

“And why should ye not fight in the cause of God and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? - Men, women, and children, whose cry is: “Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help!”
 [Al-Qur'an 4:75]

Thus Islam enjoins upon its believers to strive utmost, in purifying themselves, as well as in establishing peace and justice in the society. A Muslim can never be at rest when she sees injustice and oppression around her. Islam enjoins upon all Muslims to work actively to maintain the balance in which God created everything. However, regardless of how legitimate the cause may be, the Glorious Qur'an never condones the killing of innocent people. Terrorizing the civilian population can never be termed as jihad and can never be reconciled with the teachings of Islam.

History Of Tolerance

Even Western scholars have repudiated the myth of Muslims coercing others to convert. The great historian De Lacy O'Leary wrote: “History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims, sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.” This is not surprising to a Muslim, for his faith prohibits him from forcing others to see his point of view. The Glorious Qur'an says:

“Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things.”
 [Al-Qur'an 2:256]

Islam denounces terrorism

The act of inciting terror in the hearts of defenceless civilians, the wholesale destruction of buildings and properties, the bombing and maiming of innocent men, women and children

are all forbidden and detestable acts according to Islam and the Muslims. This is regardless of any type of terrorism, including western state-sponsored terrorism which has killed, injured and displaced infinitely more people than all other types of terrorism.

If an individual Muslim were to commit an act of terrorism, this person would be guilty of violating the laws of the very religion they claim to follow - Islam. Would it be fair to condemn all Muslims as a result, - when the religion itself is against such acts? Muslims follow a religion of submission to God, peace, mercy, and forgiveness.

“Allah does not forbid you from showing kindness and dealing justly with those who have not fought you about religion and have not driven you out of your homes. Allah loves those who are just.”
 Qur'an 60:8

The vast majority have nothing to do with the violent events some - notably the media - have associated with Muslims. Islam is not a religion of extremism.

Islam - The Great Unifier

Far from being a militant dogma, Islam is a way of life that transcends race and ethnicity. The Glorious Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of our common origin:

“O mankind! We Created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).”
 [Al-Qur'an 49:13]

Thus, it is the universality of its teachings that makes Islam the fastest growing religion in the world. In a world full of conflicts and deep schisms between human beings, a world that is threatened with terrorism, perpetrated by individuals and states, Islam is a beacon of light that offers hope for the future

Islam is not a religion of extremism



Allah says:
 “...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...”

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Islam...

an extreme religion?

“Islamic terrorists!” “Muslim fundamentalists!” “Extremists!” “Radical Islamists!” These are just some labels that have been wrongly applied to Muslims and certain Muslim groups in recent years.

The media’s portrayal of Islam often misleads those whose knowledge of the religion is limited, into making negative assumptions about this very peaceful and tolerant way of life. The prevalence of media bias and ignorance regarding Islam can be countered by understanding Islam *through its proper teachings*. That means referring to the Qur’an (which Muslims believe to be the word of God) and the authentic sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Through the proper understanding of these teachings, one will discover Islam to be completely against any form of extremism.

how the Qur’an can be misunderstood

When reading through the Qur’an or the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), one must understand the context in which the wording applies.

The following verse of the Qur’an is a favourite amongst those seeking to mislead people about Islam:

“And kill them wherever you find them, and expel them from where they expelled you, as persecuting people to sway them from God’s Religion is worse than killing. But do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque, unless they fight you there. But if they do fight you, then slay them; This is the recompense of the disbelievers.”
Qur’an 2:191

On occasions, this verse has been dangerously trimmed down to the following:

“And kill them wherever you find them...” *Qur’an 2:191*

The obvious question is, “Kill who?”. To answer this question, one should read the verses before and after verse 2:191.

“And fight in the way of Allah those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.” *Qur’an 2:190*

The above verse mentions fighting as a means of self defence (i.e. with those who fight you). The verse after 2:191 is:

“But if they cease, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”
Qur’an 2:192

These verses were revealed at a time when the Muslims had been expelled from their homes on account of their faith. They endured more than ten years of persecution and eventually had to flee to a safe land.

The above verses were referring to the Arab pagans of Mecca during the Prophet’s time, who oppressed the Muslims and planned to attack them where the Muslims sought refuge.

Hence, the above verse can only be applied in such circumstances.

This example demonstrates that verses in the Qur’an should be understood in their proper context since verses were revealed in stages in relation to particular situations, over a period of 23 years. It is also important to note that the Qur’an was revealed in Arabic. Therefore, translations into different languages may be misleading and/or inaccurate.

permissible fighting/warfare

There can be no doubt that Muslims (like anybody else) have a legitimate right to fight against aggression or when oppressed.

Islam teaches that warfare is permitted in order to preserve the wellbeing of the community or to prevent oppression from spreading - this may be in the context of defensive or offensive warfare depending on the particular situation. Islam, just like any ‘way of life’ that wants to ensure its survival, has the right to defend itself when war is declared against it. In the Qur’an we read:

However, when the enemy ceases its hostility, Muslims are commanded to cease fighting.

“To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged.”
Qur’an 22:39

“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in God; surely He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.”
Qur’an 8:61

- deviate from the right path
- kill a woman, child or aged man
- harm or burn trees, especially the fruitful
- slay the enemy’s flock, except for food
- harm those who devote their life to worship

Misconceptions Of Jihad

While Islam in general is misunderstood in the western world, perhaps no other Islamic term evokes such strong reactions as the word 'jihad'. The term 'jihad' has been much abused, to conjure up bizarre images of violent Muslims, forcing people to submit at the point of the sword. This myth was perpetuated throughout the centuries of mistrust during and after the Crusades. Unfortunately, it survives to this day. The word Jihad comes from the root word jahada, which means to struggle. So jihad is literally an act of struggling. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that the greatest jihad is to struggle with the insidious suggestions of one's own soul. Thus jihad primarily refers to the inner struggle of being a person of virtue and submission to God in all aspects of life. Secondarily, jihad refers to struggle against injustice. Islam, like many other religions, allows for armed self-defense, or retribution against tyranny, exploitation, and oppression.

Allah commands muslims not to go to extremes by saying, **“Do not transgress the limits.”**

A situation of war is no excuse to go beyond boundaries. Islam teaches the avoidance of blind retaliation.

The Glorious Qur’an says: ***“And let not the hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to righteousness.”***
Qur’an 5:8

Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him), Prophet Mohammad’s closest friend and first successor, spoke of the Islamic approach to war by highlighting the following:

In the battlefield, one should not:

- commit treachery
- mutilate the dead