

Islamic principles the critics of Islam ought to know

By

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Criticism of Islam has existed since its formative stages. Early written criticism came from Christians, prior to the ninth century, many of whom viewed Islam as a radical Christian heresy. Criticism of Islam in the West was renewed after the September 11 attacks.

Objects of criticism include the morality of the life of Muhammad, both in his public and personal life. Issues relating to the authenticity and morality of the Koran, are also discussed by critics. Figures in Africa and India have described what they perceive as destruction of indigenous cultures by Islam. Other criticism focuses on the question of human rights in the Islamic world historically and in modern Islamic nations, including the treatment of women and religious and ethnic minorities in Islamic law and practice (1).

All criticism of Islam is indeed Islamophobic. The critics of Islam usually attack Islam without knowledge or authority. They criticize Islam mainly to nullify it. They judge Islam according to pre-conceived notions in their minds coming from biased media or from hired anti-Muslim hate groups implementing political agendas against Islam.

The western critiques however, must understand that their criticism will be worthless if it touches the Koranic principles governing the Islamic thought. Muslims will never pay attention to their criticism if it opposes these principles; principles ordained by the Creator, and has been mentioned in the Koran, and in the Sunna of Muhammad, the last of His Prophets.

Before criticizing Islam, the critiques of Islam ought to know these Islamic principles first, divine principles that are non-negotiable and non-touchable. If the critiques do not respect these principles, Muslims will consider their criticism as the usual silly rantings and ramblings aiming at attacking Islam.

These Islamic principles are grouped in the following:

a) Religion with Allah has always been Islam and no other.

A large number of people have a big misconception that Islam is a new religion that came into existence 1400 years ago and Prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him - is its founder. Islam is not a new religion; it was given to Adam and all other Prophets including Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaak, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jesus, and the seal of the prophets Muhammad. Their Message was the same; Allah is One and is to be worshipped alone without associating with Him any partners. Worshipping Allah as the One God must be crowned with piety and good deeds as mentioned in the Holy Books and the traditions of the prophets.

However, after the prophets delivered the divine guidance to their people, their Message was tampered with, lost, abandoned, or changed over time, with only parts of the original message intact.

Out of His mercy, Allah then sent Muhammad as the final Prophet in order to restore the monotheistic belief and the original call of all prophets.

Islam is, therefore, a perfect religion for all humanity and for all time to come, and not for the Muslims alone. Unlike the past, Islam is now preserved in its up-to-date perfection in the Holy Koran. Past generations proved themselves incapable of preserving the original commandments of Allah in their true perspective and had tampered with them to suit their own intriguing conveniences. Almighty Allah promised in the Koran to be its preserver Himself this time. One of the living instances of this jealous guardianship is that millions of Muslims easily commit this Book of Allah to memory -- a feature unique in its own way, which is nothing short of a miracle. There is no instance in the living memory of humankind to show that any of the ancient religious books or any other kind of book of such a voluminous nature as the Holy Koran is, or was ever, committed to memory.

This fact alone proves that Allah's original words have been preserved as He willed, and that there have been no tampering whatever with them after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad through whom the Koran was delivered.

It is clear then that the religion with Allah is only Islam. The name of Allah's religion – Islam - was not decided upon by later generations of man. It was chosen by Allah Himself and clearly mentioned in His final revelation to man. In the final book of divine revelation, Allah states the following:

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah) never will it be accepted of Him" (Al-Imran, 85).

"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion" (Al-Maidah, 3).

"Abraham was not a Jew nor Christian; but an upright Muslim." (Al-Imran, 67).

Racial arrogance however, made the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) adverse to the reception of truth when it came through a servant of Allah, not of their own race.

Allah says in His Holy Book the Koran:

The true religion with Allah is Islam. Those who were given the Book were not at variance except after the knowledge came to them, being insolent one to another. And who disbelieves in Allah's signs, Allah is swift at the reckoning (Al-Imran, 19).

The religion of Islam is not named after a person as in the case of Christianity which was named after Jesus Christ, Buddhism after Gautama Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius, and Marxism after Karl Marx. Nor was it named after a tribe like Judaism after the tribe of Judah and Hinduism after the Hindus. Islam is the true religion of "Allah" (God) and as such, its name represents the central principle of Allah's religion; the total submission to the will of Allah. The Arabic word "Islam" means the submission or surrender of one's will to the only true god worthy of worship "Allah" and anyone who does so is termed a "Muslim". The word also implies "peace" which is the natural consequence of total submission to the will of Allah. Hence, it was not a new religion brought by Prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him - in Arabia in the seventh century, but only the true religion of Allah re-expressed in its final form.

Nowhere in the Bible will you find Allah saying to Prophet Moses or to the Jews that their religion is Judaism, nor to the followers of Christ that their religion is Christianity. Like the prophets before him, Jesus called the people to surrender their will to the will of Allah (Islam), and he warned them to stay away from the false gods of human imagination. According to the New Testament, Jesus taught his followers to pray as follows: "Yours will be done on earth as it is in Heaven".

When a teacher of the Law of Moses asked Jesus: 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?' 'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'" (Mark 12:28-30).

b) The universality of Islam

Since the consequences of false religion are so grave, the true religion of Allah must be universally understandable and attainable, not confined to any people, place or time. There cannot be conditions like baptism, belief in a man, as a saviour etc., for a believer to enter paradise. Within the central principle of Islam and in its definition, (the surrender of one's will to Allah) lies the roots of Islam's universality. Whenever man comes to the realization that Allah is one and distinct from His creation, and submits himself to Allah, he becomes a Muslim in body and spirit and is eligible for paradise. Thus, anyone at any time in the most remote region of the world can become a Muslim, a follower of Allah's religion, Islam, by merely rejecting the worship of creation and by turning to Allah alone. It should be noted however, that the recognition of and submission to Allah requires that one chooses between right and wrong and such a choice implies accountability. Man will be held responsible for his choices, and, as such, he should try his utmost to do good and avoid evil. The ultimate good being the worship of Allah alone and the ultimate evil being the worship of His creation (Jesus, saint, pope, priest, tree, idol, animal, nature...etc.) along with or instead of Allah. This fact is expressed in the final revelation as follows:

If only they had stood by the law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that was sent to them from their Lord, they would have enjoyed happiness from every side. There is from among them a party on the right course; but many of them follow a course that is evil". (Al-Maidah, 66).

The Koran also says:

Say: 'Do you serve, apart from Allah, that which cannot hurt or profit you? Allah is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.' (Al-Maidah, 76).

The idolaters will say, 'Had God willed, we would not have been idolaters, neither our fathers, nor would we have forbidden aught.' Even so the people before them cried lies until they tasted Our might. Say: 'Have you any knowledge, for you to bring forth for us? You follow only surmise, merely conjecturing (Al-An'am, 148).

Or lest you say, 'Our fathers were idolaters a foretime, and we were seed after them. What, wilt Thou then destroy us for the deeds of the vain-doers?' (Al-A'raf, 173).

The Jewish excesses in the direction of formalism, racialism, exclusiveness and rejection of Christ and Muhammad have been denounced in many places in the Koran.

People of the Book (Jews and Christians), go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to Allah but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of Allah, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers, and say not, 'Three.' Refrain; better is it for you. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him -- That He should have a son! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; Allah suffices for a guardian (Al-Nisa', 171).

Jesus worship, Priest worship and the worship of saints and ascetics is a form of superstition to which men have been prone in all ages. The growth of Jewish superstition is shown in the Talmud, and of Christian superstition in the doctrine of papal infallibility and the worship of saints. The mere idea of a separate order of priesthood to stand between Allah and man and be the exclusive repository of Allah's secrets is derogatory to the goodness and all-pervading grace of Allah. The worship of "lords many and gods many" was not confined only to the pagans. The deification of the son of Mary is put in the above verse in a special clause by itself, as it held and still holds in its thrall a large portion of civilized humanity (2).

The Lord says in the Koran:

They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords apart from Allah, and the Messiah, Mary's son -- and they were commanded to serve but One God; there is no god but He; glory be to Him, above that they associate -- (Al-Tawbah, 31).

They are unbelievers who say, 'Allah is the Messiah, Mary's son.' For the Messiah said, 'Children of Israel, serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Verily whoso associates with Allah anything, Allah shall prohibit him entrance to Paradise, and his refuge shall be the Fire; and wrongdoers shall have no helpers.' (Al-Maidah, 72).

The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger; Messengers before him passed away; his mother was a just woman; they both ate food.

Behold, how We make clear the signs to them; then behold, how they perverted are! (Al-Maidah, 75).

As the Koran narrates, Jesus disclaimed any knowledge of the sort of things that are attributed to him by those who take his name. The worship of Mary, though repudiated by the Protestants, was widely spread in the earlier churches, both in the East and the West.

And when Allah said, 'O Jesus son of Mary, didst thou say unto men, "Take me and my mother as gods, apart from God"?' He said, 'To Thee be glory! It is not mine to say what I have no right to. If I indeed said it, Thou knowest it, knowing what is within my soul, and I know not what is within Thy soul; Thou knowest the things unseen (Al-Maidah, 116).

Those on whom you call apart from Allah, are servants the likes of you; call them and let them answer you, if you speak truly (Al-A'raf, 194).

c) The Koran is superior to all other divine Books.

The Koran's message is eternal and universal, transcending our differences in race, colour, ethnicity and nationality. It provides guidance on every facet of human life – from economics and the ethics of trade to marriage, divorce, parenting, gender issues and inheritance.

Muslims believe that Allah sent many revelations to humanity throughout history, and over time, they underwent changes from their original form. However, out of His mercy, Allah chose to preserve His Message to humanity in His final revelation, the Koran.

The Koran is the measure of judgment. This means that it works as a judgment over the differences and disputes between the people. It establishes the truth firm and makes it distinct from the untruth. This is the greatest purpose the Koran was revealed to fulfil. It is only the Koran, which measures the ideas and views on the divine scale and decides over the validity of what people ascribe to Allah. It determines what part of the current religious ideas is the truth from Allah and what part of these is a human addition mixed with the pure divine guidance. The Koran says:

It is Allah Who has revealed the Book with decisive truth, and the balance (Ash-Shura, 17).

Certainly We sent our messengers with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the balance that men may conduct themselves

with equity. (Al-Hadîd, 25).

Considering this very quality of the Koran, it has been given the name muhaymin (guardian). In order to establish justice and equity, we need a balance and a criterion. Almighty Allah has referred to these two qualities of the Koran in the following verse:

And We have sent down to thee the Book with the truth, confirming the Book that was before it (the Torah of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus), and assuring it. So judge between them according to what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their caprices, to forsake the truth that has come to thee (Al-Maidah, 48).

The Koran therefore, supersedes previous revelations because it came directly from Allah, and is not a second-hand book written by men after the extinction of authentic divine Books. Allah has sent Muhammad the seal of His prophets with the Koran – the religion of Islam, and with it the confession that there is no deity except Allah, that He may cause the religion of Islam to prevail over all religions which came before it until the Day of Judgement, however much the idolaters may be averse that this should be so.

The Koran says:

It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that He may uplift it over all religion, even though the idolaters may detest it (Al-Saff, 9).

The Kafirs (the unbelievers) would like to blow out Allah's Light as it is a cause of offence to them. They wish to put out the light of truth for they are people of darkness; but Allah perfected His Light by descending the Koran upon Muhammad. A light that shone all the brighter and penetrated the hearts of men more and more.

The Korans says:

Their intention is to extinguish Allah's light with their mouths, but Allah will complete His Light even though the unbelievers may detest it (Al-Saff, 8).

d) Recognition of Allah by all

The question which arises here is, "How can all people be expected to believe in Allah given their varying- backgrounds, societies and cultures?"

For people to be responsible for worshipping Allah they all have to have access to knowledge of Allah. The final revelation teaches that all humankind have the recognition of Allah imprinted on their souls, a part of their very nature with which they are created.

Allah explained in the Koran that when He created Adam, He caused all of Adam's descendants to come into existence and took a pledge from them saying, Am I not your Lord? To which they all replied, "Yes, we testify to it." (2).

Allah then explained why He had all of mankind bear witness that He is their creator and only true God worthy of worship. Allah did that in case humankind should say on the Day of Resurrection, "We had no idea that You Allah, were our God. No one told us that we were only supposed to worship You alone." Allah went on to explain that it was also in case you should say, "Certainly It was our ancestors who associated partners with You and we are only their descendants; will You then destroy us for what those liars did?" Thus, every child is born with a natural belief in Allah and an inborn inclination to worship Him alone. This inborn inclination is called in Arabic "Fitrah". If the child were left alone, he would worship Allah in his own way, but all children are affected by those things around them, seen or unseen.

Allah says in the Koran:

And when thy Lord took from the children of Adam from their loins, their seed, and made them testify touching themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'yes we testify' – lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'As for us, we were heedless of this,' or lest you say, Our fathers were idolaters a foretime, and we were seed after them. What, wilt thou then destroy us for the deeds of the vain-doers?' (Al-A'raf, 172, 173).

The Prophet – peace be upon him - reported that Allah said, "I created my servants in the right religion but devils made them go astray". The Prophet also said, "Each child is born in a state of "Fitrah", then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Zoroastrian, the way an animal gives birth to a normal offspring. Have you noticed any that were born mutilated?" (Collected by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

So, just as the child submits to the physical laws, which Allah has put in nature, his soul also submits naturally to the fact that Allah is his Lord and Creator. But, his parents try to make him follow their own way and the child is not strong enough in the early stages of his life to resist or

oppose the will of his parents. The religion, which the child follows at this stage, is one of custom and upbringing and Allah does not hold him to account or punish him for this religion.

Throughout people's lives from childhood until the time they die, signs are shown to them in all regions of the earth and in their own souls, until it becomes clear that there is only one true God (Allah). If the people are honest with themselves, reject their false gods and seek Allah, the way will be made easy for them, but if they continually reject Allah's signs and continue to worship creation, the more difficult it will be for them to escape.

Prophets were sent to every nation and tribe to support man's natural belief in Allah and man's inborn inclination to worship Him as well as to reinforce the divine truth in the daily signs revealed by Allah. Although, in most cases, much of the Prophet's teachings became distorted, portions remained which point out right and wrong. Consequently, every soul will be held to account for its belief in Allah and its acceptance of the religion of Islam; the total submission to the will of Allah (3).

e) Allah can justly punish His servants for disobedience: no one can say to Him nay

Talking about violence, there is far more violence in the Bible than in the Koran; the idea that Islam imposed itself by the sword is a Western fiction, fabricated during the time of the Crusades when, in fact, it was Western Christians who were fighting brutal holy wars against Islam. All monotheistic religions, and not just Islam, have their fair share of violent and intolerant scriptures, as well as bloody histories. Thus, whenever Islam's sacred scriptures—the Koran and the Sunna of the Prophet – are accused with violence, the immediate rejoinder is that other scriptures, specifically those of Judeo-Christianity, are as riddled with violent passages.

In order to establish the religion of Allah on earth, which is strict monotheism crowned with good deeds, Allah in some cases, instructed His Prophets and Messengers to kill and destroy His enemies without mercy.

But do the violent verses of the Koran give a free permission to kill anyone anywhere? These verses were revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad at the time when Muslims were attacked by the pagan disbelievers and idolaters of Makkah on a regular basis. It is important that we study the religious texts in their proper context. When these texts

are not read in their proper textual and historical contexts, they are manipulated and distorted. The enemies of Islam manipulate these verses for their own wicked ends.

We read in the Koran:

“kill them wherever you find them...”as it is mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 191 and Surah Al-Nisa’ verse 89. The answer is simple, one should read these verses in their textual and historical context. It is better to read the whole verse as well as few verses before and few after.

As an example of reading the violent verses in their full text we read:

“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors. And kill them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, kill them. Such is the reward of those who reject faith. But if they cease, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression. The sacred month is for the sacred month, and so for all things prohibited, there is the law of equality. If then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress ye likewise against him. But fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves.” (Al-Baqarah, 190-194).

“They but wish that ye should reject Faith, as they do, and thus be on the same footing (as they): so take not friends from their ranks until they flee in the way of Allah (from what is forbidden). But if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever ye find them; and (in any case) take no friends or helpers from their ranks. Except those who join a group between whom and you there is a treaty (of peace), or those who approach you with hearts restraining them from fighting you as well as fighting their own people. If Allah had pleased, He could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you: therefore, if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (guarantees of) peace, then Allah hath opened no way for you (to war against them). Others you will find that wish to gain your confidence as well as that of their people: every time they are sent back to temptation, they succumb thereto; if they withdraw not from you nor give you (guarantees) of peace

besides restraining their hands, seize them and slay them wherever ye get them; in their case We have provided you with a clear argument against them. (Al-Nisa', 89-91).

Such verses of the Koran are interpreted by the western critiques and the haters of Islam out of context, but when the verses are read in context it clearly appears that the Koran prohibits aggression, and allows fighting only in self-defence.

Reading in the Bible we find that the land of Canaan taken by the Hebrews in about 1200 B.C.E. is often characterized as "genocide" and has all but become emblematic of Biblical violence and intolerance.

Allah told Moses:

But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them—the Hittite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite, and Jebusite—just as the Lord your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God.

So Joshua [Moses' successor] conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord, God of Israel had commanded.

The Bible overflows with texts of terror. The Bible contains far more verses praising or urging bloodshed than does the Koran, and biblical violence is often far more extreme, and marked by more indiscriminate savagery. If the founding text shapes the whole religion, then Judaism and Christianity deserve the utmost condemnation as religions of savagery.

Dozens of verses from the Bible seem very violent if taken out from their historical context. These Biblical texts have been used by many violent Jewish and Christian groups. Crusaders used them against Muslims and Jews. Nazis used them against Jews. Serbian Christians used them against Bosnian Muslims. Zionists are using them regularly against Palestinians.

To give examples from the Old Testament:

Exodus 32:27-29

Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his **brother and friend and neighbour.**' "The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own **sons and brothers**, and he has blessed you this day."(NIV).

The sons of Judah also captured 10,000 alive and brought them to the top of the cliff and threw them down from the top of the cliff, so that they were all dashed to pieces (NASB).

Joshua 8:24-26

When the Israelite army finished chasing and killing all the men of Ai in the open fields, they went back and finished off everyone inside. So the entire population of Ai, including men and women, was wiped out that day—12,000 in all. For Joshua kept holding out his spear until everyone who had lived in Ai was completely destroyed. (NLT)

Deuteronomy 2:32-34

Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, unto battle at Jahaz. And Jehovah our God delivered him up before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed every inhabited city, with the women and the little ones; we left none remaining. (ASV).

Samuel 15:3,8

Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.' " ... He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword.(NIV).

Hosea 13:16

Samaria shall bear her guilt, because she has rebelled against her God; they shall fall by the sword, their little ones shall be dashed in pieces, and their pregnant women ripped open. (NRSV).

Even in the New Testament we read the following statement attributed to Jesus saying to his disciples:

“I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence. (Luke 19:26-27).

As for Christianity, since it is impossible to find New Testament verses inciting violence, one must admit that the Crusades were in fact violent and led to atrocities by the modern world's standards under the banner of the cross and in the name of Christianity. After breaching the walls of Jerusalem in 1099, the Crusaders reportedly slaughtered almost every inhabitant of the Holy City. According to the medieval chronicle, the Gesta Danorum, "the slaughter was so great that our men waded in blood up to their ankles."

More often than not, this argument puts an end to any discussion regarding whether violence and intolerance are unique to Islam. Instead, the default answer becomes that it is not Islam per se but rather Muslim grievance and frustration - ever exacerbated by economic, political, and social factors—that lead to violence.

Therefore, before condemning the Koran and the historical words and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad for inciting violence and intolerance, Jews are counselled to consider the historical atrocities committed by their Hebrew forefathers as recorded in their own scriptures; Christians are advised to consider the brutal cycle of violence their forbears have committed in the name of their faith against both non-Christians and fellow Christians. In other words, Jews and Christians are reminded that those who live in glass houses should not be hurling stones.

In light of the above, why should Jews and Christians point to the Koran as evidence of Islam's violence while ignoring their own scriptures and history?

The critiques of Islam must understand that the violence in Allah's Books is ordained by Allah. In the Old Testament, Allah clearly ordered the Hebrews to annihilate the Canaanites and surrounding peoples. Such violence is therefore an expression of Allah's will. Allah commanded it.

It is therefore clear that punishment of the enemies of Allah for their disobedience to His commandments seems to be a divine system He adopts against the Kafirs and the disbelievers. Once strict belief in Allah's oneness is established on earth and peace is prevailed, killing is totally prohibited.

The Koran professes the basic principle that everyone has the right to live. The Koran says about the prohibition of murder:

“..Take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus does He command you, that ye may learn wisdom.” (al-An’am 6:151)

Allah says in the Koran:

And slay not the soul Allah has forbidden, except by right. Whosoever is slain unjustly, We have appointed to his next-of-kin authority; but let him not exceed in slaying; he shall be helped (Al-Isra’, 33).

According to the Koran, killing any person without a just cause is as big a sin as killing the whole humanity and saving the life of one person is as saving the whole humanity. (Al-Ma’idah, 32).

But even though the death penalty is allowed in Islam, as retribution for a large variety of crimes: 1) intentional murder; 2) spreading mischief in the land; 3) treason; 4) apostasy; 5) terrorism; 6) Piracy of any kind; 7) rape; 8) adultery; 9) homosexual activity.

The enemies of Islam claim that unlike the verses of violence of the Old Testament, the verses of violence in the Koran are open-ended, meaning that they are not restrained by the historical context, but are part of the eternal, unchanging Word of Allah, a matter that produced a trail of blood and tears across history. In other words, the Bible violence revolves around a specific time and place and is directed against a specific people. At no time did such violence go on to become standardized or codified into Jewish law. In short, biblical accounts of violence are descriptive, not prescriptive.

The critics of Islam say that Islamic violence is unique. Though similar to the violence of the Old Testament—commanded by Allah and manifested in history—certain aspects of Islamic violence and intolerance have become standardized in Islamic law and apply at all times. Thus, while the violence found in the Koran has a historical context, its ultimate significance is theological.

The truth is that, fighting in the Koran was only permitted to fight back the idolaters and the pagans of Makkah who expelled the Prophet from Makkah, his home town, then came after him to Madinah to destroy him and kill Islam in its cradle. When the Prophet won his battles against them and Islam was established, and guidance has become distinct from

error, fighting became forbidden, and the mission of the Prophet was only to deliver the Message.

The Koran says in this respect:

No compulsion is there in religion. Rectitude has become clear from error. So whosoever disbelieves in idols and believes in Allah, has laid hold of the most firm handle, unbreaking; Allah is All-Hearing, All-knowing (Al-Baqarah, 256).

Now has the path of rectitude been made distinct from the path of error, and the incorruptible and unchangeable Koran is there for all to read, the Prophet is not a guard set over the people, he is not responsible for forcing people to come to the right path.

We read in the Koran:

But if they turn away, We sent thee not to be a guardian over them. It is for thee only to deliver the Message (Ash-Shura, 48).

The Prophet's responsibility was to preach and show the way, but he was not responsible for the obstinacy and perversity of men who turned away from Allah's signs and rejected the truth

Thou shalt not guide the blind out of their error neither shalt thou make any to hear, save such as believe in Our signs, and so surrender (Al-Naml, 81).

But what is the Message? It is a reminder that the creation of humankind in the present world was not an accident. The creation took place in accordance with a divine plan, by which man was to be given temporary freedom for the purpose of putting him to the test, and thereafter rewarding him according to his deeds in the present world.

The Koran says:

Now We have sent down to you a Book wherein is your Remembrance; will you not understand? (Al-Anbiya', 10).

In other words, man is now free to believe or not to believe in Allah's Message, but the matter is not that simple, the task of accountability was taken on by Allah himself.

Allah states in the Koran:

It is thine only to deliver the Message, and Ours the reckoning (Al-Ra'd, 40).

The Prophet has been commanded to rehearse the Koran and if any accept guidance, they do it for the good of their own souls, and if any reject the Message would find their own spiritual loss in such rejection, but the Prophet must warn them first of the consequences.

And I have been commanded to serve the Lord of the territory which He has made sacred; to Him belongs everything. And I have been commanded to be of those who bow in Islam to Allah's will, and to recite the Koran. So whosoever is guided, is only guided to his own gain, and whosoever goes astray, say: 'I am not but a warner.' (Al-Naml 91, 92).

Muhammad - peace be upon him – neither seeks nor expects any reward from men. On the contrary he suffered much at their hands. He is unselfish and offers his services under Allah's inspiration. He is satisfied by guiding people to the straight path. That is his reward, and the reward he hopes for from Allah is similarly unselfish. He earnestly hopes to win Allah's good pleasure – or, to use another metaphor, "to see his face."

Say: "I ask of you no wage for it, nor am I a man of false pretensions. It is nothing but a reminder to all beings, and you shall before long know its truth." (Sad, 86-88).

f) The Torah and the Gospel of Jesus were corrupted

The previous divinely-revealed books: the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms, and the Scriptures (pages) of Ibraahîm (Abraham), were distorted by addition and deletion and some of them are totally lost, and the remaining parts are mixed with distorted texts. The Koran states that the Torah and the Gospel have been physically corrupted by those who were charged with safeguarding them (the Jews and Christians).

The Koran is the return to the true Message of Allah after the corruption of the Bible and the Gospel.

Allah says in the Koran:

So woe to those who write the Book with their hands, then say, 'This is from Allah,' that they may sell it for a little price; so woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for their earnings (Al-Baqarah, 79).

So for their breaking their compact We cursed them (the Jews) and

made their hearts hard, they perverting words from their meanings; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of; and thou wilt never cease to light upon some act of treachery on their part, except a few of them. Yet pardon them, and forgive; surely, Allah loves the good-doers (Al-Maidah, 13).

And with those who say 'We are Christians' We took compact; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of. So We have stirred up among them enmity and hatred, till the Day of Resurrection; and Allah will assuredly tell them of the things they wrought (Al-Maidah, 14).

Because Allah is Most- Merciful, He wished to guide His servants whose divine Books were corrupted or lost, so He revealed the Koran to be His last, all- embracing Scripture containing the final manifestation of the Divine Law.

The Koran came with a twofold purposes: (1) to testify the truth that still exists in the old divine Books, and (2) to falsify the falsehood that was added to them. In other words, the Koran, for one, confirms early Scriptures and, for another, is a trustworthy witness over them.

The Koran says:

It is He who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth , that He may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers be averse (At-Tawbah, 33).

This time Allah had taken it upon Himself to protect the Koran from alteration, to safeguard it from corruption, and to preserve it from distortion.

Allah says in the Koran:

It is We who have sent down the Remembrance, and We watch over it (Al-Hijr, 9).

This protection had been a reality from the time the Koran was revealed until today and will remain so forever. There has been no change in its text over time, not even in single letter. Thus, the Koran is the return to the true Message of Allah. The Koran is the last, all-embracing Scripture containing the final manifestation of the Divine law.

The Koran, the Word of Allah, is perfected in truth and justice. None can change His Words.

Allah says in the Koran:

“Perfect are the Words of thy Lord in truthfulness and justice; no man can change His Words; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing (Al-An’am, 115).

Being the final, all-encompassing and preserved against any change, the Islamic Law abrogated all the previous Scriptures. The Koran cancels the rulings of the previous Scriptures and renders them inapplicable. The Law of the old Scriptures is no longer applicable; the previous rulings have been abrogated with the new Law of Islam.

The Islamic Law is lasting, remaining suitable for every place and time, and embracing the goodness of the previous manifestations of the Law.

Allah Says in the Koran:

“And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it.” (Al-Maidah, 48).

Accordingly, Allah does not accept any religion except Islam as a way to His Pleasure, as He Says:

Whoso desires another religion than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him; in the next world, he shall be among the losers (Al-Imran, 85).

After the Koran, no more Scriptures will be revealed by Allah. Just as the Prophet Muhammad is the last Prophet, the Koran is the last Scripture.

g) The puzzling word “Kafir” - a word confusing non-Muslims

The non-Arabic speaking westerners falsely think that the word Kafir means a non-Muslim. Because of their ignorance of the Arabic language, they rely on the explanations of the English dictionaries. For example the meaning of the word kafir in the British dictionary is a “person who is not Muslim.” Other English dictionaries explain the word Kafir as “a non - Muslim or infidel”.

Kafir is a subject based on the verb Kufr. One who commits Kufr is Kafir. Kufr in Arabic dictionary bears three meanings: to conceal, to be ungrateful, to deny or to reject. These meanings for the word “Kafir”

have been used in the Koran. Now let us deliberate over these three meanings of 'Kufr.

Concealment

The Word of Allah, the Knowledge given by Him is a most valuable asset a man may possess. All along in the history of humankind, men of knowledge have been concealing from masses the Knowledge they possess so as to exploit them in the name of religion. Those who conceal from the masses the words of Allah are Kafirs. It is an undisputable fact that prior to the Koran, all the previous scriptures revealed by Allah could not remain safe from human interpolation. Those who made changes in the Word of Allah were Kafirs. It is also a verifiable truth that among all scriptures, claiming to be Word of Allah, only Koran is unaltered to the last word and letter. This is the biggest endowment of Allah to humankind. This wealth was sent for the world entire. If the possessors of this precious asset do not distribute it among humankind, for whom it was revealed, they would be Kafirs.

Ungratefulness

Ungratefulness is denying the favours Allah has bestowed on His servant. If the servant is truly thankful, then certainly, Allah shall increase him in favour, but if the servant actually denies them, Allah's punishment will be extremely severe.

The Koran says:

And when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are thankful, surely I will increase you, but if you are thankless My chastisement is surely terrible (Ibrahîm, 7).

Denial of Allah

Denial of Allah takes many forms:

1. Kufr ul-'Inad: Disbelief out of stubbornness. This applies to someone who knows the truth and admits to knowing it with his tongue, but refuses to accept it and refrains from making a declaration. Alla says, "Throw into Hell every stubborn disbeliever." (Qaf, 24).
2. Kufr ul-Inkar: Disbelief out of denial. This applies to someone who denies with both heart and tongue.

Allah says, "They recognize the favours of Allah, yet they deny them. Most of them are (Kafirs) disbelievers (An- Nahl, 83).

3. Kufr ul-Kibr: Disbelief out of arrogance and pride. The disbelief of Satan is an example of this type of kufr.
4. Kufr ul-Juhud: Disbelief out of rejection. This applies to someone who acknowledges the truth in his heart, but rejects it with his tongue. Allah says: "And they denied them (the signs of Allah), though their souls acknowledged them, wrongfully and out of pride... (An-Naml, 14).
5. Kufr ul-Nifaq: Disbelief out of hypocrisy. This applies to someone who pretends to be a believer but conceals his disbelief. Such a person is called a munafiq or hypocrite. Allah says, "Surely the hypocrites will be in the lowest reach of the Fire; Thou wilt not find for them any helper." (An-Nisa', 145).
6. Kufr ul-Istihlal: Disbelief out of trying to make haram (unlawful) into halal (lawful). This applies to someone who accepts as lawful (halal) that which Allah has made unlawful (haram) like alcohol , adultery, homosexuality, etc. Only Allah has the prerogative to make things halal and haram and those who seek to interfere with His right are like rivals to Him and therefore fall outside the boundaries of faith.
7. Kufr ul-Kurh: Disbelief out of detesting any of Allah's Commands. Allah says, "That is because they have been averse to what Allah has sent down, so He has made their works to fail (Muhammad, 8-9).
8. Kufr ul-Istihzaa': Disbelief due to mockery and derision. Allah, says, "Say: 'What, then were you mocking Allah, and His signs, and His Messenger? Make no excuses. You have disbelieved. (Al - Tawbah, 65-66).
9. Kufr ul-I'radh: Disbelief due to avoidance. This applies to those who turn away and avoid the truth. Allah says, "And who dose greater evil

than he who, being reminded of the signs of his Lord, turns away from them and forgets what his hands have forwarded? (Al-Kahf, 57).

10. Kufr ul-Istibdal: Disbelief by substituting Allah's Laws with others. This could take the form of (a) rejection of Allah's Law (shari'ah) without denying it, (b) denial of Allah's law and therefore rejecting it, or (c) substituting Allah's laws with man-made laws. Allah says, "And do not say, as what your tongues falsely describe, 'This is lawful, and this is forbidden,' so that you may forge against Allah falsehood; surely those who forge against Allah falsehood shall not prosper (An-Nahl, 116) (4).

The opposite of kufr is imaan - belief. The Koran says: The Believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger [Prophet Muhammad] and have no doubt (Al-Hujurat, 15).

Other examples of disbelief (*kufr*) would be for mocking the Sunnah of the Prophet, to belie, attack, burn or defile the Koran, and to assist another to commit disbelief. Examples of disbelief are also to allow alcohol, stealing, murder, fornication, and homosexuality.

After Islam was established, engaging in conflicts with kafirs was stopped and a new phase began. In this phase Allah commanded His Messenger Muhammad to convey the truth to all of mankind, then it is up to the people to believe or not to believe. If they believe they will benefit their own selves, and if they disobey, they will harm their own selves.

As Allah says:

“Say: ‘O you mankind! Now truth (i.e. the Koran and the Prophet Muhammad), has come to you from your Lord. So whosoever receives guidance, he does so for the good of his own self; and whosoever goes astray, he does so to his own loss; and I am not (set) over you as a disposer of affairs (to oblige you for guidance).” (Yunus, 108).

Allah also says:

“Whosoever does righteous good deeds, it is for (the benefit of) his own self; and whosoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) slaves.” (Fussilat, 46).

The Prophet cannot force the people to join Islam, his duty is only to convey the Message.

“And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So, will you (O Muhammad) then compel mankind, until they become believers?” (Yunus, 99).

Allah also says:

But if you cry me lies, nations cried lies before you; and it is only for the Messenger to deliver the Manifest Message (Al-Ankabut, 18).

Guidance to the truth is in the hand of Allah alone and no human being has any share in that, as Allah said to His Messenger:

Thou guidest not whom thou likest, but Allah guides whom He wills, and knows very well those that are guided (Al-Qasas, 56).

Allah guides to His path only those who obey Him and turn to Him.

He says in the Koran:

“While as for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their piety.” (Muhammad, 17).

Allah, however, does not guide to His path whoever disobeys Him and turns away from Him.

“Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever.” (Al-Zumar, 3).

Whatever direction a person takes, there will be reward and punishment. If he obeys, there will be Paradise:

“Indeed he succeeds who purifies his own self (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allah ordered, by following the true Faith of Islamic Monotheism and by doing righteous good deeds.” (Al-Shams, 9).

And if he disobeys, there will be Hell:

“And indeed he fails who corrupts his own self (i.e. disobeys what Allah has ordered by rejecting the true Faith of Islamic Monotheism or by following polytheism, or by doing every kind of evil deeds.” (Al-Shams, 10).

All people will be questioned by Allah for their choice between belief and disbelief in Him.

“Whosoever does righteous good deeds, it is for (the benefit of) his own self; and whosoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) slaves.” (Fussilat, 46).

Whoever loves Allah and His Messenger and do good deeds in this world, he will choose Islam as a religion. And whoever turns away from that and is only interested in the pleasures of this world and has no interest in the Hereafter, his abode will be Hell.

If in the present world the Kafirs (disbelievers and those who rebel against Allah and His messengers) are left to believe or not to believe, this doesn't mean that they will escape punishment in the Hereafter. Allah gives them plenty of rope to increase in sin then there awaits them a terrible chastisement.

Allah says about them:

And let not the Kafirs (unbelievers) suppose that the indulgence We grant them is better for them; We grant them indulgence only that they may increase in sin; and there awaits them a mighty chastisement (Al-Imran, 178).

Kafirs and wicked men are not denied prosperity, but the pleasure they enjoy is of short duration, and then they are destined to the abode of Hell, and evil indeed is the abode.

The Koran states:

Let it not delude thee, that the Kafirs (unbelievers) go to and fro in the land; a little enjoyment, then their refuge is Gehenna (Hell) – an evil cradling (Al-Imran, 197-198).

Allah says about the abode of Kafirs in the Koran:

Those who reject our Signs, We shall soon cast into the Fire: as often as their skins are wholly burned, We shall give them in exchange other skins that they may taste the chastisement. Surely, Allah is exalted in Power, Wise (Al-Nisa', 56).

The Koran also says in this connection:

But whoso makes a breach with the Messenger after the guidance has become clear to him, and follows a way other than the believers, him We shall turn over to what he has turned to and We shall roast him in Gehenna (Hell) – an evil homecoming (Al-Nisa', 115).

We also read:

And the unbelievers (Kafirs) who cried lies to Our signs – shall be the inhabitants of Hell (Al-Maidah, 10).

On the Day of Resurrection, the Kafirs who deny Allah and refuse to acknowledge His omnipotence and Authority shall be severely tortured in Hell Fire. If they had owned twice as much as all the worldly riches treasured on earth to offer in expiation of their guilt and of the torment that will be laid upon them on the Day of judgment, it will never be accepted from them, and there awaits them an unremitting punishment. They eagerly wish to get out of Hell, but never shall they succeed in escaping therefrom, and therein shall they suffer excruciating pain.

Allah says about this:

The Kafirs (unbelievers), though they possessed all that is in the earth, and the like of it with it, to ransom themselves from the chastisement of the Day of Resurrection thereby, it would not be accepted of them; for them awaits a painful chastisement. They will desire to come forth from

the Fire, but they will not come forth from it; for them awaits a lasting chastisement (Al-Maidah 36,37).

Anas bin Malik narrated that the Prophet said:

“The Kafir (disbeliever) will be asked: ‘Suppose you had as much gold as to fill the earth, would you offer it to ransom yourself (from the Hell Fire)? He will reply, ‘Yes.’ Then it will be said to him, ‘You were asked for something easier than that (to join none in worship) with Allah (i.e. to accept Islam, but you refused).’ (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, Hadith No. 546).

Those Kafirs that denied Allah and renounced faith and entered the gates of death captivated in disbelief, have come within the measure of Allah’s wrath. Such like persons have earned the curse of Allah and of the angels and of all mankind. Such curse which indicates divine wrath and malignant fate shall follow them like their shadow and beset them on all sides until the Day they are dragged in chains into Hell, confined with shackles and put to the torment which shall not abate nor shall their punishment be put in respite.

The Koran says:

Indeed, those who disbelieve (Kafirs) and die while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the curse of Allah and of the angels and the people, all together, Abiding eternally therein. The punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved (Al-Baqarah, 161-162).

As for the Kafirs, for them garments of fire shall be cut, and there shall be poured over their heads boiling water whereby whatsoever is in their bellies and their skins shall be melted; for them await kooked iron rods; as often as they desire in their anguish to come forth from it, they shall be restored into it, and: “Taste the chastisement of the burning.” (Al-Hajj, 19- 22).

The believers however, will be admitted to paradise.

Allah shall surely admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens underneath which rivers flow; therein they shall be adorned with bracelets of gold and with pearls, and their apparel there shall be of silk; and they shall be guided unto goodly speech, and they shall be guided unto the path of the All-Laudable (Al-Hajj, 23).

The god-fearing shall be amidst gardens and fountains: 'Enter you them, in peace and security!' We shall strip away all rancour that is in their breasts; as brothers they shall be upon couches set face to face; no fatigue there shall smite them, neither shall they ever be driven forth from there (Al-Hijr, 45-48) (5).

The fact that Kafirs will go to Hell is not our own personal opinion, but the categorical command of Allah, Most High.

It should be emphasized that the falsehood the enemies of Islam promulgate against it will not go without punishment. They think that under the pretext of freedom of speech and researching religion, they can nullify the religion of Islam and render it void and worthless! They forget that the Koran is the Word of their Creator and playing with His words in order to invalidate them has severe consequences.

They forget that the Koran is a blessing from the Lord for all beings. It is guidance and the distinction between right and wrong without which, man would surely be in loss. The Koran is the last Scripture revealed by Almighty Allah confirming what little truth remains in parts of previous scriptures and refuting and correcting fabrications and additions, which have crept into current day versions of such scriptures.

The fabrication and lying these hate mongers publish and diffuse through the media about Islam will not vanish in the air because every word they said or wrote against Allah's religion has been already recorded.

On the day of Judgment we will all be held accountable for our deeds. Allah will ask every person what he or she has done in his or her life.

Allah says in His holy Book the Koran:

"Draws near for mankind their reckoning, while they turn away in heedlessness." (Al-'Anbia', 1).

Allah also says:

"Verily, to Us will be their return, then verily, for Us will be their Reckoning." (Al-Ghashiah 25, 26).

On the Day of Judgment, Allah will discuss the people's deeds in depth and in detail, and will hold them accountable for each evil act they committed. Then Allah will send His enemies away to the Hell Fire.

The Koran says:

"On the Day when every person will be confronted with all the good he has done, and all the evil he has done, he will wish that there were a great distance between him and his evil." (Al-Imran, 30).

On the Day of Judgment, we will be asked about five things. The Prophet said: "The son of Adam will not pass away from Allah until he is asked about five things: how he lived his life, and how he utilized his youth, with what means did he earn his wealth, how did he spend his wealth, and what did he do with his knowledge." [Good hadith reported by Imam At-Tirmithi].

It will be disastrous if the servant replies that he spent his life attacking the Koran, he earned his wealth by smearing His lord and humiliating His prophet, and used his knowledge to refute the Koranic commandments as we see nowadays from the enemies of Allah.

The Messenger described the questioning in a speech reported by Imam Muslim: "Allah will meet a person and ask him: "O person, wasn't I generous with you, and made you with a spouse, and made the horses and camels at your disposal? The servant will reply "yes"! Allah will then ask "Did you think that you will meet me?" He will reply: "No!" Allah will say: "I will forget you like you forgot me"! Then Allah will meet another person and his reply will be the same as the first person. Then Allah will meet a third person and will ask similar questions, and the person's reply will be: "O Lord I believed in you, in your books, and in your messengers. I prayed, I fasted, and I gave charity, and he will praise Allah as much as he can. Allah will say: "Hold on to your words, now we will bring the witnesses." The person will ask himself "Who will testify against me?" Then that person's mouth will be sealed, and his thighs flesh and bones will be asked to speak. They will speak about his bad deeds. He will know that he has no excuse. This is the hypocrite Allah will be furious with!"

Allah describes this situation in the Koran:

"On the day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions". (An-Nur, 24).

Allah also says in the Koran”

"And they will say to their skin:" Why did you bear witness against us?
"They will say "Allah has caused us to speak, as He cause all things to speak." (Fussillat, 21).

Allah will also ask us in the Day of Judgment about how we utilized our hearing, our vision, and our hearts.

We read in the Koran:

And pursue not that thou hast no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart – all of those shall be questioned of (Al-Isra', 36).

In the Hereafter, man's entire being would bear witness to his deeds. The ungodly will be dumbfounded. They will be unable to speak or offer any defence, but their silence will not matter. Their own hands and feet will speak against them.

Today We set a seal on their mouths, and their hands speak to Us, and their feet bear witness as to what they have been earning (Yas'In, 65).

The enemies of Islam openly proclaim that Islam is a wicked religion. This has been clearly shown in their books, media, and websites. Wars on Islam is designed to harm, weaken or annihilate the societal system of Islam, using military, economic, social and cultural means.

But Islam is the last religion of Allah to all humankind, and fighting it would certainly bring Allah's wrath on the attackers and the perpetrators. Allah encompasses the evil things they do. The enemies of Islam are devising evil, but evil devising encompasses those who do it.

Their foolishness took them to oppose Allah the Creator, and whoever opposes Allah – then indeed, Allah is severe in punishment.

What we are seeing from the critiques of the West is freedom to offend, freedom to incite violence and hatred. There is an estimated \$200 million Islamophobia industry now in the US, diffusing hatred against innocent Muslims to the extent that hate crimes against Muslims in US have skyrocketed.

But Allah defends His religion. It is the religion, which He has approved for His servants since Adam until Muhammad, until the end of time.

Allah says:

The religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His will) (Al-Imran, 19).

And He says:

“Today I have perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (Al-Maidah, 3).

That is why Allah defends His religion at all times. He says:

Assuredly, Allah will defend those who believe; surely Allah loves not any ungrateful traitor. Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged – surely Allah is able to help them (Al-Hajj, 38-39).

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