

A Perspective On Islam

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Intro: Avner and Rachel Boskey live in Beersheva, Israel with their children. They are accomplished Messianic musicians, with at least two CD's on the market. Avner is originally from Montreal, Quebec, where he grew up in a secular Jewish family, but was sent to a Jewish Day school. He has mastery of French, English, Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Russian, and probably a few more language, and two masters degrees; one from McGill University in Montreal in history, and one from Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Yiddish literature. He is a certified Israeli tour guide.

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Terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the WTC have shocked and shaken America. Violent Middle Easterners hijacked civilian aircraft, yet sought no hostage negotiations. Their purpose was to murder, to wreak destruction and terror on America's economy, society and democracy. Are these mujahidin (jihad warriors) a lunatic fringe element of Islam, or do they represent one of the real faces of that religion? How are believers to relate to Islam in light of coming prophetic events on the earth? And how can we keep the mind and heart of Messiah as we interface with our Muslim neighbors?

The clearly Islamic aspects of the recent terror attacks have prompted public scrutiny and discussion of the nature of Islam. In past days Muslim advocates have repeatedly stressed similar themes: Islam is a monotheistic major world religion; most Muslims are peace loving and not violent; Islam doesn't believe in jihad as holy war, but in jihad as an ethical movement for self betterment. Are these statements all true? Let's carefully examine each one of these assertions.

I. Is Islam a monotheistic major world religion?

Islam is a major world religion, with more than one billion followers, including five million in the United States. The five largest Muslim nations are Indonesia (180 million), Pakistan (125 million), Bangladesh (109 million), India (84 million) and Iran (66 million). Further on down the list, 12th through 15th in size are Sudan and Afghanistan (22 million), Iraq (20 million) and Saudi Arabia (19 million).

Is Islam a monotheistic religion? That all depends on how one defines 'monotheism'. Monotheism refers to the belief in one god. But belief in any one god is not exactly the same as belief in the One True God. While the Bible teaches monotheism, it does not teach a generic monotheism (i.e., that it is possible for any spirit to be considered the Supreme Deity). The Bible teaches that the God of Israel whose personal name is YHVH (commonly known as Jehovah) – He alone is God Most High. The same Scriptures also clearly teach that the gods worshipped by the pagan nations are in fact demons (1Ki.18.39; 2Ki.19:18; 1Chron. 16:26; Psa. 96:5; Zech.14:9; 1Cor.8:4-6; Gal.4:8). This may not be a politically correct viewpoint today, but the Bible focuses on eternal truths and does not try to be a spiritual chameleon.

Many people today believe that religion's job is to promote moral and ethical behavior. According to this viewpoint, different religions with their different spirits, names of god or gods, avatars etc., – all should be tolerated because these are simply different ways of expressing the same divine and ethical truths. "Why argue about whether He is called YHVH or Allah," they question with exasperation; "Stop quibbling about words!" The Bible does not agree with this argument and draws a clear line in the sand: righteousness and

strength, justification and salvation are to be found only in the name of the God of Israel (Isa.45:23-25). From the Bible's perspective, a false god is a demon, and he who follows a false god engages in idolatry and participates in counterfeit worship.

So the question must be asked: is the name of Allah an interchangeable name for the One True God, or is Allah in fact a demonic spirit?

A. YHVH Is God's Own Name

The Bible uses the personal name YHVH to describe the One True God. God declared to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'YHVH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations" (Exod.3:15). If the Bible is true, then God has just stated that the name YHVH is the personal name of God. It is unchangeable and it lasts forever. This name which God has chosen for Himself is used nearly 9,000 times in the Bible but not even once in the Koran.

Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) said that the Hebrew Scriptures are so reliable that even the smallest letters, the jots ("yod" in Hebrew) and the tittles (the protrusions or bumps on the Hebrew letters themselves) are accurate. His point? We all can depend on the reliability of the Hebrew Scriptures (Matt.5:17-18; 2Tim.3:15-17). In those Scriptures God has given mankind His own name so that we will all be able to recognize that name (whenever it appears) as His own signature in history, His personal trademark. The Bible says that YHVH is what the God of Israel wants to be called. Considering these biblical ground rules, it is highly significant that the Islamic Koran neither recognizes nor uses the name YHVH. Instead, 2,100 years after YHVH revealed His name to Moses, Muhammad arose and declared that God's unchangeable name YHVH is unimportant, and that believers should now use another name, a different name – Allah.

B. YHVH Calls Himself The God Of Israel

YHVH describes Himself repeatedly in the Bible as the God who is bound by everlasting covenant to Israel. He is the God who loves Israel (Deut.7:7-9; Hos.2:14-23; 11:1-4,8; 14:4; Amos 9:8-9; etc.). He is the God who chose Isaac (not Ishmael – Gen.17:18-21) and Jacob as heirs, and the God who promises to save the Jewish people and restore them to their homeland, the land of Israel (Isa. 49:5-6; Lk.2:67-77 etc.). Yet the Koran describes its god as having a different agenda. The first major surah (chapter) in the Koran, "The Cow" (Surah 2) describes Allah's hatred, rejection and cursing of the Jewish people (see also Surah 5:64,82; 9:30). The Koran gives priority to Ishmael and not to Isaac (Surah 2:125,127,133,136,140; 3:84; 4:164; 14:39,163; 19:54) and it is silent about YHVH's choosing of Isaac and Jacob.

The Koran teaches that some Jews, as punishment for their sins, have been changed into apes and pigs (Surah 5:60), Islamic teaching also announces that the Jewish people will be destroyed by Muslims at the End of Days. The Hadith, a compilation of Muhammad's

teachings written down after the completion of the Koran, and considered authoritative by Islam, teaches: “. . . the prophet...said: ‘The Hour (the Day of Judgment) will not begin until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them. A Jew will hide behind a rock or a tree, and the rock or tree will say, ‘O Muslim, O slave of Allah! There is a Jew behind me, come and kill him!’ – except for the gharqad (box thorn), for it is one of the trees of the Jews.’” (al-Bukhari 2926; Muslim, 2921-2).

Incidentally, this verse from the Hadith was recently quoted in its entirety with approval by Osama Bin Laden in his May 28 1998 interview with John Bell of ABC News, “We are sure of Allah’s victory and our victory against the Americans and the Jews as promised by the prophet, peace be upon him: ‘Judgment day shall not come until the Muslims fight the Jews fight the Jews, whereas the Jews will hide behind trees and stones, and the tree and the stone will speak and say “Muslim, behind me a Jew come and kill him”, except for the al-Ghargad tree, which is a Jewish plant’. We are sure of our victory.” Muhammad taught and prophesied that a future holocaust would be carried out by the Islamic world against the Jewish nation.

If the God of the Bible is the One called YHVH, if He loves and has chosen the Jewish people for eternity – then Allah cannot be the same as this God!

C. Messiah Yeshua Loves His Bride

Yeshua (Jesus) is not only the Messiah of Israel; He also offers the free gift of salvation to the world (John 10:14-16). All who embrace Yeshua (Jews and Gentiles) are part of the Bride of Messiah and are deeply loved by Him (Eph.3:1-6; 5:22-27). Yet Allah of the Koran commands Muslims to have a radically different attitude to Christians and Jews from what the Bible commands: “Take not Jews and Christians as friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people!” (Surah 5:51) “O believers! Do not take my enemy and your enemy for friends. Would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the rasul (ed., Muhammad) and yourselves because you believe in Allah your lord? If you go forth in jihad on my path and seeking my pleasure, would you manifest love to them? I know what you conceal and what you manifest; and whoever of you does this, he has indeed gone astray from the straight path” (Surah 3:28; see also Surah 60:1). Not love, but suspicion, rejection, condemnation and enmity towards Christians and Jews is a foundational part of Islam.

Islamic art can be the servant of Muslim theology. On the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, inside the Dome of the Rock, an engraved Arabic inscription runs along the inside rim of that Golden Dome, proclaiming in beautiful gold leaf calligraphy: “O People of the Book, do not overstep proper limitations ... and speak only the truth about Allah. The Messiah Yeshua, son of Mary, is only a messenger of Allah... Believe therefore in Allah and his messengers, and do not say ‘Three’ . . . Allah is only one Allah. Far be it from his glory that he should have a son.” This quote from the Koran (Surah 4:171; see also 5:75) clearly denies the deity of Messiah Yeshua, His incarnation, and the deity of the Holy Spirit. In this sacred shrine of Islam, the central place afforded to this anti-Messiah declaration is no accident.

D. YHVH Has Chosen Jerusalem

YHVH has chosen Jerusalem out of all the cities of the world to be His own. This truth is reflected in one of the strongest rebukes addressed to Satan in the Scriptures: “And YHVH said to Satan, ‘YHVH rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, YHVH who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!’” (Zech. 3:2) Jerusalem is called the City of David over 40 times, and the Bible is full of Messianic promises that the Son of David will rule over the entire world from Jerusalem, sitting on David’s Throne.

Yet the Koran asserts that an oasis in the Arabian desert – Mecca – is actually Allah’s chosen city (Surah 2:125-27; 3:97), and that the God’s temporal ruler comes not from David’s seed but from Ishmael’s Arabian descendants (Surah 33:40).

The God of the Bible wants to be recognized by His name and His many loves (the Jewish people, the Church, the city of Jerusalem, the land of Israel and David’s descendants). Islam stands opposed to all of the above. On this evidence alone one can clearly conclude that Allah is not the God of the Bible. He does not have the same heart and passions as YHVH. He does not have the same thoughts as the God of Israel. He is not the same God.

E. The Pre-Islamic Allah

Most Muslims believe that Allah has always been the One True God (Surah 2:136: 29:46). They believe that Abraham, Hagar, Ishmael, Moses, David and Yeshua were all Muslims (e.g. Surah 2:135, 140; 3:67; 22:78). The Koran believes that Jews and Christians have forged and distorted the Scriptures (Surah 3:71,99). Islam believes that originally, the Bible was full of references to Allah, Mecca and the Ka’ba (the black cube, an ancient pagan center of pilgrimage in Mecca) but that nearly all these references have been deliberately removed from the Bible by non-Muslims. But a brief look at Arabian history prior to Muhammad reveals that the origins of Allah worship are to be found in pagan polytheism.

In approximately 430 BC Herodotus the Greek historian refers to the fact that various deities were worshipped in Arabia, including a female deity known as al-il-Lat (The Histories, Book iii – this word could well be the female form of Allah). The Koran, written down nearly 1100 years later, refers to the fact that three female deities named al-Lat (the same word as al-il-Lat), al-Uzza, and Manat were worshipped in Arabia. People would often turn to these goddesses in intercession (Surah 53:19-20). These three deities were also known as “the daughters of Allah”, as the edited text of Surah 53:21-22 explains. These three deities were only some of the many spirits and demons worshipped by Arabs in the centuries before Muhammad. Another such deity was Hubal – a Moabite/ Nabatean/North Arabian demon – known from stone inscriptions dated to 1-5 AD, whose idol was a giant stone placed atop the Ka’ba (according to Ibn al-Kalbi.). Other deities included Isaf and Na’ilah (two lovers who were turned to stone for cohabiting in the Ka’ba, and whose idols were placed on two little hills, Safa and Marwa, near the Ka’ba), Awf (a great bird), and Allah.

A book called ‘Siratu’l Rasul’ (“The Life of the Messenger” – originally written by Ibn Is’haq

in the 600's AD and later revised by Ibn Hisham) recounts a story from Muhammad's youth, prior to his later spiritual revelations. Abdu'l Muttalib, Muhammad's grandfather, was preparing to sacrifice one of his sons to "the god at the Ka'ba". This god's name is known from other Muslim sources as Hubal – possibly a form of the Semitic 'Ha-Ba'al' – 'The Lord'. Hubal was known as 'rabb al-bayt' or 'lord of the house'. According to Ibn Is'haq, the idol of Hubal was originally brought from al-Balq'a in Syria to the Ka'ba in Mecca by an Arab named Amr bin Luhayya. In the above account divination was then used to determine Hubal's will (by casting arrows to the ground). Muhammad's father Abd'allah (Arabic for 'slave of Allah' – an indication that Allah was only one of the many deities worshipped at the Ka'ba) brought Muhammad to be sacrificed in his stead. The grandfather then consulted a sorcerer who counseled him on how to obtain an answer (through divination) which would satisfy the deity yet leave Muhammad alive.

This was the religious background that shaped young Muhammad's spiritual world view – sacrificing children, consulting sorcerers, and worshipping tribal idols. When he was approximately 40 years old, Muhammad received a spiritual revelation, ostensibly from the angel Gabriel ('Jibril' in Arabic; see Siratu'l Rasul 5:152; Mishkat 4:356-57). This spirit revealed to him that Allah (the local god of his father Abd'allah) was not just one deity of many being worshipped in the Ka'ba, but that Allah was actually the supreme deity. Further, Jibril told him that Allah wanted Muhammad to become his 'rasul' – his apostolic prophet. Muhammad's reaction was anxiety and fear that he might be going mad. His wife Khadija and her cousin Waraqa reassured him that his prophesying was similar to what Moses had received. Eventually Muhammad became convinced of this as well.

Allah, the spirit who for centuries had seemed content to take his place in the Ka'ba pantheon along with 359 other demons (that number comes from Waqqidi's biography of Muhammad, written 120 years after Muhammad's death), was suddenly describing himself as the 'only true god'. A deity who had been content to receive worship in a polytheistic shrine for centuries was now advocating strict 'monotheism' on his own terms. Allah's accommodation to polytheism is totally different from what the Bible teaches about YHVH's response to a polytheistic context (when the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the Philistine shrine of Dagon in 1Sam.5:1-12)!

And so Islam (Arabic for 'submission' [to Allah]) was born. One of the many demons of the Arabian desert would now become famous as "Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, The Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment" – 'The One True God'. Monotheism had been suddenly redefined by Muhammad to mean the worship of a desert spirit as the One True God.

F. By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them

The spirit known as Jibril would later give Muhammad many revelations, including the following — God has rejected and cursed the Jews and the Christians (Surah 2:89,105,213; 9:30); Yeshua is not God's Son (Surah 4:171; 5:72-75; 19:88-93; cf. 1 John 2:18-23); there is no Trinity (Surah 5:116-18); the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, has been deliberately distorted by Jews and Christians to the point where it is no longer the word of God (Surah 2:113,120,159; 4:46; 5:41; 57:27); Yeshua never died on the cross (Surah 4:157); it is a

‘divine’ commandment to persecute Jews and Christians, to defeat them in battle and then to consign them either to slavery or to death (Surah 8:39; 9:5,29; 47:4).

These Koranic teachings mentioned above cannot be biblically described as ‘good and peaceful’. They are anti-Jewish and anti-Christian. And they are not teachings which only represent ‘some extreme sect of Islam’. These are Muhammad’s own words in the Koran and the Hadith! The spirit who communicated these teachings to Muhammad was neither the God of the Bible nor His messenger. Allah is not Jehovah, and Islam can not be described as a biblically monotheistic religion. Though Islam worships a spirit whom it calls ‘the one true God’, the Bible classifies that spirit as a demon. Islam is not true biblical monotheism. It is actually a demonic counterfeit of true monotheism.

At Washington’s National Cathedral a memorial service for the victims of the terror attacks was held on September 17. One Christian minister prayed “O God of Abraham, God of Muhammad ...” In light of the above referenced Islamic teaching, one point must be emphasized: the God of Israel is the Lord of every man, and in that sense He is the God of Muhammad, Buddha and Bin Laden. But if the prayer quoted above meant to say that the God of Muhammad (Allah) is the same deity as the God of Abraham, then this is bearing false witness, biblically speaking. Allah is not the God of Abraham, and Allah is not the God of the Bible.

G. Are Islam’s claims to be tolerated and respected?

Islam is one of the world’s major religions, but it fails the biblical test of being considered true monotheism, since Allah and the revelation he gave to Muhammad are fundamentally opposed to the Bible. This should not be surprising to Bible believers, since paganism and demonic worship are the spiritual matrix out of which Allah was elevated.

In a pluralistic world, all religions (whether true or false) are to be tolerated and afforded legal protection. It is not the primary concern of a secular state to judge the truth-claims of any one religion. Judaism and Buddhism, Satanism and Christianity, Islam and Wicca – all have the right to exist and propagate their beliefs. In that sense, in a secular society Islam is to be tolerated and respected. Its teachings should not be mocked; its mosques and madrasas (Islamic seminaries) should be free from attack; its adherents should be treated with courtesy, friendliness and respect.

At the same time, it should be remembered that the Koran claims that only Islam’s religious positions are true, and that Christianity’s and Judaism’s claims are distorted or even willfully misleading. Since Islam is free to preach and teach according to that religious perspective, it is only logical that Christians and Jews should exercise their own freedom of religion when it comes to pointing out where Islam departs radically from biblical truth. Bible believers should also not be ashamed to point out where Islam’s origins fall under the biblical description of being pagan and demonic.

A few pages from now the question of jihad (holy war) will be considered. It will be seen that Islam teaches about a future world battle between Islam on the one hand, and what we now call Western Christianity and secular democracy on the other. Islamic forces will

conquer the West and, in this future Islamic dictatorship, Christians who willingly submit to Muslim rule will have limited civil rights and a nearly slave status. However, if they oppose Islam they are to be massacred. Secularists will be given a simpler choice – conversion to Islam or the death penalty. The fate of the Jews is the clearest – they will simply be slaughtered.

Though these future jihad actions may now be explained by Muslim clerics to be an Islamic expression of respect and tolerance for defeated non-believers, the rest of the world may not so willingly appreciate or embrace these same definitions. A look around the planet at the turn of the 21st century reveals that respect and toleration for other religions tend to characterize democracies. Such religious freedoms are not found in countries ruled by Islamic dictatorships today (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, etc.). Islam cannot have it both ways – it cannot simultaneously portray itself in the West as a champion of democratic principles of respect and toleration for other religions, and still remain true to Muhammad's call for jihad.

Islam foresees and calls for a violent armed clash between Muslims and the other nations. Watchmen who point this out are not fostering religious hatred or hatred of Islam. To point out these Islamic teachings is to speak the truth and to deliver a prophetic warning.

II. Are Most Muslims Peace Loving And Not Terrorists?

Part of this question can be answered quickly and positively. Many Muslims are peace loving and desire nothing more than to raise their families and lead a quiet life. Muslims are human beings made in the image of the God of Israel. They share a common humanity with all other descendants of Adam and Eve, and no one should forget that their hopes and joys are very similar to every other person's hopes and joys. As well, most Muslims are not terrorists. Only a small percentage of Muslims would be classified by Western or Israeli intelligence services as terrorists.

But this is only part of the story. What the West considers terrorism, many Muslims consider Islamic heroism. There is great support internationally in the Muslim street for Osama Bin Laden, for anti-American and anti-Israeli terror, for Sadaam Hussein and for violent jihad. Spurred on by calls to jihad, the Islamic masses can be very quickly roused to uncontrolled riots and frightening displays of pro-terrorist violence. Recent riots in Pakistan, Kashmir, Indonesia and Gaza are current, frightening examples.

Much violence has also occurred in the Islamic world when Muslims fight against Muslim (e.g., when Islamic military dictatorships with a more secular world view attempt to crush Muslim fundamentalist organizations, or when radical Islamic groups try to destabilize and overthrow Muslim military regimes). Though Muslims are not necessarily violent, an unusual degree of violence does characterize many Islamic societies. A brief description of recent Muslim violence in various Islamic countries brings this point home.

Algeria has been reeling from a war between GIA (Armed Islamic Group – radical Muslim

terrorists) and its established government (a more secular Muslim military dictatorship) since 1992. Gruesome reports of entire villages having their throats slit, famous pop singers assassinated for singing Western influenced music, government instigated massacres of regions whose loyalties are suspect – these have left more than 70,000 murdered over the past 9 years. GIA cells are believed to have cooperated in Bin Laden's September 11 attacks.

Libya is an Islamic dictatorship under Muammar al-Qaddafi. It has been one of the chief training centers for world terrorism, and has executed many attacks such as the bombing of a Berlin discotheque in March 1986 where US soldiers were murdered, as well as the terrorist bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988. It has cooperated with Pakistan in the funding and development of an Islamic nuclear bomb, as well as developing chemical warfare abilities. Libya has been a main supporter of such terrorist groups as the Columbian M-19, Red Brigades, IRA, Ahmed Jibril's PFLP, Arafat's PLO etc. In the 1970's Qaddafi awarded Yasir Arafat \$5 million in recognition of his terror operation at the 1972 Munich Olympics which led to the massacre of Israeli athletes.

Egypt's President Sadat was assassinated by terrorists associated with Egyptian Islamic Jihad in October 1981. This group was later co-planner of the World Trade Center bombings in 1993 and seems to have been involved in the September 2001 attack as well. Its top leader was Ayman al-Zawahiri (one of the planners of Sadat's assassination) who now functions as Osama Bin Laden's top deputy for military operations. In the 1950s Egypt originally financed, trained and ran the first terrorist raids of the fedayin, and in 1964 helped establish the PLO as a terrorist organization. Egypt was also the first Islamic country to use poison gas against fellow Muslims in the North Yemen war of 1962-67. The Christian Copts of the Egyptian Nile Valley have been subject to decades of torture, murder, raping and destruction of property on a regular basis, with a blind eye being turned by Muslim authorities.

Sudan is considered one of world terrorism's main centers. Osama Bin Laden has a strong network in that country. According to the US Grand Jury indictment against Osama Bin Laden, the bombers of the US Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania were trained and sent out from that country. The Islamic dictatorship 'National Islamic Front' ruling Sudan has been overseeing the massacre, enslavement, rape and murder of the Christian and animist inhabitants of Southern Sudan, forcibly converting survivors and prisoners to Islam. Years ago the NIF proclaimed a jihad against its 'domestic enemy', and since 1983 more than 1.9 million people have been murdered or have been caused to die as a result of the actions of the NIF in southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains.

Syria and Lebanon are also a world center of terrorism, as well as of opium and hashish cultivation. Between 1975-82 over 100,000 Lebanese were killed in the Lebanese civil war between the PLO, the Shiite and Sunni Muslims, the Druze and the Maronite Christians. In the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley the Hezbollah terrorist groups train and send out forces to attack Israel. According to the US State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counter-terrorism's 2000 report, Syria oversees the following terrorist networks operating and training in Lebanon's Bekaa: Hezbollah, Osama Bin Laden's al-Qa'ida (Arabic, 'The Base') network, Hamas, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, George Habash's PFLP-GC, Asbat al-

Ansar, and several local Sunni extremist organizations. Other sources would add the names of the Japanese Red Army and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Syria not only controls Lebanon's terrorist training camps, but allows Islamic terrorists to base out of Damascus. In February 1982 the Syrian city of Hama was subject to a 27 day siege. The Syrian Army under the command of Rifa'at Assad surrounded the city and trapped possibly 100 members of the Muslim Brotherhood who were opposed to President Assad's regime. Artillery shelling of that city caused between 10,000 and 38,000 civilian casualties. Fifteen thousand people were untraceable as a result of the massacre. In September 2001 two PFLP terrorist were arrested crossing into Israel from Jordan, having been trained in Syria to blow up the two towers of Tel Aviv's Azrieli Center.

Jordan became a base of PLO terror operations against Israel between 1964 and 1970. When the PLO tried to overthrow King Hussein's government in September 1970 to set up a terrorist dictatorship in its stead, the king responded by unleashing his Bedouin Legionnaires against the PLO. Approximately 3,500 were killed during those weeks in 'Black September', with many terrorists actually escaping to Israel to request asylum.

The Palestinian Authority continues to engage in open terrorism. Of the 176 Jewish terror victims in the past year, 71 of them were committed by members of the PA security forces. Calls for a jihad against the Jewish people and for the destruction of the State of Israel are regularly broadcast on PA controlled radio and television. On September 11, the day of the World Trade Center bombing, the PA controlled newspaper al-Hayat al-Jadida declared, "The suicide bombers of today are the noble successors of the Lebanese bombers, who taught the US Marines a tough lesson. These suicide bombers are the salt of the earth, the engines of history. They are among the most honorable people among us." The PA appointed Mufti Ekrima Sabri gave a sermon at the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem in late August 2001, in which he called on Allah "to destroy the United States and Great Britain, as well as those who help the two countries".

Saudi Arabia continues to bankroll many terrorist groups, though the funding mostly comes through private individuals. Many terrorist organizations receive substantial chunks of their funding through the government-tolerated generosity of the Saudis. Jews are forbidden to set foot in Saudi Arabia, and anti-Jewish literature is readily available. Christian houses of worship are illegal, and Christians who are discovered practicing their faith are often arrested, tortured and sometimes beheaded.

Iran is the center of Shi'ite Islam, and a world leader in exporting terrorism. It is a haven for many terrorist organizations, and funds Hezbollah's and Islamic Jihad's activities against Israel. Iran also supports and offers safe haven to Algeria's GIA, Egypt's Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, Hamas, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, PFLP-GC, Kurdistan Worker's Party, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, etc. Iran's government held US embassy personnel hostage for 444 days in 1979-80, and has been linked to many top terror attacks around the world. It has continually called for the destruction of the Great Satan (USA) and the Little Satan (Israel) through jihad. Hezbollah's former leader is Imad Mugniyeh, the planner and mastermind of Hezbollah kidnappings, suicide bombings and many especially violent airplane hijackings. He is also the man who oversaw the torture to death of William Buckley (the CIA station chief in Beirut) and the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos

Aries in 1992. At present he resides in Iran and in recent months has had significant contact with Bin Laden's top leadership, including Ayman al-Zawahari. The September 11 hijackings show strikingly similar tradecraft to Mugnyeh's methods.

Iraq is perhaps the most well known country which both exports terrorism and murders its own citizens. In March 1988 Sadaam Hussein launched a chemical warfare attack against the town of Halabja in northern Iraq. Mustard gas and nerve gases were deployed. Between 5,000 and 12,000 Iraqi Kurds were killed immediately, and an estimated minimum of 40,000 were injured. His brutality against the Kurds, the Iranians and the Kuwaitis have earned him the Arabic title 'the butcher of Baghdad'. Sadaam has stirred up riots across the Muslim world by his declarations that he is leading a jihad against the forces of the godless West and of Israel. His drive to obtain non-conventional weapons (atomic, biological and chemical) coupled with his cruel invasion of Kuwait, triggered the Gulf War of 1991. Sadaam was one of the few world leaders who publicly applauded the recent attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon.

Afghanistan's non-Arab country is ruled by the Islamic Taliban dictatorship. It is a center for training some of the most radical and violent Islamic terrorists, and the center of Bin Laden's al-Qa'ida network. The cruelty of this Islamic regime against its own people is internationally known and documented. Eight Christians working for the humanitarian aid organization "Shelter" are facing the death penalty for the alleged crime of sharing their faith with Afghans.

Pakistan is a non-Arab Muslim country. Christians accused of sharing their faith in Pakistan have been jailed, tortured and lynched. Osama Bin Laden has many contacts with Pakistan's intelligence community and has received active support from many sources in Pakistan. Over 30,000 Pakistanis fought as jihad warriors against Russian forces in Afghanistan. Recent violent anti-American riots and calls for jihad against the West show the volatile nature of many Pakistani Muslims. Recently President Musharraf publicly accused Hindus and Jews of plotting against Pakistan. This was partially done in an effort to divert Muslim anger away from Pakistan's leaders, who are cooperating with America against fellow Muslims in Afghanistan and the mujahid Bin Laden.

Indonesia, a non-Arab Muslim country, has recently seen horrendous Muslim instigated riots against Indonesian and immigrant Chinese Christians. A campaign of targeted rapes, murders and church burnings throughout Indonesia has garnered world media attention.

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This brief survey of violence and terrorism in Muslim countries, and the solid evidence of widespread Islamic support for Muslim terrorist organizations, refutes the accuracy of the mantra that many are repeating today, that Islam is simply 'the way of peace' and that there is no such thing as Islamic terrorism. There are a sizable and active number of Muslim organizations and Islamic countries which support, export and engage in terrorism against Western targets. They are not a lunatic fringe. They are following Muhammad's command to engage in jihad – Islamic holy war (more on this in a few pages).

Though not all Islamic terrorism is sponsored by Arabs, the lion's share of it brings together

two potent elements – Islam and the Arab people. An example: of the 26 terrorist organizations whose identities have been published and whose financial holdings in the US have been seized, all are Islamic and most are Arab-led. Part of the key to this volatile mix may be found in the Bible, in Genesis 16:10-12. There the Angel of the Lord prophesies to Hagar concerning her yet to be born son Ishmael. “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count . . . Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. And you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. And he will be a wild donkey of a man. His hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him, and he will live to the east of (ed., or in opposition to/against) all of his brothers.”

This prophetic word has shaped much of the destiny of the greater Arab nation and its relationship with the world. Fierce independence, a wild and untamable soul, and arrogant animosity can characterize Arab dealings (at their worst) with the world. But the Arab world at its best manifests freedom of abandoned worship, generosity, graciousness and sacrificial zeal. When Messiah Jesus is allowed to transform their hearts, the descendants of Ishmael will find God bringing sweet out of the bitter, and they will discover the beauty of their Abrahamic connection in a totally new way. Peace and cooperation will supplant wildness and strife, and love between Arab and Jewish cousins will bloom again.

We must remember that God has a heart overflowing with compassion and saving love for the multitude of Ishmael’s sons and daughters. The Living One who saw Hagar and her son dying of thirst in the wilderness, has preserved Ishmael’s line for redemptive purposes as well. Great revival will break out throughout the Arab world but prior to this, believing Jews and Gentiles need to be willing to pay the price in prayers, tears and blood to see the Arab world set free from the demonic deception known as Islam.

Another biblical passage that may have some bearing is Psalm 120. The Jewish psalmist complains that he has become exasperated in his having to deal with deceitfulness and warlike strife in the tents of Kedar (an ancient name for an Arabian tribe). “Too long has my soul had its dwelling with those who hate peace. I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war” (Psa.120:6-7). It seems that not much has changed in 3,000 years. The Arab people have long had the tendency to see themselves at war with the world. The Bible indicates that this tendency goes back not only to the jihad of Muhammad’s day, but even to the days of Ishmael and King David.

A third passage which helps to explain the spiritual dynamic of Islam is Hebrews 12:15-17. This passage is based on two scriptures in Gen.25. In Gen.25:22-23 YHVH prophesies to Rebecca that the right of firstborn inheritance (physically and spiritually) will rest on Jacob the second born. In Gen.25:31-34 Esau fulfills the prophetic word by selling his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of red lentil pottage. The Book to the Hebrews notes that a root of bitterness sprang up in Esau’s heart after God affirmed that Jacob would indeed possess the promise. “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears”.

This bitter root based on jealousy of Jacob has spiritually defiled the majority of the Arab peoples. Satan has complicated matters by using Islam to fan the flames of hatred toward the Jewish people — first among the Arabs, and then through them to the rest of the Islamized world. Islam has perpetuated this spiritual striving, elevating it to the level of a religious commandment.

Another spiritual factor concerning the Arab people is found in Isaac's prophetic word over Esau, given after Jacob had received the right of the firstborn: "I have made [Jacob] lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. . . Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck.' Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob." When Rebecca was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself with the thought of killing you" (Gen.27:37,39-42).

Isaac says that Esau's descendants would eventually move away from the land of Israel and make their home in the deserts. This process began when Esau moved to Edom, the desert area between southern Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Isaac adds that they would not make their living so much from agriculture as from the sword – from conquest, and from pillaging and plundering desert caravans. The Bedouin of the Arabian desert, and specifically Muhammad's followers from Yathrib/Medina, began the expansion of Islam by raiding peaceful trading caravans.

Islam's first military exploits did not involve spreading the religion of Allah, but they were simply piracy – attacking and despoiling other Arabs on their way to the pagan shrines of Mecca. These raids were known in Arabic as *razzia*, and were an old pre-Islamic Arabian custom. Muhammad himself organized 82 raids, leading between 19 and 26 of them personally. Within a short time robbing, raping and murder would be elevated to a spiritual commandment called 'jihad for the sake of Allah'. Isaac's prophecy over Esau was about to come true with devastating results for the startled inhabitants of Africa, Asia and southern Europe.

But God has not only spoken hard words over the Arab people. The Hebrew prophets proclaim that a radically different prophetic vision will transform many Middle Easterners at the End of Days. Isaiah speaks of a day yet future when many Arabs will turn to the God of Jacob and find His healing. This will not be considered a day of defeat for the Arab nations, but rather an entrance into true victory and blessing as the rift in Abraham's family will finally be healed. Ishmael and Esau will at last find joy and covenantal blessing as they embrace their Jewish cousins, accepting them as the ones who have received the right of inheritance which belongs to the firstborn.

"In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the Lord at its border. So the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the Lord . . . In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and

Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt My people, Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My inheritance'" (Isa.19:19,21,23-25).

One of the keys to peace between the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Israel lies in the hands of the Jewish people. When God grants Israel grace, humility and revelation, the Jewish people will be able to honor and respect Ishmael and Esau as Abraham and Isaac's physically firstborn sons — though God's 'promise of the firstborn' will always remain Isaac's and Jacob's inheritance.

Even though Abraham's earthly family remains very dysfunctional, believers should remember that the Arab nation is the Jewish people's elder brother. Pray that the fractured physical family of Abraham will be healed in fullness, Even today, honor and slighted honor is a powerful dynamic among Arab people and the source of much conflict. Pray that the Jewish people grow deep enough in grace to bless and honor their Arab brothers, bringing healing and restoration. Pray that God will so transform Arab and Jewish hearts that Jews will request wise and godly counsel from their Arab brothers, and that Arabs will gladly share their "older brotherly" wisdom and protection with younger brother Jacob, the Jewish people whom God calls "the firstborn son among all the nations" (Exod.4:22-23).

III. "Jihad doesn't mean holy war - Muhammad never taught holy war."

The recent focus on jihad and mujahidin has caused some Islamic spokesmen in the West to declare that Islam does not believe in holy war, and that anyone who believes this is defaming Islam and is ignorant of Arabic. Most Westerners are ignorant about Islam and Arabic, and are also committed to a form of secular pluralism. When accusations are leveled at them, many Westerners simply step back, lower their heads and mumble, "I'm sorry! No offense intended to you or your religion!"

Ever since the terror attacks occurred on the Pentagon and on New York City, Hollywood and the State Department have stepped into the gap, attempting to lower tensions and dissipate American anger against Islam. Pop stars and politicians, movie stars and TV show hosts have suddenly become authorities on Islam, reading from prepared scripts which quote from the Koran (usually out of context) and describe Islam in glowing terms as a peaceful religion which only wants to worship its God in peace and quietness.

The Koran and Hadith (authoritative Muslim commentary) describe jihad very clearly, and their description does not jibe with what many talking heads are confidently proclaiming. These next sections set forth Islamic teaching on jihad from the source documents, explain how these teachings are reflected in both the Muslim view of the End of Days and in the terror and violence of the 'mujahidin of the apocalypse', and suggest some prophetic possibilities as to how this rapidly developing crisis may play out.

A. The Arabic word 'jihad'

Jihad is derived from the Arabic root jhd and its primary meaning is ‘to strive’, ‘to exert oneself’, or ‘determined effort’. One who participates in jihad is a mujahid (plural mujahidin). In the Koran the term jihad is usually followed by the expression fi sabil Allah (‘in the path of Allah’) and nearly always refers to war and conquest in Allah’s name. There are other Arabic words that refer to war, such as harb (‘to put to the sword’) or qital (‘to slay’), but jihad is the Koran’s term of preference for holy war – conquest of non-Muslims, their territories and possessions – in the name of Allah, as well as giving pagan survivors the choice between death and conversion to Islam.

The Hadith, a compilation of Muhammad’s teachings written down after the completion of the Koran and considered authoritative by Islam, is the second most important source of Islamic law (Shari`a). The term jihad as used in the most authoritative hadith (Sahih al-Bukhari) has 199 references, all of which define jihad as warfare. The world famous Orientalist scholar Bernard Lewis states that “the overwhelming majority of classical theologians, jurists and traditionalists . . . understood the obligation of jihad in a military sense” (Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 72). The original and classical Islamic use of the term jihad in both Koran and the Hadith means armed warfare conducted against unbelievers.

B. How the understanding of ‘jihad’ has evolved

At first glance the issue seems to be clear: Islam’s most authoritative and original sources teach that jihad is holy war. Why should any Muslims disagree? For example, why does the Council on American-Islamic Relations’ web page state that “‘Jihad’ does not mean ‘holy war.’ . . . It is a central and broad Islamic concept that includes struggle against evil inclinations within oneself, struggle to improve the quality of life in society, struggle in the battlefield for self-defense (e.g., - having a standing army for national defense), or fighting against tyranny or oppression”? CAIR’s definitions do not reflect the classical Arabic and Koranic uses of the term ‘jihad’. Why are the clear facts being blurred?

The answer has to do with three factors. The first factor is that spin doctors might be concerned about present public relations, not about Koranic accuracy. The second factor is that Muslims in the West are concerned about anti-Islamic persecutions, and consider it better to fudge the truth for the sake of temporary peace, than tell the truth and face massive discrimination.

The third factor deals with how Islam has fared in history. Islam has undergone political and theological changes since its inception. At Islam’s birth, Muhammad defined jihad as holy war, and for at least a century that is how Islam’s leaders understood the call. Islam spread from Mecca to Mesopotamia, from Persia to the Pyrenees, from India to Israel – all through wars of conquest. At one point in history Islam had nearly conquered the known world at the point of a scimitar.

But eventually Islamic forces were stopped. In France Charles Martel broke the wave of Muslim conquest at the Battle of Poitiers in 732. Alfonso VIII of Castile broke the Almohad (Moorish) hold on Spain in the Battle of Las Navos de Tolosa in 1212, leading to the emigration of one million Moors back to Morocco. The Byzantine kings kept up a barrier

against the Islamic onslaught from the 600's until 1453, when their city of Constantinople was overrun by the Turks. Three days of murder, rape and robbery were permitted to the Islamic jihad victors. Austria and Hungary held firm against the green banner of Islam, preventing them from battering down the very gates of Vienna in 1529 and 1566. Finally in 1683 Islam's throttling grasp on the nations of Europe began to be broken, with the defeat of the Ottoman forces of Kara Mustafa by John III of Poland at the Battle of Vienna. Over one thousand years of Islamic jihad conquest and rule was now beginning to be reversed.

At the dawn of Islam in the seventh century AD, when Islam's Bedouin armies had been sweeping across the known world and conquering at the point of the sword, Muhammad's teachings on jihad were not disputed by Muslims. They were incorporated into the Koran and the Hadith, and formed a bedrock of Islamic teaching and practice. But when the Muslim momentum of conquest began to be blunted, the theology of jihad began to metamorphose. Temporary treaties were allowed with the enemy, in order to allow Islamic forces time to consolidate forces and then to attack again. Occasionally the nearly slave status granted to Jews and Christians (the dhimmi status granted to Dar al-Kitab, the 'people of the Book') was relaxed because Islam was in need of their professional services. In certain cases pagans were granted improved conditions for the same reasons.

Islamic jurists began to develop new theological terms. At first the world was to be divided into two sectors – Dar al-Islam (the zone or abode of Islam, where Islamic law is rigorously carried out) and Dar al-Harb (the zone of the sword/warfare, where unbelievers lived who needed to be conquered and converted or slain). This view of the world implied that perpetual warfare would exist between Muslims and non-Muslims, until Islam would absorb or conquer Dar al-Harb. Other jurists would later suggest a third possibility (after Islamic military advances were stalled and cease-fire treaties were signed) – Dar al-Sulh (the zone of peace treaty) or Dar al-Ahd (the zone of covenant). Non-stop war would not have to be immediately waged. Treaties afforded Muslim governments time to re-arm and then renew jihad at a later and more auspicious date.

As corruption began to predominate in many Islamic leaders, and as succession wars and murderous rivalries began to characterize Muslim rulers, a new wave of zealous Islamic preachers and teachers arose. These called for the overthrow of all Islamic leaders who were comfortable with the status quo standoff, or who had abandoned jihad in favor of accommodation with pagans or Christians.

These new Islamic firebrands declared that Muslim leaders who failed to enforce Muslim religious law (the Shari'a) rigorously (including the necessity of jihad) had forfeited the right to rule. Led by the teachings of Ibn Taymiya (1268-1328), they now redefined jihad to include the overthrow of established Islamic governments who had abandoned Muhammad's original zeal for conquest. They also declared that professing Muslims who do not live strictly according to the Shari'a are unbelievers, and that jihad must be waged against them as well. Other Muslim groups who came to the same conclusions included the Kharijis/Khawarij in the 600's and the Assassins/Hashishin in the 1000's AD.

Finally another major development in the evolution of jihad came through the Sufi movement. Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1059-1111) taught that there is a

distinction between lesser jihad (al-jihad al-asghar) and greater jihad (al-jihad al-akbar). What was now called 'lesser jihad' still meant holy war and it still involved the conquest of pagans, Jews and Christians at the point of the sword. But now the term 'greater jihad' would be understood to refer to personal struggle against inner evil. Al-Ghazali envisioned the body as a city governed by the human soul yet also under attack by evil desires. A purported tradition which is hotly disputed in Islam and not found in the Koran or the more authoritative hadiths, describes how Muhammad supposedly came back from a jihad battle and declared, "We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." When asked, "What is the greater jihad?" he replied, "It is the struggle against oneself."

Many Muslims have been influenced by this Sufi form of Islam, and think of jihad more as a personal struggle against evil, rather than as holy war for the sake of Allah. Yet al-Ghazali's teaching provoked charges of heresy from Ibn Taymiya and his follower Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziya (1292-1350), who declared that al-Ghazali's hadith quoted above was a deliberate fabrication and a violation of Muhammad's teachings on jihad in the Koran.

Today modern Muslims have various definitions of jihad that they can choose from. Some use the term jihad in good faith to mean totally non-violent behavior. Many others, especially in the Middle East and Asia, understand jihad to be armed conflict. It is important to point out that an honest examination of classical Islam forces one to conclude: Muhammad taught and practiced jihad as holy war; that is how Islam's first leaders and theologians understood the term; that is exactly how Islamic terrorists define their own actions. Other more esoteric Muslim understandings of jihad do not erase the fact that 'armed conquest and conversion or murder of unbelievers' is Islam's original understanding of the term.

C. The Return to Classical 'jihad'

A significant and growing group of Islamic activists (including Bin Laden) considers those who champion the peaceful 'greater jihad' to be anti-Islamic, cowardly, accommodationist and heretical. Their understanding is that jihad as armed attack is the heart and cornerstone of Islam, and that Islam's weakened status in the world is due to the abandoning of jihad by apostate Islamic leaders and teachers. These pro-jihad Islamic activists include the assassins of Egypt's President Anwar al-Sadat.

Sadat's assassins were followers of the blind Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman (now a prisoner in a US penitentiary) and his Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Jama'at al-Jihad) group. The assassination was defended in an Islamic pamphlet (written by Muhammad Abd al-Salaam Faraj) titled "The Neglected Obligation" (al-Farida al-Gha'ibah). Faraj called for the assassination of Muslim leaders who will not engage in jihad, and promised Muslims that Islam's victorious jihad conquest of the world is inevitable (see Johannes Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan, 1986). Faraj was later put to death by Egypt.

Another modern and influential prophet of jihad was the Shi'ite Muslim Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini (1903-1989). He called for jihad as armed actions, stating that "by means of jihad . . . (Islamic jurists) must expose and overthrow tyrannical rulers and rouse

the people so the universal movement of all alert Muslims can establish Islamic government in the place of tyrannical regimes". When Islamic teachers truly communicate these points, this will cause "the entire population to become mujahidin" (Ruhullah Khomeini, Islamic Government, Text in Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini, trans. & annotated Hamid Algar; Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981, p. 108, 132). His teachings led the nation of Iran to overthrow the Shah and turn 180 degrees against America. This sudden radical 'Islamization' of Iran caught the US by surprise and totally disrupted American foreign policy in the Middle East. Khomeini's present influence on modern radical Islam is very strong.

In 1995, sixteen years after Iran embraced Khomeini's vision of jihad, some in the US intelligence community had not yet read the writing on the wall. "Ambassador Philip Wilcox, coordinator of the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the U.S. Department of State, declared: 'There is no link between Islam and violence and terrorism. That is a canard which we want to dismiss at the outset. Nor is there a worldwide Islamic network somehow waging jihad against the West. This is a concept that's brooded about sometimes, and there is virtually no intelligence information to suggest that such a network exists'" (article by Paul Findlay, Republican - Illinois; Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, March 1995, p. 20).

Paul Findlay is on record as an advocate of Arab and Islamic causes (he was called "Yasser Arafat's favorite congressman" by Jon Margolis, national political correspondent for the Chicago Tribune). That is his democratic right. What is of concern is that agents of US counter-terrorism could have been so off-base in their appraisals. Could this lack of clear thinking perhaps reflect in some way how the American intelligence community was so ill-prepared for the events of September 11 2001?

Most Americans are now convinced that a worldwide Islamic terror network exists. But the cost of unbelief has been high. With the future in mind, consider Osama Bin Laden's predictions on May 28 1998 in these selected quotes from John Miller's interview with him on ABC News:

We look at ourselves and our brethren as worshipers of Allah who created us to worship him and follow his books and prophets. I am one of Allah's worshipers. I worship Allah, which includes carrying out the jihad to raise Allah's word and evict the Americans from all Muslim land . . . We are sure of Allah's victory and our victory against the Americans and the Jews as promised by the prophet peace be upon him Our battle with the Americans is larger than our battle with the Russians . . . We predict a black day for America and the end of the United States as 'United' States . . . (The USA) will retreat from our land and collect the bodies of its sons back to America. Allah willing . . . any government that sells its people's interests and betrays its people and takes actions that removes it from the Muslim nation will not succeed. We predict that the Riyadh (ed., Saudi) leader and those with him . . . will disintegrate. They have left the Muslim nation. We predict that like the Iran Royal family, the Shah, they will disperse and disappear . . . The Muslim masses are moving towards liberating the Muslim worlds. Allah willing, we will win . . . A great meeting took place a few days ago in Pakistan, and it was attended by 150 scholars in Pakistan . . . great joint fatwas were passed . . . the International Islamic Front for the Jihad Against Jews and

Crusaders was formed, which we are a member of with other groups. It has a higher council to coordinate rousing the Muslim nation to carry out jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders. . . The American Government is driving America to destruction ... so, we tell the Americans as a people . . . if they value their lives and those of their children, find a nationalistic government that will look after their interests and not the interest of the Jews. The continuation of the tyranny will bring the fighting to America . . . We would like to stress that we are in close contact with Muslim masses, praise be to Allah. The issue of liberating Holy Lands is not my personal desire, but I am just a worshiper of Allah and one of Allah's soldiers in the Muslim nation. The movement is driving fast and light(ly) forward. And I am sure of our victory with Allah's help against America and the Jews.

On July 21, 2001, a nine-minute long edited tape was passed on to Reuters Television by a Kuwaiti television station. The tape was made by Osama Bin-Laden and contained an announcement which would soon be acted on with chilling results: "To all the mujahidin: your brothers in Palestine are waiting for you, it's time to penetrate America and Israel and hit them where it hurts most". Fifty two days later, pilots trained by Bin Laden's al-Qa'ida organization began to crash their hijacked planes into America.

The Western world (specifically the United States) and Israel are being actively targeted by Koran-quoting modern jihad warriors. Amazingly, at the same time some defenders of Islam try to protest that these mujahidin are not real Muslims, since (they insist) Islam does not believe in compulsion in religion (Surah 2:256). As firemen still dig through the ruins of the WTC looking for bodies, many Americans are confused and not a little exasperated by the mixed signals they are getting from a divided world Islamic community, one which seems to be speaking out of two sides of its mouth about what jihad really is.

One thing is pretty clear. It is obvious to all that for these terrorists, jihad is not primarily self-improvement or an internal struggle against evil desires. As the ABC News quote demonstrates, these mujahidin back up their violent and murderous behavior with accurate quotes from the Koran and the words of Muhammad. Only the willfully blind can ignore the fact that at this moment in history some Muslims really are a threat to the West, and that some of Muhammad's teachings really are a threat to all non-Muslims.

Islamic mujahidin would strongly disagree with the remarks which President George Bush made on September 17 2001 at the Islamic Center of Washington, when he said, "These acts of violence against innocents violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith. And it's important for my fellow Americans to understand that (ed. point) . . . The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war. When we think of Islam we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. . .". The mujahidin's response would simply be, "Of course we represent war! Jihad for the sake of Allah is war, but we also understand holy war to be a fundamental tenet of the Islamic faith, of normative Islam, Muhammad's Islam, the Koran's Islam!"

It is said that one should not try to be more Catholic than the Pope. And far be it from non-Muslims to advocate one stream of Islam over another. These debates over which form of Islam is 'kosher' really should be internal Islamic debates. Nevertheless, it needs to be

stressed repeatedly that modern Islamic terrorism is not a distortion or a gross perversion of classical Islam. The unappetizing truth is that modern Islamic jihad terrorism is the flesh and blood grandchild of Muhammad's jihad teachings and practices.

D. The Koran and Hadith on 'jihad'

It is now time to consider the Koran's and the Hadith's teaching about jihad. This may help in understanding the spiritual guidelines that radical Islamic terrorists are following as they plan war against America, Israel and the Western world. The contextual use of the term jihad in all of the following passages is 'armed conflict' and 'religious war of conquest'.

The highest calling

According to the Hadith (al-Bukhari 1:25), the highest calling a Muslim can engage in is armed jihad: "Muhammad once was asked: 'What is the best deed for the Muslim next to believing in Allah and his messenger?' His answer was: 'To participate in jihad in Allah's cause'".

Every knee shall bow

Muhammad taught that jihad warfare is the sacred duty of all Muslims. Islam must strive and fight until the nations are forced to bow every knee to Allah. "I have been ordered to fight with the people till they say, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah'" (al-Bukhari 4:196). This teaching is an Islamic counterfeit of Isaiah 45:23 and Philippians 2:10-11, where YHVH/Yeshua says that every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

The difference between Isaiah's declaration and Muhammad's call to jihad is striking. According to Isaiah, at the Final Judgment all mankind will stand before the God of the Bible and acknowledge His sovereignty. But Muhammad's Allah is not content to wait; he commands his followers 'in the now' to crush and kill all who refuse to acknowledge Allah's supremacy. The totalitarian nature of Islam is clear – its mandate is to conquer the entire world and force it at the point of the sword to submit to the 'one true faith', to the dictatorship of Allah.

Against Jews, Christians and Polytheists

This armed jihad conflict is directed against Jews and Christians ('the people of the Book') and polytheists. "Fight them and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame" (Surah 9:14). "Wage war on those who don't believe in Allah or the Last Day . . . who . . . refuse to acknowledge the true religion (Islam), (even if they are) the people of the Book, until they pay the jizya (poll-tax) without reservation and are totally subjugated. The Jews claim that Uzair (Ezra?) is a son of Allah, and the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the son of Allah'. Those are their claims which do indeed resemble the sayings of the unbelievers of old. May Allah destroy them! How they are deluded!" (Surah 9:29,30).

How would modern atheists and agnostics be defined in this Islamic scenario? It should be

remembered that in Muhammad's day, there were no large groups of atheists or agnostics. In classical Islam's eyes, atheism would simply be another modern heretical form of not believing in Allah and his prophet – and therefore not immune from the attention of the jihad.

Order of jihad battle

What did Muhammad tell his followers to do when jihad battle begins? “When you meet the unbelievers (in battle), strike off their heads; then when you have made wide slaughter among them, carefully tie up the remaining captives. Afterwards either set them free as a favor or let them ransom (themselves) until the war terminates. Thus (you are commanded). but if it has been Allah's will he could certainly have exacted retribution from them (himself). But (he lets you fight) in order to test you by means of others; and (as for Muslim fighters) those who are slain in the cause of Allah, he will by no means allow their deeds to perish” (Surah 47:4).

Death and taxes

These above passages describe the components of jihad: military defeat of the enemy combined with deliberate slaughter of the opponent; enslavement or ransom if the victorious leader so desires; a fealty bond (jizya or poll-tax) paid by Jews or Christians, indicating their acceptance of and agreement to a humiliating near-slave status (dhimmi); death by the sword for those who refuse to accept Islam or pay the jizya (see *The Dictionary of Islam*, p. 243).

This last condition also applies to Christians and Jews. “The Jews were allowed to stay at Khaibar on condition that they would pay half the produce of their lands to the holy Prophet in addition to the jizya” (Mishkat 2:455; later on the Jews of Khaibar were slaughtered). “If they (the enemy) refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the jizya. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them” (Sahih Muslim, 4294).

Open season

The following two stories show the treatment of Arab polytheists at the hand of Muhammad's jihad soldiers. “Ayas b. Salamah reported on the authority of his father: ‘The apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) appointed Abu Bakr to be our commander and we fought with some people who were polytheists, and we attacked them at night, killing them. Our war-cry that night was “Kill, kill!” Salamah said: “I killed that night with my hand polytheists belonging to seven houses” (Sunan Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Jihad 2632). “The messenger of Allah (Muhammad) made a raid upon Banu Mustaliq while they were unaware and their cattle were having a drink at the water. He killed those who fought and imprisoned the others” (Sahih Muslim 4292). These jihad stories are a respected part of Islam's religious tradition.

Polytheists who accept Islam can be spared, but if they return to polytheism, they are to be destroyed. “Say to the unbelievers (ed. polytheists): If they desist from their unbelief, what is now past shall be forgiven them; but if they return to it, they have already before them

the doom of the ancients! Fight then against them until there is no strife and the religion is entirely Allah's..." (Surah 8:39-42). Since Christians who believe in the Trinity are considered polytheists by Islam, they are also potentially fair game, and can be destroyed if battle is joined: "But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and kill those who join other gods with Allah wherever you may find them; capture and besiege them and lie in wait for them with every stratagem (of war)" (Surah 9:5; cf. 2:217).

Terror and jihad

Jihad not only involves warfare and subjugation. Terror is considered a necessary psychological weapon to intimidate and crush all opposition. Allah says, "I will instill terror into the hearts of the unbelievers. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every one of their fingertips . . . O you who believe! when you meet those who disbelieve marching for war, then turn not your backs to them. And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day – unless he turn aside for the sake of fighting or withdraws to a company – then he, indeed, becomes deserving of Allah's wrath, and his abode is hell; and an evil destination shall it be. It is not you who slew them; it was Allah who slew them, and you did not smite when you smote (the enemy), but it was Allah who smote, and that he might confer upon the believers a good gift from himself . . . Strike terror (into the hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies" (Surah 8:12, 15-17, 60). These words of Allah are the spiritual catalyst which led to the actions of the Black Tuesday terrorists.

Jihad – a harsh and merciless calling

Muhammad taught his followers that jihad warriors need to carry out their attacks with ferocious cruelty. "O you who believe! Fight the unbelievers in your surroundings, and let them find harshness in you and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil)" (Surah 9:123). Mujahidin (jihad warriors) are to be known for their lack of mercy in battle: "Those who follow Muhammad are merciless to the unbelievers but kind to each other" (Surah 48:29).

Those who ride forth under the banner of jihad are not to show chivalry or love to the enemy, before his defeat or after. Rather than Yeshua's commandment to love one's enemy, Allah commands Muslims to hate their enemies: "O you who believe! Do not take my enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the apostle and yourselves because you believe in Allah your lord? If you go forth struggling hard (doing jihad) in my path and seeking my pleasure, would you manifest love to them? And I know what you conceal and what you manifest; and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight path" (Surah 60:1)

Why are Muslims commanded to terrorize and slaughter their opponents? Part of the Koranic reason is because Allah hates those who will not accept or believe Muhammad's message. Whereas the New Testament says that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all may come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), Allah has lost patience with non-Muslims and has consigned them to hellfire. "The Jews and Christians and the polytheists will burn forever in the fire of hell. They are the worst of men" (Surah 98:6). These above teachings are messages of hate. Their spiritual author is Allah. Their physical scribe was

Muhammad.

The army of Allah

Muslims are told not to accept offers of friendship from Jews and Christians, since the latter are probably trying to get them to reject Islam. Offers of friendship should be met with a jihad response. “They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike; therefore take not from among them friends until they flee (their homes) in Allah’s cause; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper” (Surah 4:89).

Since the Koran sees mujahidin as the army of Allah, those who reject the Koran are to be considered an anti-Islamic demonic army under the control of Shaitan (Satan and his demons). The Koranic response to unbelievers is one dimensional – engage in jihad and destroy the infidels! “Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah (do jihad), and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of the Shaitan. Fight therefore against the friends of the Shaitan; surely the strategy of the Shaitan is weak” (Surah 4:76).

Jihad is not an optional choice for Muslims; it is a commandment. Later generations of Muslims would argue about whether jihad is a group or individual responsibility, but the Koran makes it clear: “Fighting is prescribed for you, though it be hateful to you” (Surah 2:216). “And strive hard (do jihad) in the cause of Allah, a striving that is due to him; he has chosen you and has not laid upon you a hardship in religion – (but he has given you) the faith of your father Ibrahim (Abraham) . . .” (Surah 22:78).

Martyrdom and suicide

The Koran’s perspective is that all Muslims are slaves of Allah. Everything they are and all that they have belongs to him, including their lives. And Allah grants jihad warriors paradise upon martyrdom. “Truly Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for theirs (in return) is Paradise. They fight in his cause, so they kill (others) and are killed ... (al-Bukhari 51:1). “So narrated Al-Mughira bin Shu’ba, ‘Our prophet told us about the message of Allah that “... whoever amongst us is killed will go to Paradise” (al-Bukhari 51:2).

The focus on martyrdom through jihad sounds strange to Western ears. Yet the suicide bombers of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Bin Laden have drawn the world’s attention to this basic Islamic truth. Martyrdom in combat is to be greatly desired, according to Muhammad. “So narrated Anas bin Malik, “The prophet said, “Nobody who dies and finds good from Allah ...would wish to come back to this world even if he were given the whole world and whatever is in it – except the martyr who, on seeing the superiority of martyrdom, would like to come back to the world and get killed again” (al-Bukhari 51:6).

According to the Koran, to avoid the physical dangers of jihad is cowardice and a dishonor to all Muslims. It is liable to lead to damnation for the shirkers of jihad. “If you do not fight, he will punish you severely, and put others in your place” (Surah 9:39; see also 8:15-17). “Say to those of the dwellers of the desert who were left behind: ‘You shall soon be invited

(to fight) against a people possessing mighty prowess; you will fight against them until they submit; then if you obey, Allah will grant you a good reward; and if you turn back as you turned back before, he will punish you with a painful punishment” (Surah 48:16).

It seems that some Muslims were slow to join in the jihad journeys, and Muhammad rebukes them quite forcefully: “O you who believe! What (excuse) have you that, when it is said to you: ‘Go forth in Allah’s way (in jihad)!’, you should incline heavily to earth (ed. stay at home)? Are you contented with this world’s life instead of the hereafter? But the provision of this world’s life compared with the hereafter is but little. If you do not go forth, he will chastise you with a painful chastisement and bring in your place a people other than you, and you will do him no harm; and Allah has power over all things” (Surah 9:38-39).

Jihad is to continue until the sway of Islam is over all the earth and all mankind bows before Muhammad. The first region for Muslims to conquer through jihad was Arabia. After that, they were commanded to conquer the rest of the world for Allah: “Make war on them until idolatry does not exist any longer and Allah’s religion reigns universally” (Surah 8:39).

The rewards of jihad

Jihad has its own rewards. “Let those who barter the life of this world for that which is to come, fight in the cause of Allah (do jihad); for whoever fights on Allah’s path, whether he is killed or triumphs, we will give him a handsome reward” (Surah 4:74). That reward amounts to 80% of the booty of war, which includes women and children.

“And know that whatever thing you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the apostle and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer – if you believe in Allah and in that which we revealed to our servant (Muhammad), on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met; and Allah has power over all things” (Surah 8:41). “Abu Hurairah reported that the messenger of Allah said, ‘To whichever village you go and settle therein, there is your share therein, and whichever village disobeys Allah and his messenger, its one-fifth is for Allah and his messenger, and the remainder is for you’” (Mishkat 2:412). “Samurah bin Jundub reported the apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) as saying, ‘Kill the old men who are polytheists, but spare their children’” (Sunan Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Jihad 2664).

The Hadith teaches: “After the Battle of Badr, the verse dealing with the booties was first revealed. The verse introduced the rule for the first time that the spoils of war would be the property of the soldiers who actually take part in the battle. Previously it went either to the coffers of the victorious king or commander even though he did not join in the actual fight. That is one of the reasons why the soldiers of Islam fought tooth and nail. They would get Paradise in case of death in holy war, and booties in case of conquest. Jihad is therefore the best source of all acquisitions” (Mishkat II:406).

Jihad privileges extended to raping women captives. “In the actual war-field in the midst of hostilities, according to some jurists, some concessions were sometimes given to soldiers for recreation. Captive virgin girls in war were once made lawful for the soldiers for copulation” (Mishkat II:440). “Abdullah (b.Masud) reported, ‘We were on an expedition with Allah’s

messenger (may peace be upon him) and we had no women with us . . . (Muhammad) ... then granted us permission that we should contract temporary marriage for a stipulated period giving her a garment, and Abdullah then recited this verse, “Those who believe do not make unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Allah does not like transgressors” (Sahih Muslim, II:705).

Another Islamic teaching promises paradise pleasures for the jihad warrior who dies in battle. Seventy perpetual virgin houris (dark-eyed beautiful young women) who don't sweat or complain await him, and will be always available for the inexhaustible mujahid. “In Paradise (al-Jannat) there are palaces made of pearl, in each palace are seventy abodes made of rubies, in each abode there are seventy houses of green emerald. In every house is a couch, on every couch are seventy beds of every color, on every bed a spouse from the houris . . . In each house there are seventy slave-girls, and every morning when he is anxious for food the Muslim is given all that he desires besides. And verily ... their beauty shall be as that of the moon on the night when it is full . . . Their vessels and their combs shall be of gold and silver, and their perspiration of musk . . . And verily every man among the people of Paradise shall surely wed 500 houris and 4,000 virgins (Sahih al-Bukhari; Mishkat al-Masabih under the title “Descriptions of the Garden”; see also Mizan al-Haqq). These are the visions which pass in front of the eyes of Islamic mujahidin – whether they be World Trade Center hijackers, young Iranian Shi'ite men running across Iraqi minefields, or Hamas suicide bombers striding into the crowds of Jewish shoppers in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv or Netanya.

Resolving jihad contradictions

The Koranic evidence for jihad as an Islamic campaign of war and conquest is overwhelming. Yet when this material is presented, some Islamic advocates will react by presenting statements (also from the Koran, and only a handful at that) which seem to endorse religious freedom. This creates a certain amount of difficulty for Westerners who want clear answers as to what Islamic jihad really is.

These inconsistencies exist because the Koran itself often has contradictory or ambivalent teachings on a subject. For instance, at one point in Muhammad's career he was content to accept a form of polytheism (Surah 53:19-20 – the ‘Satanic verses’), to grant toleration to non-believers (Surah 2:256), and to bow toward Jerusalem (Surah 2:142-144; see also *The Dictionary of Islam*, p. 520 which quotes from Jalalu'd-Din Al Suyouti's *Al Itqan fi Ulum-il Quran*: “After his flight he ordered his followers to turn [in prayer] to the bayt al Makdas [the Temple] in Jerusalem. This, however, which was done to conciliate the Jews, held good for six or seven months only, and then he changed it again”). These more tolerant statements can be found in the Koran and Hadith – next to statements which order his followers to slaughter Jews and Christians.

What happened is simply this: at an earlier stage in his career Muhammad was more tolerant in an effort to win a wider following for his new revelations. Over time he decided to narrow his message and even received new revelation accordingly. These decrees always moved away from toleration and towards greater stringency. Muhammad ultimately would preach and lead murderously violent jihad actions wherever he went. In that sense, the vast

majority of classical Islamic teachings recorded in the Koran and Hadith is Muhammad at his harshest (see al-Bukhari 4:34-199 for grim details of Islamic jihad activities).

At one point in his career Muhammad decreed that in jihad, women and children are to be spared, while their Christian, Jewish or polytheistic husbands, brother and fathers are to be slaughtered: "It is narrated by Ibn Umar that a woman was found killed in one of these battles; so the messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) forbade the killing of women and children" (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Jihad wa'l-Siyar, 19:4320). That concession, by the way, is not a proof of Islamic tolerance. Muhammad was advocating violence and murder on religious grounds, acts which included the mass slaughter of all males and the raping of the women.

Yet at the same time, another respected Islamic tradition quotes Muhammad as permitting the slaughter of innocents. "So narrated as-Sa'b bin Jaththama, 'The prophet passed by me at a place called al-Abwa or Waddan, and was asked whether it was permissible to attack the pagan warriors at night with the probability of exposing their women and children to danger. The prophet replied, 'They are from them' (ed. Muhammad is saying that the women and children are also pagans like their husbands/fathers, so it is permissible to kill them). This quote is from Bukhari, Sahih vol. 4, transl. M.M. Khan, New Delhi 1984, pp.158-59 (also Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Jihad wa'l-Siyar 19:4323).

Both traditions quoted above are respected by Islamic jurists. Yet the two traditions are contradictory. Muhammad at one point said that it was fine to murder men but not women and children. Later on, he said that it was acceptable to murder all three. It is simply not honest to stand up on Western television screens and pretend that jihad is only another word for moral self-improvement, when the above-quoted texts clearly call for world conquest and mass murder.

Occasionally one can indeed find public relations spin-doctors for Islam who try to present jihad as non-violent and humanitarian. Here is such an example: "Thus jihad in Islam is not an act of violence directed indiscriminately against the non-Muslims; it is . . . not an act of mad brutality. It has its material and moral functions, i.e. self-preservation and the preservation of the moral order in the world" (Sahih Muslim 3:938) "... (T)he sword has not been used recklessly by the Muslims; it has been wielded purely with humane feelings in the wider interest of humanity" (ibid., p. 941). In light of the many Koranic verses quoted in this article on the true nature of jihad, one is struck with a sense of unreality upon reading these last two quotes. Are we observing selective memory, spiritual blindness, or simply an inability to perceive the truth? Whatever the cause, the end result of such spin for the viewer is a distorted picture of Islam.

E. Future 'jihad'

Islam sees its future in light of the past. As a result, the person who wants to understand how Islam will influence the future of mankind, must consider how Muslims envision their own past, present and future. My appreciation to David Cook whose thought provoking article 'Islam and Apocalyptic', has influenced my own thoughts in this section. Mr. Cook's article is available through the website of Center for Millennial Studies at Boston

University at the following site: <http://www.mille.org/people/Cook.Abs.html>.

Starting 1,400 years ago, Islam attempted to conquer the entire world, and nearly succeeded. For over 1,000 years it held sway as the world's strongest empire. But at present, Islam has waned in power and dwindled in influence. The world powers (defined as 'Christian' powers by the Muslim world) of Britain, France, USA and Russia have either directly dominated or influenced large areas of the Middle East over the past three centuries. Not only their military influence, but also their political influence, their cultural sway (Hollywood and Western secular values), and their religious influence (freedom of religion, and missionary outreach) – all have brought pollution to strict believers in Islam and jihad, according to traditional Islamic perspective. Millions of Muslims have been conquered by the values of the West, it is felt, and have slacked in their commitment to Islam.

But it's not only the Christians who are seen to be the enemies of once glorious Islam. The Jews have also humiliated the Muslims. The State of Israel is seen by most Muslims as a hated spearhead of Western forces and values in the Middle East. Time and again the little Jewish state has defeated superior numbers of Islamic forces. This shaming of Muhammad's army can only be assuaged by the total elimination of the State of Israel, many Muslims believe.

The present disgraceful and defeated condition of Islam cannot be due to any fault of Allah. It must be due to the disobedience – the lack of religious purity and zeal – of the Islamic world. According to this perspective, Allah is now giving individual Muslims the chance to redeem themselves through a renewed commitment to Islam and to jihad (Muhammad's burning command to conquer the world for Allah immediately prior to the final Hour of Judgment). This time, it is believed, Islam's triumph will be decisive and eternal.

The above perspective can be called 'Islamic revivalism'. It sees the present world condition as paralleling the world situation in Muhammad's day (600's AD). The mujahidin see themselves as re-enacting the original battle between the world of Islam and the world of the infidels (Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb). Many of the world's Islamic leaders are also infidels (according to Islamic revivalism) – rich petroleum sheiks content to sin and slumber while the West drains Islamic oil wells (a strategic military gift given by Allah to Muslims to put the West in an economic and political stranglehold).

The Islamic calendar is used by modern Islamic revivalism to raise Muslim expectations that the Final Hour is here. This calendar (called the hijri), takes its starting point with Muhammad's escape from Mecca on July 16, 622 AD. Islam's 14th century ended in 1979. This 'turn of the century' event quickly took on important jihad symbolism, for two apocalyptic events occurred in quick succession in that year – Khomeini's Islamic Revolution in Iran, and the short-lived but violent takeover of Saudi Arabia's central mosque containing the Ka'ba (Masjid al-Haram) in November 1979 by mujahidin. For Islamic revivalists, the Hour of Judgment is nearly here, and jihad is now the order of the day.

Some Muslim revivalists consider that the kickoff for this Islamic Last Hour might have

started with the Arab-Israeli wars, or perhaps with the Gulf War. Muslim eschatology (end-times scenarios) describes the rise of an 'antichrist' figure called the 'dajjal' who is supposed to be a Jew. He will lead a world conspiracy against Islam, spearheaded by the Christian West and by Israel. Since it is unthinkable that Islam would lose out to Christianity in the Final Hour, true Muslims must in the meantime resist the dajjal's influence by resisting and destroying all Western, Christian and Jewish influences on Islamic society – be they political, cultural or religious. The name of one of Bin Laden's umbrella groups, the International Islamic Front for the Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders, takes on added meaning within this eschatological (last days) context.

Islamic revivalist writings decree that Allah will bring natural disasters and terror acts against the West as punishment for their corruption of Islam. When these acts of Allah's vengeance against the West occur, they say, Muslims should be encouraged. In this context, consider the spontaneous outbursts of joy and city-wide victory marches in Lebanon and Palestinian areas, when news of the Black Tuesday terror attacks became known.

Islamic futurists believe that war will first be joined against the Jews in Israel and then, after Israel's defeat, against the West. The reason Israel has succeeded for so long, it is believed, is because the dajjal is exercising his demonic powers through Israel and the United States to weaken and divide the Islamic world. The worldwide spread of American culture, music, films etc., reflects a dajjal agenda to destroy Islam. From this perspective, one could nearly say that the rock star Madonna, the fast food giant McDonald's, and the seven-branched Jewish menorah (candelabrum) are all elements of the dajjal's satanic agenda.

It is noteworthy that, during the first and second intifadas (violent Palestinian riots against Israelis), bloodthirsty graffiti were scrawled and street chants resounded, drawing connections between jihad against the Jews and jihad against the Christians: "First we come for the Saturday people (the Jews) and then for the Sunday people (the Christians)!" These mob chants are reflecting Palestinian awareness of a jihad consciousness and a jihad eschatology.

One Islamic strategy influenced by the above eschatology, is the attempt to drive a wedge between the Christian West and the Jewish state of Israel. The principle of 'divide and conquer' is older than Machiavelli, and is part of the world strategy of Islamic terror. Islamic revivalists and terrorists are trying to weaken and destroy Israel as a first step. This will lead, in their minds, to weakening and destroying the West. One of the main messages that Islamic terrorism and its fellow travelers continue to drive home to America and the West is this, "The main reason for terror attacks against the US is your support for Israel. End support for Israel, and we will end attacks on you!" In this regard, it is worth meditating on the results of the October 2001 NEWSWEEK poll which found that 58% of Americans surveyed believe that recent Islamic terror is due to American support for Israel.

Another pause for thought would come from Osama Bin Laden's latest video message aired on Qatar's al-Jazeera television station on October 7 2001. "As for the United States, I say only a few words to it and its people: I swear by Allah who elevated the skies without pillars, that neither America nor he who lives in it will enjoy security before we can see it as

a reality in Palestine – and not before all the infidel armies leave the land of Muhammad, may peace be upon him”.

Bin Laden’s aide Suleiman Abu Ghaith (a spokesman for the al-Qa’ida group) added, “America has announced its total support for the Zionist entity that has killed and oppressed Muslims and Arabs, and this is its stupid policy . . . America has to know that was happened to it is a result of this policy and it must know that if it continues this policy, then the sons of Islam will not in any way stop waging revenge . . . The American people must know that it bears total responsibility and what has happened to it is because of its support for this policy”.

IV. Is the West prepared for ‘jihad’?

Many in the West find it nearly impossible to come to terms with the very openly declared agenda of Islamic jihad revivalism. The possibility of another threat to world order (of similar nature to fascism or communism) brings fear and horror to many Westerners. “Just when we made the world safe from Communism, now this? Crop dusters with anthrax, and nuclear backpacks in US cities?” Many in the West don’t want to live with crises, and they hope that these crises (if left alone) will disappear.

History is full of examples of national leaders who have played the ostrich when faced with international emergencies. Prime Minister Chamberlain of Great Britain refused to believe that Hitler could be a threat to Western European democracies. Communists in Western Europe and North America refused to believe any thing bad about Uncle Joseph Stalin. Many Israelis until recently believed that Yasir Arafat had changed his spots and was now a peace partner in good faith.

Yet the ostrich response is widespread. At the same time as Allied troops are fighting the Taliban and al-Qa’ida in Afghanistan, great pains are being taken by Western ‘Christian’ leaders to proclaim that Islam has nothing to do with Islamic terrorists, and even (in the recent words of Prime Minister Tony Blair) to deny that Islamic terrorists even exist. Why is it that the West does not want to acknowledge the religious identity of its self-declared enemies?

One reason may be that the West does not want to buy into apocalyptic scenarios. Who wants to accept that ‘life as we know it’ may never be the same again? Many Westerners consider peace and comfort as the main values in life. Anything that will disturb those activities should be ignored, and then maybe it will go away. But Paul’s caution in 1 Thessalonians 5:3-6 is opposite: he warns that those who desire peace and safety above all things will confront sudden destruction. We who desire God’s protection should be sober and on the lookout, Paul says.

A second reason is that many in the West are naive when it comes to recognizing implacable enemies – foes who want to murder, conquer and convert at the point of the sword. That scenario sounds too ‘kitsch’ for most Westerners. Most believe that everyone ‘has his price’, and that enemies can be bought off with increased offers of humanitarian

aid. Often the foreign policy of the West has been strikingly similar to the words of Rodney King, “Can’t we all just get along?” Or perhaps the words of John Lennon offer quicksilver hope, whether it be “Love is all you need” or “Imagine ... nothing to kill or die for ... imagine all the people living life in peace”. One heritage of the Woodstock Nation is its naive inability to recognize existential threats.

A third reason concerns those in America and Europe who are isolationist, who believe in looking out for “Fortress America/Europe and let the rest of the world be darned”. There are those who would willingly throw Israel to the Islamic wolves if it means an uninterrupted flow of oil for the eighteen wheelers of American or European industry.

At the same time it should be noted that prophetic voices calling attention to upcoming jihad have been raised in the past decade. Steve Emerson produced a television broadcast in 1995 (available in video) called ‘Jihad in America’, detailing how the developing international Islamic terror network has been making inroads in America. For the most part his work was ignored. Israeli then-Prime-Ministerial contender Benjamin Netanyahu published *Fighting Terror* (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, NY, 1995), a little heeded appeal to the West (until Black Tuesday) to defeat terrorism before the fast closing window of opportunity would be shut – the moment when Islamic terrorists deploy atomic, chemical or biological weapons.

The fourth and last reason that some leaders in the West refuse to publicly acknowledge the existence of Islamic terror, is due to a misguided political strategy. The West wants to eradicate Islamic terror networks, but at the same time it wants to avoid angering the very volatile Muslim world. This explains the many recent American and British declarations which emphasize that the Afghanistan war is not anti-Islamic, but anti-terror. It is more important for the Western coalition to ignore the terrorist nature of Islamic jihad and describe the Islamic faith as altogether peaceful, than it is to expose the violent nature of jihad and lose their tenuous and touchy Muslim allies.

At the same time the West also wants to strengthen the hand of pro-Western Islamic elements in the Muslim world, while weakening and invalidating anti-Western jihad forces. That is why Western leaders continually insist that Islam is purely a religion of peace, and that Islamic jihad warriors like Bin Laden are not really a valid expression of Islam.

The moral problem with this strategy is twofold. First, it confuses and blurs the spiritual discernment of the Western public. This will make it harder to rally them when Islamic jihad really kicks into high gear. Secondly, it plays into the hands of the Islamic jihad movement itself, whose sleepers have infiltrated North America and Europe. Many of these sleepers continue to operate under the cover of Islamic institutions and charities – some which are bona fide, others which are bogus fronts which raise funds for terror and orchestrate terror campaigns. To win the war on terrorism, it is absolutely necessary to understand the nature of one’s enemy and his strategy. To confuse one’s own forces about the enemy’s strategy is to risk losing the war.

Unless the West is willing to be ruthlessly honest in calling terror ‘terror’, in comprehensively uncovering terror networks in Western countries, in not turning a blind

eye to Islamic terror nests in host countries like Syria (recently voted in as non-permanent UN Security Council member), Iran, Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, and in not adopting a double standard when it comes to anti-Jewish/anti-Israeli terror (by justifying or quietly rewarding anti-Israel terrorist movements) – then the best that can be expected from Operation Unending Freedom in Afghanistan is the lopping off of a few heads from the many-headed Islamic terrorist hydra. But the terrorist hydra will grow new heads, and these heads will grow back even more quickly. And these new terrorists will be even more passionately committed to carrying out an even harsher jihad against the ‘infidel’ West.

V. Prophetic possibilities

The following is a considered opinion about what may well happen in the near future. These thoughts are not inerrant, but are worth considering as events unfold.

It seems that the Islamic terror movement, in conjunction with Muslim states which support an Islamic jihad agenda, will try to escalate terror attacks against the West, inflicting civilian casualties at a rate like nothing which has ever been seen before. This would include the use of atomic, biological and chemical warfare against American cities. Many reliable prophetic voices have been quietly saying these things for years.

Natural disasters in the West (from massive flooding to earthquakes and comets) will be understood by Islam’s followers to show that Allah himself is smiting the West and fighting his own form of jihad against the ‘infidels’.

Years ago, an internationally trusted prophetic voice prophesied that Communism would one day be revived and return to the world scene as a power to be reckoned with. This Communism will be ‘raised from the dead’ to join together with Islam, having the common goal of world conquest. Islam will be the stronger of these two powers, and their union will have terribly evil consequences for the entire world. It seems that these struggles will lead to the rise of the real anti-Messiah.

In the meantime, Islam will continue to push for its short term goal of getting America to abandon Israel. Terrorism against Western targets, a renewed anti-Israel Arab boycott – but especially a determined Arab oil embargo – will be its major tools. The plumb line which God will use to divide the hearts of all the nations will be Israel. Those who stand with her in her hour of need will be blessed and accepted by the God of Israel, while those who abandon her and choose all other gods will be thrust out from God’s presence forever (Matt.25:31-46).

So it is no longer business as usual. The masks are off. Pray that many in the West and in Israel will recognize the strategies of Satan as seen in the Islamic revivalist jihad movement. There is a window of opportunity open right now in the West as a result of the September 11 terror attacks – a willingness to weigh and consider the potential destructiveness of Islamic jihad, and its potential threat to Western civilization.

VI. How shall we then respond?

Here are three areas of prayer and response to focus on:

1. Islam

- pray for, love and witness boldly to your Muslim friends
- learn more about Islamic culture, history, Arabic music, food
- pray for the release of the Holy Spirit revelation concerning Yeshua to Arab and Islamic leaders and peoples

2. Israel

- pray for the peace and protection of the Jewish people, the state of Israel, and their capital city Jerusalem (Psa. 122:6)
- pray for the revelation of Messiah Yeshua to the Jewish people
- share your faith in Yeshua boldly with Jewish people
- be ready to open your hearts and homes to Jewish people as they begin to face worldwide persecution

3. Your own homeland

- love your country
- pray for your leaders' wisdom, discernment, protection, peace
- pray for protection, repentance, revival
- pray that your country will stand by Israel and bless her
- share your faith and life boldly

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