial dismay, His Messenger agreed.

9:38 O Believers, what is the matter with you? If you are told: "March forth in the Way of Allah", you simply cling heavily to the ground. Are you satisfied with the present life rather than the Hereafter? Yet the pleasures of the present life are very small compared with those of the Hereafter.

9:39 If you do not march forth, He will inflict a very painful punishment on you and replace you by another people, and you will not harm him (the Prophet) in the least; for Allah has power over everything.

9:40 If you do not support him, Allah did support him, when the unbelievers drove him out – he being the second of two (the Prophet and Abu Bakr), while they were both in the cave⁴⁸. He said to his companion: "Do not grieve; Allah is with us." Whereupon, Allah sent down His Tranquility upon him and assisted him with soldiers you did not see, and made the word of the unbelievers the lowest. The Word of Allah is indeed the highest and Allah is Mighty and Wise.

⁴⁸ This is another occasion when Allah sent invisible soldiers to guard the entrance to a cave in Thaur mountain where Muhammad and Abu Bakr were hiding on their way to Medina from Mecca after the Prophet had escaped another assignation attempt.

9:41 Charge forth, on foot or mounted, and struggle with your possessions and yourselves in the Way of Allah. That is far better for you, if only you knew.

9:42 Had it been a gain near at hand and a short journey, they would surely have followed you. But the distance seemed too long to them. Still they will swear by Allah: "Had we been able, we would have marched forth with you." They damn themselves, and Allah knows that they are liars.

God had choice words for His Messenger and questioned the allegiance of many of those who sought to avoid the long journey north.

9:43 May Allah pardon you! Why did you allow them (to stay behind) before it became clear to you who were the truthful ones, and you knew who were the liars?

9:44 Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day do not ask you for [exemption from] fighting in the Way of Allah with their wealth and lives. Allah knows well the righteous.

9:45 Only those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day will ask you [for exemption] and their hearts are in doubt. Thus they vacillate in their state of doubt.

God then changed His tune, as He often does in these situations, and explained that it was all His doing if some of them were reluctant to join His Messenger on an expedition to the southern frontier of the Byzantine Empire.

9:46 Had they wanted to go forth, they would have made preparations for that; but Allah was averse to their going forth, and so He held them back, and it was said to them: "Sit back with those who sit back."

9:47 Had they gone out with you, they would have only increased your confusion, and would have kept moving among you sowing sedition. And some of you would have listened to them. Allah knows well the wrongdoers.

9:48 They have sought to sow sedition before and turned things around for you, until the truth came out and Allah's Command was manifested, although they were averse [to it].

9:49 Some of them say: "Allow me and do not tempt me." Indeed they have already fallen into temptation and Hell shall encompass the unbelievers.

9:50 If a good fortune befalls you, they are displeased, and if a disaster befalls you they say: "We took our precautions before." Then, they turn away rejoicing.

9:51 Say: "Nothing will befall us except what Allah has decreed for us. He is our Lord, and in Allah let the believers put their trust."

God will tell His Messenger to remind those who wish to stay behind that he, the Prophet Muhammad, is also His instrument for meting out punishment.

9:52 Say: "Do you expect for us anything other than one of the two fairest outcome (martyrdom or victory); while we await for you that Allah will smite you with a punishment, either from Himself, or at our hands?" So wait and watch, we are waiting and watching with you.

Some wanted to offer money to get an exemption from this jihad against the Byzantines.

9:53 Say: "Spend willingly or unwillingly; it shall not be accepted from you. You are truly a sinful people."

9:54 And nothing prevents what they spend from being accepted but that they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger and that they do not perform the prayer except lazily, and do not spend [anything] except grudgingly.

Muhammad may have granted exemptions to fathers who did not want to be away from their children for months on end. This did not sit well with Allah, Who explained that even children were part of His Plan, therefore not a valid reason to be exempt from the fighting, no matter how far away.

9:55 So do not let their wealth and their children win your approval, Allah only wishes to torture them therewith in the present life, so that their souls might depart while they are still unbelievers.

Why some did not care to accompany Muhammad on the long journey.

9:56 They swear by Allah that they [are believers] like you, but they are not; they are a people who [fear] you.

9:57 If they could find a shelter or dens or any place to crawl into, they would make for it in great haste.

It was during the return trip from Tabuk that Muhammad got wind of an alleged assassination plot, which led to some foreboding revelations about unbelievers and hypocrites.

9:73 O Prophet, fight the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be stern with them. Their abode is Hell, and what a terrible fate!

9:74 They swear by Allah that they said nothing [evil], but they said the word of disbelief and disbelieved after professing Islam, and they aimed at (according to some commentators they aimed at killing the Prophet while he was returning from Tabuk) what they could not attain. They only resented that Allah and His Messenger have enriched them from His Bounty. If they repent, it will be better for them; but if they turn away, Allah will inflict a very painful punishment on them in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have on earth no friend or supporter.

9:75 And some of them make a compact with Allah: "If He give us of His Bounty, we shall give in charity and be among the righteous."

9:76 But when He gave them of His Bounty, they grew mean and turned away disobediently.

9:77 So He caused hypocrisy to cling to their hearts until the day they meet Him, on account of revoking what they promised Allah and on account of lying.

9:78 Do they not know that Allah knows their hidden thoughts and private talk, and that Allah knows fully the things unseen?

9:79 Those disparage the believers who give voluntary alms and those find nothing to offer but their outmost endeavour, and they scoff at them. May Allah mock them. There is a painful punishment [in store] for them.

9:80 Ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them; because they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger. Allah does not guide the sinful people.

Some may have stayed behind because they were worried about the heat.

9:81 Those who stayed behind rejoiced at tarrying behind the Messenger of Allah and hated to struggle with their wealth and their lives in Allah's Path, saying: "Do not march forth in the heat." Say: "The Fire of Hell is hotter, if only they could understand."

9:82 Let them laugh a little and cry a lot, as a reward for what they used to do.

While God waited to burn those who stayed behind in Hell, His Messenger would not allow them to join further expeditions.

9:83 Then, if Allah brings you back to a party of them and they ask your permission to go forth with you, say: "You will never go forth with me, and you will never fight with me against any enemy. You were content to sit back the first time; so sit back with those who stay behind."

As to attending their funerals, don't bother:

9:84 And do not ever pray over any one of them who dies, or be present at their grave; indeed they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger, and died still ungodly

Again with the children and the wealthy!

9:85 And do not let their wealth or children win your admiration. Allah only wishes to punish them therewith in the present life, so that their souls may depart while they are still unbelievers.

Perhaps the ultimate insult is found in Revelation 9:87:

9:86 And if a Surah is revealed stating: "Believe in Allah and fight along with His Messenger", the affluent among them will ask your permission and say: "Let us be with those who stay behind."

9:87 They are content to be among the women who stay behind, and a seal is set upon their hearts, and thus they do not understand.

What could those who went to Tabuk expect?

9:88 But the Messenger and those who believe with him struggle with their wealth and their lives. To those are the good things reserved, and those are the prosperous.

9:89 Allah has prepared for them Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. That is the great triumph!

Even the desert Arabs, i.e., Bedouins, didn't escape Allah's criticism.

9:90 Some of the desert Arabs who gave excuses came to seek permission, whereas those who lied to Allah and His Messenger stayed behind. Those of them who disbelieved shall be afflicted with a very painful punishment.

God did allow for some exceptions for the weak and the sick as well as for those who could not afford to make the journey to Tabuk or for whom transportation was not available.

9:91 The weak, the sick, and those who have nothing to spend are not at fault, if they are true to Allah and His Messenger. There can be no blame on the beneficent; and Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

9:92 Nor on those who, when they came to you asking you for mounts, you said: "I do not find that whereon I can mount you." Thereupon they went back, their eyes overflowing with tears, sorrowing for not finding the means to spend (to provide the expenses of war).

As often happens during these long rants, God repeats himself, perhaps for effect.

9:93 The blame is on those who ask your permission, although they are rich. They are content to join those women who stay behind. Allah has placed a seal upon their hearts and so they do not know.

More revelations, supposedly received on the return journey, for the people Muhammad allowed to stay behind, prompting another round of questioning when he reached Medina.

9:94 They present to you [false] excuses when you return to them. Say: "Do not offer excuses; we will not believe you. Allah has told us [all] about you. Allah shall see your work, and His Messenger too. Then you will be turned over to Him Who knows the unseen and the seen, and He will apprise you of what you used to do."

9:95 They will swear by Allah to you, when you return to them, that you may leave them alone. So leave them alone; they are an abomination and their abode is Hell, as a reward for what they used to do.

9:96 They swear to you that you may be well-pleased with them; but should you be well-pleased with them, Allah will not be well-pleased with the sinful people.

Generalizations about Bedouins:

9:97 The desert Arabs are more steeped in unbelief and hypocrisy and are more likely not to know the bounds of what Allah has revealed to His Messenger. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

9:98 And some of the desert Arabs regard what they spend as a fine, and await the turns of fortune to go against you. May the evil turn against them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

9:99 And some of the desert Arabs believe in Allah and the Last Day and regard what they spend [in the way of Allah] as a means to get closer to Allah and to earn the prayers of the Messenger. Indeed, that will bring them closer [to Allah]. He will admit them into His Mercy. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

Some of the desert Arabs and people of Medina can expect double the punishment.

9:101 And some of the desert Arabs around you are hypocrites, and some of the people of Medina persist in hypocrisy. You do not know them, but We know them. We shall punish them twice, then they will be afflicted with a terrible punishment (before they are thrown into the Fire).

Some confessed that they had lied to avoid going to Tabuk. God hints that He will pardon them if they part with some of their wealth.

9:102 Others have confessed their sins; they mixed a good deed with a bad one (the good deed is confessing sins and the bad one is that they stayed behind when the Muslims marched against the enemy). Perhaps Allah will pardon them. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

9:103 Take of their wealth voluntary alms to purify and cleanse them therewith; and pray for them, for your prayers are a source of tranquility for them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

9:104 Do they not know that Allah is He who accepts the repentance from His servants, and accepts voluntary alms, and that Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful?

There may also have been some labour involved.

9:105 And say: "Work, for Allah shall see your work, and His Messenger and the believers too. And you shall be brought back (on the Day of Resurrection) to Him Who knows the unseen and the seen, and He will apprise you of what you used to do."

As to any others left out of the revelations, that will be decided when the Day comes.

9:106 And others are deferred to Allah's Decree; He will either punish them or pardon them. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

The Destruction of the Christian Mosque of Medina

It was also on the way back from Tabuk that God revealed what He thought of the mosque built by the Christian monk Abu 'Amir al Rahib and those who prayed there. The Masjid al-Dirar had been built, with Muhammad's approval, next to the Masjid al-Quba whose first stones were positioned by the Prophet himself. After receiving the revelation that He should not pray there, God's Messenger realized that it had been a mistake to allow its construction and he had the Masjid al-Dirar destroyed. The fact that the Christian mosque was built with Muhammad's approval would indicate that Abu Amir's intentions were honourable, but Revelation 9:107 says otherwise.

9:107 And those who build a mosque (the reference is to the mosque built in the neighbourhood of the mosque of Quba', the first mosque built by Muslims) or hurt [the Muslims], to

spread unbelief, to disunite [the believers] and to await him (he is said to be Abu 'Amir) who had fought Allah and His Messenger – they will certainly swear that they meant nothing but good. Allah bears witness that they are liars.

9:108 Do not stand up there [for prayer]; for a mosque founded on piety from the first day is worthier of you standing in it. Therein are men who love to be purified; and Allah loves those who purify themselves.

What could pass for a parable:

9:109 Is one who founds his edifice upon the fear and Good Pleasure of Allah better, or one who founds his edifice upon the brink of a crumbling precipice that will tumble down with him into the Fire of Hell? Allah does not guide the unjust people.

9:110 The edifice which they built will continue to be a source of doubt in their hearts, unless their hearts are cut up into pieces. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

The Three Sincere Believers Who Lied

No, we are not finished with the controversies surrounding the excursion to Tabuk. God forgave His Messenger for granting all those exemptions, including a group that “almost deviated” but in the end, joined Muhammad and went to Tabuk.

9:117 Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed him in the hour of distress, after the hearts of a group of them had almost deviated. Then He forgave them; for He is, indeed, Most Kind and Most Merciful towards them.

Back in Medina, Muhammad again interviewed those he allowed to stay behind. Those who stuck to their original stories were dismissed with a simple: “May Allah forgive you.” When three sincere believers who had accompanied the Prophet on more than one military campaign (two had fought at Badr) admitted to lying, something they now deeply regretted, God’s Messenger asked Allah for advice.

As an exemplary punishment from the Prophet, no believers were to talk to the three men until God had rendered His decision. After forty days, with still no revelation on their score, Muhammad ordered their wives to have nothing to do with them. Ten days later, Allah

communicated His Decision, which exonerated the three men but not before excoriating them, just a little.

9:118 And [He also forgave] the three who were left behind till the earth, for all its vastness, became too small for them (meaning they could not find refuge), and their souls were distressed, and they realized there was no refuge from Allah except with Him. Allah then forgave them so that they might repent. Allah is the All-Forgiving, the Merciful.

9:119 O you who believe, fear Allah and side with the truthful.

Muhammad returned from Tabuk a more self-confident, wary Messenger. His actions on his return secured the home front as he made plans to take the quest for converts and booty even further afield.

The Religion of Peace in Persia

Our aim is not to fight you. Accept Islam the peaceful way, and you will be safe. If not then clear our way to the people so that we may explain this beautiful way of life to them... if you do not accept any of these conditions then the only alternative is the use of the sword.

Before deciding on the third alternative you should keep in mind that I am bringing against you a people who love death more than you love life.

From a letter by Khalid Ibn Al-Walid the leader of the Muslim armies invading Persia to the Persian General Hormuz before the battle of Kadima.

It was a typically bloody conquest with the believers offering no quarter, beheading thousands of surrendered and captured Persian soldiers and fulfilling Khalid's pledge to God that if He gave them victory, "no enemy warrior will be left alive, until their river runs red with blood."

The Muslims may have won the war, but getting the Persian people to accept "the beautiful way of life" may have proven problematic for Umar, the Caliph at the time of the conquest—to discover another lost verse⁴⁹ where God includes the Zoroastrians as a people of the Book who could refuse "the beautiful way of life" and not be put to death if they agreed to pay the jizya. The Magians in the following is the only reference to Zoroastrians in the Koran:

22:17 Indeed, the believers, the Jews, the Sabians, the Christians, the Magians and the idolaters – Allah shall decide between them on the Day of Resurrection.

⁴⁹ It was the same Umar who remembered a verse, which he said must have been lost, where God revealed that the punishment for adultery was death by stoning. The Koran only stipulates that the guilty parties be lashed 100 times. This claim by Umar, and the Prophet's example, is why women found guilty of intimacy with someone other than their lawfully-wedded husband are stoned to death to this day (more on this topic in *Women and the Koran*, Boreal Books, 2021).

Robert Wright in *The Evolution of God* speculates that Verse 22:17 may have been added after the Muslim conquest of Persia to make Islam more palatable to Zoroastrians by including them as a people whom Allah, who “does whatever He pleases,” may admit into Paradise.

By and large the Koran offers no evidence that Muhammad had contact with the Zoroastrians—except for this one verse where they appear out of nowhere and are suddenly eligible for Paradise. It’s enough to make you wonder whether this verse wasn’t added, or at least amended after Muhammad’s death, when the conquest of Persian lands brought many Zoroastrians under Islamic governance.

The Zoroastrians were a people of a book, not *the* Book, but a book, the *Avesta*; what about the Sabians?

There is another reason to suspect that this verse is a product of the post-Muhammad era. It grants salvation not only to Zoroastrians but to “Sabians.” To judge by the beliefs of their modern day heirs (sometimes called Mandeans), the Sabians, like the Zoroastrians, would have been hard to fit into the Abrahamic fold; they revered John the Baptist but considered Jesus, Abraham and Moses false prophets.

And again (judging by their modern heirs) they would have had another thing in common with Zoroastrians; their residential epicenter was to the east of Muhammad’s turf, in modern-day Iraq and Iran, land conquered not by Muhammad but by his successors.

Robert Wright, The Evolution of God, p. 394

Who First Destroyed the Birthplace of Zoroaster?

Fakhry says the Greeks, Moududi says the Romans. The “clear revelations” are not always clear, even for eminent scholars of the Koran. In Moududi’s translation, the Greeks of Revelation 30:2 become Romans and those they vanquished are the Iranians who initially vanquished them.

THE GREEKS [or BYZANTINES]

30 Ar-Rum

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

30:1 Alif – Lam – Mim.

30:2 The Greeks have been vanquished

30:3 In the nearest part of the land; but after being vanquished, they shall vanquish,

30:4 In a few years. Allah's is the command before and after; and on that day the believers shall rejoice,

30:5 In Allah's support. He supports whom He wills; and He is the Almighty, the Merciful.

30:6 It is Allah's Promise. Allah does not break His Promise, although most people do not know.

The believers rejoiced, according to Moududi, not because of the Byzantine Emperor's victory over the Iranians where he destroyed the birth-place of Zoroaster and ravaged the principal fire-temple of Iran, but the Muslim victory at Badr in 624 over the Meccans, which occurred around the same time.

WAR AND FANTASIES

A Pitch for Martyrs

An imagined pitch for suicide bombers using
only verses from one surah.

The *War Surah*, the ninth surah *Repentance*, may be mostly about war, but revelations about the conduct of hostilities against the unbelievers are scattered throughout the Koran. These timeless invitations to murder those who do not worship what you worship are often highly concentrated as in the third surah, *The Family of 'Imran*, where the word martyr is first encountered. Like all revelations about the need to rid the world of unbelievers, these appeals are addressed to the Prophet's Arab supporters; nonetheless, it is easy to imagine clerics making the same pitch for suicide bombers in Allah's Cause to receptive young men in madrassas and mosques around the world. The target for these recruits will be mainly People of the Book, i.e., Jews and Christians, God's most hated unbelievers after the polytheists.

Prayers in Islam consist mostly of verses from the Koran, therefore the pitch I imagined would be presented to a group of young men gathered for prayer with the prayer leader, the pitchman reciting selected passages from the 3rd surah. A few verses you will find here may have been quoted elsewhere (my comments in *italics*).

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

3:1 Alif, Lam, Mim.

3:2 Allah, there is no God but He, the Living, the Everlasting.

3:3 He has revealed the Book (the Koran) to you in truth, confirming what came before it; and He has revealed the Torah and the Gospel,

3:4 Aforetime, as a guidance to mankind. And He also has revealed the Criterion (the Qur'an as determiner of right and wrong). Verily, those who have disbelieved in Allah's Signs, a terrible punishment awaits them; Allah is mighty and stern in retribution.

3:5 Indeed, nothing is hidden from Allah whether on earth or in the heavens.

3:6 It is He Who forms you in the wombs as He pleases; there is no God but he, the Mighty, the Wise.

3:8 Lord, do not cause our hearts to vacillate after You have guided us and grant us Your Mercy. You are indeed the Munificent Giver.

3:10 As to the unbelievers, neither their riches nor their children will avail them anything against Allah; in fact, they shall be the fuel of the Fire.

3:11 Like Pharaoh's people and those before them who denounced Our Revelations. Allah smote them on account of their sins. Allah is Stern in retribution!

3:12 Say to those who disbelieve: "You shall be defeated and driven together into Hell; and what an awful resting place."

The heart of the pitch! Life on Earth may be good, but Paradise is better.

3:14 Attractive to mankind is made the love of the pleasures of women, children, heaps upon heaps of gold and silver, thoroughbred horses, cattle and cultivatable land. Such is the pleasure of this worldly life, but unto Allah is the fairest return.

3:15 Say: "Shall I tell you about something better than all that?" For those who are God-fearing, from their Lord are gardens beneath which rivers flow, and in which they abide forever [along with] purified spouses and Allah's good pleasure. Allah sees His servants well!

And who are those who seek "purified spouses and Allah's good pleasure"?

3:16 Those who say: "Our Lord, We have believed, so forgive us our sins and guard us against the torments of Hell."

3:17 They are the patient, the truthful, the devout, the charitable and the seekers of forgiveness at daybreak (*when battles are usually engaged*).

If you can't believe God, who can you believe?

3:18 Allah bears witness that there is no God but He, and so do the angels and men of learning. He upholds justice. There is no God but He, the Mighty and Wise One.

The difference between you and them:

3:19 The [true] religion with Allah is Islam. Those who were given the Book (the Jews and the Christians) did not disagree among themselves, except after certain knowledge came to them, out of envy among themselves. Whoever disbelieves in Allah's Revelations will find Allah Swift in retribution!

Those who are not of your religion must be made to submit.

3:83 Do they desire a religion other than Allah's, after everyone in the heavens and on earth has submitted to Him willingly or unwillingly; and unto Him they shall all be brought back!

3:85 Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.

You are the best!

3:110 You were the best nation brought forth to mankind, bidding the right and forbidding the wrong, and believing in Allah. Had the People of the Book believed, it would have been far better for them; some of them are believers, but most of them are sinners.

Not so for your enemy!

3:111 They will only cause you a little harm; and if they fight you, they will turn their backs on you (in defeat), and will have no support.

3:112 Ignominy shall attend them wherever they are found, unless [they are bound] by a covenant from Allah and a covenant from the people. They will incur Allah's anger, and wretchedness shall be stamped on them, because they disbelieved in Allah's Revelations and killed Prophets unjustly. That is because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits (doing what is unlawful).

In case you should harbour doubts about God's methods for dealing with the unbelievers, i.e., evil-doers.

3:128 It is no business of yours whether Allah forgives them or punishes them; for they are indeed evil-doers (*sic*)!

3:129 And to Allah belongs what is in the heavens and on earth; He forgives whom He pleases and punishes whom He pleases. Allah is All-Forgiving and Merciful.

3:131 And guard yourselves against the Fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers.

Now, obey God and the Prophet and ask forgiveness.

3:132 And obey Allah and the Messenger, that perchance you may find Mercy.

3:133 And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth prepared for the God-Fearing;

A reminder that there is a war on, and that God is on our side, therefore, you cannot lose if you are steadfast and don't let emotions get in the way.

3:139 Do not be faint-hearted and do not grieve; you will have the upper hand, if you are true believers.

The first mention of martyrdom!

3:140 If you have been afflicted by a wound, a similar wound has afflicted the others (the unbelievers). Such are the times; We alternate them among the people, so that Allah may know who are the believers and choose martyrs from among you. Allah does not like the evildoers!

Will you help Him help the believers by killing the unbelievers?

3:141 And that Allah might purify the believers and annihilate the unbelievers.

Don't expect to be first in line to Paradise if you have not helped God rid the world of unbelievers.

3:142 Or did you suppose that you will enter Paradise, before Allah has known who were those of you who have struggled, and those who are steadfast.

You were hoping for death to join Him in Paradise; well, now is your chance.

3:143 You were yearning for death before you actually met it.
Now you have seen it and you are beholding it.

Role models from the past are exalted.

3:146 How many Prophets with whom large multitudes have fought; they were not daunted on account of what befell them in the Cause of Allah. They did not weaken or cringe; and Allah loves the steadfast!

3:147 Their only words were: "Lord, forgive us our sins and our excess in our affairs. Make firm our feet and grant us victory over the unbelieving people."

3:148 Therefore Allah granted them the reward of this life and the excellent reward (Paradise) of the life to come, and Allah loves the beneficent!

Don't trust the unbelievers; trust Me.

3:149 O believers, if you obey the unbelievers they will turn you upon your heels (turning you back from your true religion), and thus you will become complete losers.

3:150 Rather, Allah is your Protector, and He is the Best Supporter!

A reminder to keep on killing until victory is assured. Do not be distracted by booty like the believers who fought at the Battle of Uhud.

3:152 Allah fulfilled His Promise to you when, by His Leave, you went on killing them; until you lost heart and dissented about the affair and disobeyed, after He had shown you what you cherished (the booty).

We all have to die sometime.

3:168 Those who said to their brethren, while they themselves stayed at home: "Had they obeyed us they would not have been killed?" Say: "Then ward off death from yourselves, if you are truthful."

A gracious, forgiving Host will welcome you to Paradise should you die fighting in His Cause.

3:157 And were you to be killed or to die in the Way of Allah, forgiveness and Mercy from Allah are far better than what they (the unbelievers) amass.

3:158 And were you to die or to be killed, it is unto Allah that you will be gathered.

Many of the verses quoted herein could be considered an incitement to hate and murder. A cleric using these verses, and these verses alone, as part of a recruitment effort for martyrs in a sermon in Arabic (the lingua franca of Islam), in a mosque or madrassa just about anywhere in the Western world, would not be prosecuted because of Western tolerance of hate speech as long as it is based on scriptures. Considering the Koran's unrelenting, unmitigated condemnation, dehumanization and demonization of unbelievers, this has to be a real cause for concern. Ordinary people do not kill others unless they have good reason. Suicide bombers would not do what they do unless convinced that their murderess enterprise was sanctioned by God. This is why the Koran is such a powerful instrument when it comes to war-mongering and the mass murder of innocent men, women and children.

A Winning Strategy

Before Muhammad could attempt to impose God's perfect religion on an imperfect world, he first had to convince his fellows Arabs to submit to the Will of Allah and accept him as God's anointed spokesperson. Most would not be swayed to abandon the gods and goddesses of their forefathers, and a vicious civil war ensued where the Muslims, except on the rare occasion, would give no quarter. During this civil war, all the rules of chivalry and fair play that had guided the relationships between the tribes and clans of the Peninsula were abandoned by the Muslims. Only one thing mattered for the believers in this fratricidal war: it was convert or die!

Convert or die! This simple, easy-to-understand demand from God allowed Muhammad to embark on a cold-blooded, methodical approach to eliminating the Arab opposition and making Islam the religion of the Peninsula. But even this straightforward strategy might not have worked if he had not been able to attract the young men who would be doing the killing and the converting to flock to his banner, as they do to this day. These men had to be convinced 1) that killing and dying on behalf of a god who murders by proxy is considered doing good, for which they will be amply rewarded, and 2) to show no mercy to anyone who would not submit, no matter their age or gender.

In achieving that objective, the Koran was indispensable. Finding a bride in pre-Islamic and post-Islamic Arabia, if you were not wealthy or powerful, was problematic. The fact that rich men could purchase as many women and slave-girls as they could afford, and powerful ones could keep as many as they could abscond with, meant that young, frustrated fighting men were plentiful.

God, in His Koran, not only promised these desperate-for-intimacy young men that they could take as slaves or spouses the wives and daughters of the men they killed or enslaved on His behalf, but should they die in the attempt, He would make it up to them then and there. They would immediately be admitted into Paradise, no questions asked, and given a harem more impressive than any found on Earth, replete with voluptuous maidens and sexually-adept female-

facsimiles, the infamous houris, all committed to satisfying a young warrior's every sexual fantasies for an eternity.

This promise from God, with terror and booty as defining components⁵⁰ – which Muhammad had in writing – proved invaluable and nurtures the strategies of those who would complete his mission, as stated at the beginning of *Announcing a Universal War*, such as Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, the Taliban, and so on, to this day.

The following are the remaining revealed truths from the surah *Repentance*, meant to appeal to those God needs to slaughter those who will not submit to His Will.

When fighting for Allah, you are never alone.

9:16 Did you imagine that Allah would leave you alone before knowing who of you fight [in the Way of Allah] and do not seek supporters besides Allah and His Messenger? Allah is Fully Aware of what you do.

Unbelievers are not welcome here.

9:17 The unbelievers should not enter Allah's Mosques bearing witness thereby against themselves that they are unbelievers. The works of those are vain and in the Fire they will abide forever.

9:18 Only he who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, performs the prayers, gives the alms and fears no one but Allah, shall visit Allah's Mosques. Those shall be reckoned among the rightly guided.

Doing wrong by doing right, and vice versa?

9:19 Do you consider those, who give the pilgrims water to drink and maintain the Sacred Mosque, like those who believe in Allah and the Hereafter and fight in Allah's Way? They are not alike in Allah's Sight, and Allah will not guide the wrongdoing people.

⁵⁰ **Narrated Abu Huraira:**

Allah's Apostle said, "I have been sent with the shortest expressions bearing the widest meanings, and I have been made victorious with terror, and while I was sleeping, the keys of the treasures of the world (the booty) were brought to me and put in my hand."

Bukhari 52.220

Stoking the flames of a fratricidal war.

9:24 Say: "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your relatives, the wealth you have gained, a trade you fear might slacken, and dwellings you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger or than fighting in His way, then wait until Allah fulfils His Decree. Allah does not guide the sinful people.

The untouchables!

9:28 O believers, the polytheists are truly unclean; so let them not come near the Sacred Mosque after this year of theirs; and if you fear poverty, Allah shall enrich you from His Bounty, if He pleases. Allah is Truly All-Knowing, Wise.

The right religion, the right months and the right time to fight.

9:36 The number of months, with Allah, is twelve months by Allah's Ordinance from the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of these are Sacred. This is the right religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them; but fight the polytheists all together just as they fight you all together; and know that Allah is on the side of the righteous.

Another reminder as to whom is deserving of God's Mercy.

9:71 As to the believers, males and females, they are friends of one another. They enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, perform the prayers, give the alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is those on whom Allah will have mercy. Allah is Mighty, Wise.

In case you've forgotten what is included with that Mercy.

9:72 Allah has promised the believers, males and females, Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever, and fair dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. However, Allah's Good Pleasure is greater. That is the great triumph.

Killing and injuring as good deeds.

9:120 It is not given to the people of Medina and the desert Arabs around them to stay behind the Messenger of Allah, nor to prefer their own lives to his life for they are afflicted neither by thirst nor fatigue nor hunger in Allah's Way, nor do they take a step that upsets the unbelievers, nor inflict a

blow on the enemy but a good deed is recorded for them on account of it. Allah does not allow the beneficent to lose their reward.

9:121 Nor do they spend anything whether small or large, nor cross a valley but it is recorded for them, so that Allah may reward them for the best of their deeds.

Indoctrination and war both play a role.

9:122 The believers should not all go to war. Why doesn't a company from each group go forth to instruct themselves in religion and admonish their people (those who go to war) when they return, that perchance, they may beware.

Mercy as an attribute of the Prophet.

9:128 There has come to you a Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad) from among yourselves. It grieves him to see you suffer, he cares much for you, and is kind and merciful towards the believers.

Whom do you trust?

The last revelation of this most ominous of surahs:

9:129 But if they turn away, say: "Sufficient for me is Allah; there is no God but He; in Him I put my trust. He is the Lord of the Glorious Throne."

The Saudi Way

Having killed, enslaved or exiled those who would not submit to Allah's Will on the Peninsula, Islam embarked on a war of conquest, taking Jerusalem only eight years after the surrender of Mecca. Today, followers of the Prophet continue the tradition of seeking to establish God's kingdom on Earth through violence, with Wahhabism being the driving ideology. John L. Esposito, author of *Unholy War; Terror in the Name of Islam*, describes Wahhabism this way:

Wahhabi theology sees the world in white and black categories – Muslim and non-Muslim, belief and unbelief, the realm of Islam and that of warfare. They regarded all Muslims who [do] not agree with them as unbelievers to be subdued (that is, fought and killed) in the name of Islam.

One of the first to embrace Wahhabi theology was Muhammad Ibn Saud (d. 1765), a local Arab tribal chief. Ibn Saud used the ultra-conservative Wahhabi movement, according to Esposito, "to legitimate his jihad to subdue and unite the tribes of Arabia, converting them to this puritanical version of Islam." Ibn Saud still serves as an example for the current rulers of Saudi Arabia who, like their honoured ancestor, look to the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab for guidance. Wahhabi theologians have interpreted Verse 9:5, *The Verse of the Sword*, as a command from God to wage a non-stop aggressive campaign to establish His Kingdom on Earth. The Ottoman Empire, in 1818, put a stop to Saudi ambitions to spread their fundamentalist version of Islam through violence, forcing a change in tactics. The war against the unbelievers could also be fought with wealth.

61:10 O believers, shall I show you a trade which will deliver you from a very painful punishment?

61:11 Believe in Allah and His Messenger and struggle in the Cause of Allah with your possessions and yourselves. That is far better for you, if only you knew.

While Saudi Arabia does not have the military might today, Al Qaeda notwithstanding, to spread its puritanical, backward version of Islam by force, it does have the money, and the Koran says that spending your money, i.e., possessions, to spread Islam gets you a free pass into Paradise; all is forgiven.

61:12 He will then forgive your sins and admit you into the Gardens, beneath which rivers flow, and into fine dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. That is the great triumph.

With the discovery of oil and the wealth that came with it, the House that Muhammad Ibn Saud built has been able to spread the Word far and wide by funding Islamic schools on the Wahhabi model, the most notorious being in Pakistan, which gave birth to the Taliban.

Afterword

Wars Never-Ending

THE SUPPORT

110 An-Nasr

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

110:1 When Allah's Support and victory come,

110:2 And you see people entering Allah's religion in throngs;

110:3 Then, magnify the Praise of your Lord and seek His
Forgiveness. He is indeed All-Forgiving.

War is endemic in Islam, whether it is the never-ending war against unbelievers or believers killing believers in brutal civil wars over leadership and dogma. The Prophet's overwhelming victory over the unbelievers was quickly followed, after his death, by three civil wars under the four so-called Rightly Guided Caliphs (Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali), the last three assassinated by unhappy believers, heralding an tradition of settling leadership issues through violence, befitting a religion where the threat of violence is pervasive.

Both types of wars—the general war against unbelievers and the bloody pitiless conflicts between believers—continue in one form or another to this day, with the second type expected to continue until Judgement Day, even if Islam is successful in ridding the world of all of those who refuse to submit to the Will of Allah before then.

SPECIAL

Raising a Holy Warrior

Teach Your Children Well.
Children are our future;
Teach them well and let them lead the way.

Greatest Love of All by Whitney Houston
Lyrics by Michael Masser and Linda Creed

Hatred is what God readily admits He has nurtured with His Koran. You cannot separate the hatred for unbelief from hatred of the unbeliever, which I am sure the All-Knowing and Wise is aware.

49:7 Know that Allah's Messenger is in your midst. Were he to obey you in much of your affairs (*take your advice*), you would suffer hardship; but Allah has endeared belief to you and embellished it in your hearts, and He has made you to hate unbelief, sin and disobedience. Such are the rightly guided.

49:8 As a Bounty from Allah and a Favour. Allah is All-Knowing and Wise.

Allah's Messenger may no longer be in our midst but his example has been inspiring generations to this day. It was his example that established fifteen as the age at which a boy could join the fraternity of holy warriors and participate in the organized slaughter of unbelievers, as well as keep the possessions of those he has killed.

Narrated Ibn Umar:

That the Prophet inspected him on the day of Uhud while he was fourteen years old, and the Prophet did not allow him to take part in the battle. He was inspected again by the Prophet on the day of Al-Khandaq (i.e. battle of the Trench) while he was fifteen years old, and the Prophet allowed him to take part in the battle.

Bukhari 59.423

Narrated Abdur-Rahman bin Auf:

While I was standing in the row on the day (of the battle) of Badr, I looked to my right and my left and saw two young Ansari boys, and I wished I had been stronger than they. One of them called my attention saying, "O Uncle! Do you know Abu Jahl?"

I said, "Yes, What do you want from him, O my nephew?"

He said, "I have been informed that he abuses Allah's Apostle. By Him in Whose Hands my life is, if I should see him, then my body will not leave his body till either of us meet his fate."

I was astonished at that talk. Then the other boy called my attention saying the same as the other had said.

After a while I saw Abu Jahl walking amongst the people. I said (to the boys), "Look! This is the man you asked me about." So, both of them attacked him with their swords and struck him to death and returned to Allah's Apostle to inform him of that.

Allah's Apostle asked, "Which of you has killed him?"

Each of them said, "I have killed him."

Allah's Apostle asked, "Have you cleaned your swords?"

They said, "No."

He then looked at their swords and said, "No doubt, you both have killed him and the spoils of the deceased will be given to Muadh bin Amr bin Al-Jamuh."

The two boys were Muadh bin 'Afra and Muadh bin Amr bin Al-Jamuh.

Bukhari 53.369

The boys in the preceding hadiths, like your modern teenager or young man revelling in committing atrocities on behalf of the Islamic State, were not born the depraved individuals they have become. A child is not born a holy warrior. The process of creating suicide bombers and willing executioners for the likes of the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, and so on begins with rote-learning by millions of children around the world of the most pitiless, appalling

mainstream piece of religious text ever revealed on their mother's knee. It is mothers who are tasked with introducing their children to the Koran.

There is a very common ceremony practiced throughout most of the Muslim world called Khatmi-Qur'an. It is the ceremony to recognize and celebrate a child's first full reading of the Koranic text in Arabic under the not-always-benevolent tutelage of their mother.

Life in jail for son's murder over Koran studies

A mother who beat her seven-year-old son to death when he failed to memorise passages from the Koran has been jailed for life, for a minimum of 17 years. The judge said she had beaten him for three months leading up to his death, adding: "The cause of the beating was your unreasonable view that he wasn't learning passages quickly enough."

BBC, January 7, 2013

Most children complete the first full reading of the Koran between the age of four and seven. A thorough grounding in the Koran, reinforced by mandatory daily prayers—which consist mainly of repeating word-for-word verses the Koran—ensures that when it comes to unbelievers, they can be as cruel and pitiless as the Author and their Commander in Chief.

Lessons in Cruelty

(Excerpt from *Children and the Koran*, Boreal Books, 2020)

One of the most pitiless revelations is also one of the most famous verses of the Koran.

5:38 As for the thieves, whether male or female, cut off their hands in punishment for what they did, as an exemplary punishment from Allah. Allah is Mighty and Wise.

Moderate Islamic scholars and religious leaders spend a lot of time trying to explain away pitiless and cruel so-called revealed truths, immutable facts revealed to a mortal by a god, like the above. It is inevitable that every now and then, the true believers, e.g., the Islamic State, the Taliban, Boko Haram, etc., will remind them and us that Allah's unambiguous instructions are not subject to interpretation. They are correct, for to do so is to question the wisdom of God, to question God's very sanity, thereby destroying the foundation of your beliefs.

With the Koran as their legal justification, Taliban gunmen executed women and girls in soccer stadiums. Anonymous, frightened, fragile human beings dressed in oppressive burqas—invisible in life, invisible in death—brought into the stadium in the back of pick-up trucks, forced to kneel on the ground, then shot in the back of the head to the obvious pleasure of the bearded younger and older men milling around. Bearded men displaying the same lack of mercy and compassion that we have come to expect from many of those who utter *In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful*, every time Allah's name is mentioned.

The flattering invocation "In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful" begins every chapter of the Koran except Chapter 1, *The Opening* and Chapter 9, *Repentance* (*Ultimatum* in some translations), which is mostly about making war. Nonetheless, the reader is reminded at least twice in the first chapter (only seven verses), which must be spoken before every prayer praising Allah's merciful and compassionate nature.

THE OPENING

1 Al-Fâtihah

- 1:1 In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
- 1:2 Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds,
- 1:3 The Compassionate, the Merciful,
- 1:4 Master of the Day of Judgement,
- 1:5 Only You do we worship, and only You do we implore
for help.

What about the Koran's relentless graphic description of sadistic torture and pain? As an adult, you may be able to dismiss Allah's bragging about torturing and burning men, women and children in His Hell as metaphorical excesses, sadistic flights of fancy, but what about Muslim children? Children raised in the Islamic faith are encouraged, if not compelled, to memorize the Koran as early as possible; the prize for the best memorizer is a choice place in Paradise.

What kind of twisted perception of the concept of mercy and compassion will such children be left with after memorizing the following verses about Allah on Judgement Day, not caring about the people He condemns to burn in Hell in perpetuity for not believing in Him and "for what you used to do"?

52:13 On the Day they will be driven into the Fire of Hell by force.

52:14 "This is the Fire which you used to deny.

52:15 "Is this magic or do you not see?

52:16 "Burn in it. Bear up or do not bear up; it is the same for you. You are only rewarded for what you used to do."

What kind of warped understanding of the concept of mercy and compassion will Muslim children be left with after reading about how the *Compassionate One* takes obvious pleasure in the punishment He inflicts?

11:105 The day (*Judgement Day*) it comes, no soul shall speak without His Leave. Some of them shall be wretched, some happy.

11:106 As for the wretched, they shall be in the Fire; they shall have therein groaning and moaning;

What happens to the mind, to the personality of a child who commits, must commit to memory not only the horrific verses we have discussed so far, but others that are even more impressive in their attention to detail when it comes to the deliberate, cold-blooded application of torture? For instance, the *Compassionate One* replacing the burnt skin of unbelievers burning in His Hell so that the torment of their skin roasting in His Fire never ends.

4:56 Those who have disbelieved Our Signs, We shall surely cast them into the Fire; every time their skins are burnt, We will replace them by other skins, so that they might taste the punishment. Allah indeed is Mighty and Wise!

In Allah's Hell, the fantastical vision of pain and torment quickly gives way to the more mundane, but just as gruesome, just as painful torture and never-ending suffering with which any child can relate. For a non-believing adult, the following brutality may seem like the plot of some of the more violent Saturday morning cartoons their kids watch. For believing children the following is real, not the product of a cartoonist's imagination. Somewhere in time and space, in Allah's bizarre universe, God is actually doing to real people what some children may fantasize about but eventually dismiss, as they grow older, as *immoral, sadistic behaviour*.

14:16 Behind him is Hell, and he is given stinking water to drink.

14:17 He sips it but can hardly swallow it, and death surrounds him from every side, but he will not die; and beyond this is still a terrible punishment.

18:29 And say: "The Truth is from your Lord. Whoever wishes, let him believe; and whoever wishes, let him disbelieve." We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire whose canopy encompasses them all. If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten brass which scalds the faces. Wretched is that drink and wretched is the resting-place!

22:19 Here are two adversaries who dispute about their Lord. To the unbelievers, garments of fire shall be cut up and over their heads boiling water shall be poured;

22:20 Whereby whatever is in their bellies and in their skin shall be melted.

22:21 And for them are iron rods (to beat their heads with).

22:22 Every time they want, in their gloom, to get out of it (the Fire), they are brought back into it. [And it is said to them]: "Taste the agony of burning."

Such is the punishment from Allah for not believing in His Book and the person who preached its content to mankind, and don't bother saying you're sorry; it won't do you any good.

23:101 And when the Trumpet is blown, they will have no kinship to bind them on that Day and they will not question one another.

23:102 Then, those whose scales are heavy – those are the prosperous.

23:103 But those whose scales are light – those are the ones who have lost their souls. In Hell they will dwell forever.

23:104 The Fire lashes their faces, and therein they shrivel.

23:105 "Were not My Signs (this Qur'an) recited to you, but you used to denounce them as lies?"

23:106 They will say: "Lord, our misery overcame us and we were an erring people.

23:107 "Lord, bring us out of it (Hell); then, if we revert we are indeed wrongdoers."

23:108 He (Allah) said: "Rot in it and do not talk to Me.

It's all about winners and losers, with the losers getting all the pain and the winners, all the pleasure.

23:109 "There was a group of My servants who used to say: 'Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy on us; you are the best of the merciful.'

23:110 "But you took them for a laughingstock, till they made you forget My Name, while you were mocking them.

23:111 "I have rewarded them this day for their forbearance, making them the winners."

Pleasure or pain, which will it be?

47:15 The likeness of the Garden which the God-fearing have been promised is this: rivers of water not stagnant, rivers of milk whose taste has not changed, rivers of wine delighting its drinkers and rivers of distilled honey. Therein they have every variety of fruit and forgiveness from their Lord too. Are they to be compared with those who dwell in the Fire forever and are given to drink boiling water which will rip up their bowels?

What happens to the mind of a child who commits to memory not only the appalling descriptions of what Allah will do in His Hereafter to those who refused to submit to His Will, but what He expects the believers to do, in the here-and-now, to those who would abandon Islam? On at least three occasions, God, in the person of Pharaoh, will remind the child labouring to memorize verses of inconceivable brutality that His recommended punishment for leaving Islam is to have your hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, then to be crucified upon the trunks of trees, palm trees if they can be found.

7:124 "I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides; then I will crucify you altogether."

20:71 He (Pharaoh) said: "Do you believe in him before I give you leave? It must be your chief who has taught you magic. I shall then cut your hands and feet on alternate sides, and I will crucify you upon the trunks of palm trees, and you will certainly know whose punishment is sterner and more lasting."

26:49 He (Pharaoh) said: "You have believed before I gave you leave. He (Moses) is indeed your chief, who taught you sorcery, and so you will learn. I shall cut off your hands and feet alternately and will crucify you all."

As the child memorizes these techniques for inflicting unbelievable pain and humiliation on those who would dare leave Allah's perfect religion for one less perfect, or for no religion at all, he will be reminded that childhood offers no protection from a vengeful, unforgiving god when it comes to unbelievers and apostates. The spontaneous, cold-blooded murder of a child by a fellow by the name of Khidr⁵¹ because Allah fears his lack of commitment to Islam will cause his parents distress, forever etched in the young impressionable mind: *this God does not flinch at killing children who don't do as they are told and replacing them with children who will.*

18:74 Then they departed; but when they met a boy, he (Khidr) killed him. Moses said: "Have you killed an innocent person who has not killed another? You have surely committed a horrible deed."

18:80 "As for the boy, his parents were believers; so we feared that he might overwhelm them with oppression and unbelief.

18:81 "So we wanted that their Lord might replace him with someone better in purity and closer to mercy.

What happens to the mind of a child who commits these horrifying descriptions of pain and suffering to memory? What happens to the mind of a child who is required to repeat many of these cruel, pitiless, sadistic verses as part of the five daily mandatory prayers to a god who claims to be the personification, the embodiment of compassion and mercy?

⁵¹ The enigmatic Koran character Khidr served for a time as Moses' spiritual advisor (recommended: *Shared Prophets*, Boreal Books, *Moses and Khidr*).

What do Muslim children dream about after mouthing the words describing a fire, *the Smasher*, which creeps up people bound to pillars, slowly burning them through and through?

THE BACKBITER

104 *Al-Humazah*

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

104:1 Woe unto every backbiter and slanderer,

104:2 Who amasses wealth and counts it diligently.

104:3 He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal.

104:4 Not at all; he shall be cast into the Smasher.

104:5 And if only you knew what is the Smasher.

104:6 It is Allah's kindled Fire,

104:7 Which attains even the hearts.

104:8 Upon them it is closing in;

104:9 On pillars stretch out.

What do they fantasize about during their waking hours? Do they ever forget the tortured and tormented verses, including those that encourage the mutilation of alleged wrongdoers, which they memorized under the benevolent encouragement of their teachers, imams, parents and guardians?

What do these well-intentioned teachers of Islamic "morality" think they are doing? What do they think they are doing when they tell the children to pay particular attention to revelations about Allah's heroes, such as the many prophets who disowned parents, family members and close relatives who refused to submit to His Will?

What do they think they are doing when they invite children to read Allah's often repeated instructions not to associate with unbelievers, and the even more compelling revelations that demand that Christians and Jews who are invited to become Muslim but decline, and refuse to pay a ransom to save their lives, be murdered in cold blood?

What do they think they are doing when they invite children to read revelations that damn and curse people who believe in more than one god, Indians for example, and instruct the believers to kill them on

the spot if they are invited to become Muslim but refuse; that for polytheists, not even a ransom can save their lives?

Lebensraum

3:85 Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.

48:28 It is He Who sent forth His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may exalt it above every other religion. Allah suffices as Witness.

Are the Saudis, perhaps unwittingly, taking a page out of *Mein Kampf* by funding madrassas on the Wahhabi model around the world, schools that teach children that Islam is the master religion and all that this implies, including murder on a genocidal scale?

Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*, looked to the East for what he called lebensraum, literally “living space” for the master race. This living space was to be acquired through extermination, enslavement and sterilization of non-Aryan races. It was the moral duty of every Nazi to ensure the survival of the master race by whatever means at his or her disposal.

35:39 It is He Who made you successors in the lands. Then he who disbelieves, his unbelief will recoil upon him; and their unbelief will only increase the unbelievers in contempt in the sight of their Lord. No, their unbelief will only increase the unbelievers in perdition.

Will the practitioners of the master religion one day, with the authority granted them by the Koran as “successors in the lands,” see it as their religious and moral duty to cull an overpopulated, starving planet to ensure not only the survival but the supremacy of the master religion, and those who believe, until their god can bring an end to His Creation? Will this piece of entitlement dogma and lessons in cruelty lead to even greater atrocities than when it was the alleged superior race that laid claim to exclusivity of living space?

Willing Executioners

Are Islamic schools and mosques raising another generation of *willing executioners* unable to empathize with the people, the unbelievers, for whom Allah shows no mercy and reserves such a gruesome, agonizing fate?

In his book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen presents evidence that the demonizing of the Jews by Christian churches for the alleged murder of Christ and other offences pre-disposed Germans to accept and participate in the murder of millions of Jews. What kind of monsters does the Koran give birth to through its relentless, unrelenting insistence that unbelievers are creatures not worthy of mercy or compassion? That unbelievers are only deserving of the most horrible punishment imaginable?

Most parents try to protect their children from the make-believe violence on television, reminding them that it is all imaginary and this is not how normal, civilized people behave. In madrassas, teachers are not expected to tell the children, who are memorizing the Koran under their supervision, that the violence is not real or that pitiless cruelty or brutality is unacceptable when dealing with those who won't submit to the will of Allah.

Maybe it is time for the West to restrict religious teachings to places of worship and the home so that children get a respite from the relentless bombardment of the word of God and learn to appreciate the values inherent in a secular society free from religion's more nefarious influence.

If nothing is done to curb this schooling in hate and sadism, what truly horrifying events are we setting in motion as the world gives rise to the next generation of Hitler-like leadership, similar to the one we find in Iran and now Afghanistan, where burning the unbelievers in an atomic fire is seen as doing God's work? Only doing what He expects of them and be amply rewarded.

I realize I may be placing too much emphasis on one preponderant aspect of the Koran, the sadism and the horrific cruelty, but that is in large part what the book is all about. Muslims and non-Muslims should be concerned with the impact of reading, of committing to memory and automaticity, such violent, pitiless events and beliefs on young minds.

A Woman Who Slept Around Confronts the Conqueror

(Excerpt from *Remembering Uzza: If Islam Was Explained
to Me in a Pub*, Boreal Books 2018)

Bob: Was collecting the Zakat the first thing the Prophet did after the believers took over Mecca?

Uzza: No. The first thing Muhammad did was to take away a Meccan woman's right to choose.

Archie: The man had his priorities.

Uzza: At a special ceremony, he had the women of Mecca pay him homage and promise, among other things, not to commit adultery.

Gerry: Why bring up adultery at this time?

Uzza: The women of Mecca slept around. That was not a secret, and Hind was no exception.

Bob: And their husbands were okay with this? They did not have them stoned to death?

Uzza: They may not have always approved, but most of the pre-Islamic Arabs, especially the fun-loving, tolerant people of Mecca, were not barbarians.

Archie: Who is this Hind person?

Uzza: Sorry, she was the wife of Abu Sufyan. She was the only woman among those assembled with the men of Mecca to hear their conqueror deliver his instructions to leave her face and hair uncovered. When Muhammad demanded the women of Mecca swear to stop "fornicating" with men other than their husbands, she rose to ask if it was possible for a free woman to commit adultery.

Bob: What did she mean by that?

Uzza: Like the free married men of Mecca who slept with other women, she may have felt that a free woman was entitled to do the

same; it was her choice and many of the fair-minded men of Mecca, before Islam, seemed to agree. How I love that woman.

Bob: Because you like to sleep around?

Uzza: NO, and if I did, it is no one's business but my own. No, it is because she defended women's rights when they were threatened, unlike the women of today who see covering their features as empowering them, when it is about empowering men who, like Muhammad, would tell them what to wear, what to do and with whom they can do it with. Sometimes I hate my sex.

Archie: You and the Prophet.