

THE BOOK FIGHTING WORDS BY HECTOR AVALOS TELLS US ABOUT ISLAMIC VIOLENCE

SUMMARY BY AVALOS: Islamic violence is neither solely a modern reaction against colonialism nor some aberrant feature of the religion. Rather, violence forms the initial premises of Islam, be it in the Qur'an or in the life of Muhammad, who continues to be a model for Muslim behavior. At the very least, violence was permitted to carry out the agenda of Muhammad, it is an allowable interpretation of certain passages in the Qur'an and the Hadith, and it is believed to be so by those who carry out violent acts today.

Alternatively phrased, no Islamic religious claim, peaceful or violent, can be deemed justified unless evaluated on empirico-rationalist grounds. And it is that lack of verifiability for any Islamic religious claim that ultimately allows the violent side to exert itself repeatedly and gain legitimacy within Muslim communities.

COMMENT: Good!

QUOTE SEEMING TO ADVOCATE RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: Sura 10:99: "If it had been thy Lord's Will, They all would have believed,-All who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will to believe?"

AND

The expression "let there be no compulsion in religion (Id ikraha fi al-din) is open to interpretations that are no less verifiable than the ones for an offensive jihad. Linguistically, the verse can also be understood as a simple description of a current state of affairs (e.g., "it is not feasible to enforce conversion at the moment") rather than as a command that prohibits coercion at any time (see also Sura 10:99). Rudi Paret, though acknowledging that it is possible to translate it as an expression of tolerance, regards as more likely the understanding that the Qur'an is not proclaiming tolerance, but rather expressing resignation.

COMMENT: Good!

QUOTE: Most traditionalist Muslim interpreters admit that jihad can be violent, even if justified. Both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars who support a pacificistic or defensive notion of jihad focus on one or more of the following issues: (1) misunderstanding understanding the meaning of the root j-h-d; (2) inattention to the chronology and abrogation of Qur'anic passages; (3) not understanding that when jihad does refer to fighting, it is defensive fighting; (4) generalizing what the Qur'an restricts; and (5) the forbidding in the Qur'an of coercion in religion. In regard to the word "jihad," these authors would rightly note that the root j-h-d does not necessarily involve the infliction of physical injury to another person. The root meaning is "struggle," and this need not involve violence. However, the fact that jihad does not always involve violence does not mean that jihad never involves violence. Indeed, even some of the defensive interpretations of jihad concede that violence is at least sometimes what jihad means.

COMMENT: Good!

QUOTE: One example of a clear attribution of violence to religious reasons can be seen in the following Hadith reported by Al-Bukhari, perhaps the most authoritative collector of traditions about Muhammad. Al-Bukhari tells us: The prophet said, "Allah ... assigns for a person who participates in (holy battles) in Allah's Cause and nothing causes him to do so except belief in Allah and in His Messenger, that he will be recompensed by Allah with a reward, or booty (if he survives) or will be admitted to Paradise (if he is killed in the battle as a martyr)."

Here is a clear attribution of the reason for violence from a Muslim himself. This sort of self-attribution by practitioners of a religion certainly would count as strong evidence that violence that is just the result of religious beliefs does happen. Moses, Jesus and Muhammad and others said it too. The Bible blames bad religion for burning children as sacrifices to Molech. The Book of Mormon has Nephi being helped by the Holy Spirit to murder the brother of Laban to burgle and steal from him.

COMMENT: Speaks for itself. Islam cannot call itself a religion of peace for distributing and accepting and allowing acceptance of such a text. It seems to think that peace is the absence of war! It is more than that and deeper. It means getting rid of anything that sanctions the blessing of violence or commands violence.

QUOTE FROM 9/11 BOMBER: Dated 1996, the Last Will and Testament of Mohamed Atta gives a glimpse into his mindset.

"This is what I want to happen after my death, I ani Mohamed the son of Mohanied Elamir awad Elsayed: I believe that prophet Mohamed is God's messenger and time will come no doubt about that and God will resurrect people who are in their graves. I wanted my family and everyone who reads this will to fear the Almighty God and don't get deceived by what is in life and to fear God and to follow God and his prophets if they are real believers. In my memory, I want them to do what Ibrahim (a prophet) told his son to do, to die as a good Muslim."

As near as we can tell from such statements, Atta crashed into the World Trade Center because he believed in Islam. He adds toward the end of his testament: "I wanted the people who look at my will to be one of the heads of the Sunna religion. Whoever it is, I want that person to be from where I grew up or any person I used to follow in prayer. People will be held responsible for not following the Muslim religion. I wanted the people who I left behind to hear God and not to be deceived by what life has to offer and to pray more to God and to be good believers. Whoever neglects this will or does not follow the religion, that person will be held responsible in the end."

COMMENT: As Avalos says there are few statements as conclusive as that! It is true that a person is responsible for being in whatever religion they are in and by implication not being in whatever religion they are not in.

QUOTE: Even some scholars (e.g, Kister, "The Massacre of the Banu Qurayza") who otherwise present a frank discussion of this episode seem to omit or downplay the tradition that Muhammad himself (did the beheading. However, Ibn Ilisham (al-Slrat, 3:218) leaves little doubt that Muhammad is meant because the verb (daraba="strike off [heads]") is singular, and no other grammatical subject is seen as an antecedent but Muhammad. 74. Guillaume, Life of Muhammad.

COMMENT: Muhammad was a murderer. Jack the Ripper is demonised and why not Muhammad? This is a problem with warlords in general. People won't react to them as vile the way they do serial killers. This inherent tendency shows we should not believe any religious group that claims to be all about peace.

QUOTE: The attacks of September 11, he observes, have failed to mobilize the Islamic world in the manner Osama bin Laden expected.

COMMENT: Bin Laden simply assumed that the attacks would teach Muslims that such terrorism is indeed part of their religion and part of what their prophet is about. He thought they would respond by joining in his jihad. A lot did but not many more approve of the 9/11 atrocities.

