

Submission to the
Standing Committee on
Canadian Heritage on
Motion 103

Islamophobia

Is a fear of Islam a legitimate fear and are
Canadians being unfairly maligned for
voicing their apprehension and, should
they be concerned that Parliament will try
to legislate this fear away?

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by topic and explained in a way we can all understand

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Foreword

Canada has welcomed so many immigrants and refugees that foreign-born citizens now make up 20% of the population. No other Western nation even comes close. Yet, on Thursday March 23, 2017, at 4:01 pm, Parliament in a 201 to 91 vote passed a resolution which implies that Canadians did this in spite of their despicable selves, their generosity and compassion masking a people filled with hatred for those they helped.

Motion 103, an initiative of a Member of Parliament who greatly benefited from Canadians' selflessness accuses her benefactors of abetting a culture of racism, of religious discrimination (against Muslims is understood), of Islamophobia i.e. fearing the hundreds of thousands of believers they rescued from dire economic straits and life-threatening situations.

My presentation to the Committee is an argument against making recommendations to the House of Commons for changes to our laws which could, in effect, make expressing a fear of Islam a crime and providing the Faith and its Prophet protection from criticism not unlike that which they enjoy under the Sharia's blasphemy laws (Appendix: Blasphemy Laws - A Tale of Two Victims).

A worrisome sign, every party in Parliament now incorrectly refers to fear of a religion as racism, and who does not like laws which combat racism, even when they don't!

The British Experience

Motion 103's Islamophobia accusation could be considered a veiled attempt (no pun intended) to legitimize an implicit and sometimes explicit restriction enforced through threats of bodily harm, even death, against expressing a distressing opinion about Islam, its scriptures or its Prophet. The motion is a not unfamiliar attack on freedom of speech and expression in the name of a hypersensitive religion.

Following the July 7, 2005 London bombings which saw 52 mainly Christian commuters killed and more than 700 injured (many horribly maimed), in the face of opposition which included prominent Muslims, the British Parliament passed legislation sheltering mainstream religious texts, whether the message be one of love or of hatred, from criticism.

... we also recognize that a free society must have the scope to debate, to criticize, proselytise, insult and even ridicule belief and religious practices in order to ensure that there is full scope – short of violence or inciting violence or other criminal offences - to tackle these issues.

From a plea by an alliance of Muslims, Christians, humanist, secularist urging the British Parliament to reject legislation limiting the rights to criticize religious beliefs and traditions.

The British government tried appeasement again, with predictable results. Almost from one day to the next, the country that fought a world war to preserve us from fanatics simultaneously became a more tolerant and intolerant society: more tolerant of violence-prone religious zealots and less tolerant of their critics, and more people died with no end to the escalating violence.

Perversely, by making scriptures beyond reproach Islam is free to vilify other faiths at will for its scriptures came after and are often openly contemptuous of those which came before, the Gospels in particular. The Honourable Mélanie Joly would further curtail our right, our obligation in a democracy to speak our mind to protect the sensibilities of easily offended legislators.

Words Matter, No Kidding!

"Words matter" said the Minister of Heritage. She followed up this truism with a promise to seek ways of restricting words, starting with those expressed on social media in opposition to her government's support of a motion, if carried to its logical extreme, would make expressing a fear of Islam a crime.

While Joly called the reaction to her support of the motion "completely unacceptable," the minister said she decided to ignore the comments directed at her, and instead would try to prevent more messages from being posted, and work with social media companies to see what actions could be taken to curb abusive language online.

National Post, February 18

If the Minister of Heritage is serious about saving us from words, perhaps she could start with a concentrated overabundance of words meant to terrify.

If You Do Not Fear Islam, You Do Not Know Islam!

You may have heard the phrase "If you do not fear Islam, you do not know Islam." If that fear is real, in whose interest would it be to make it a crime to express your misgivings? In a short, archaic often brutal book in which a belligerent deity demands that non-believers be subdued by hook, by crook or by death, Allah, on at least a dozen separate occasions bellows "fear Me" if you know what is good for you.

A fear of Islam is a legitimate fear. Fear is what most non-believers who get close and personal with Islam's core religious text will experience. It is quite normal, for fear is the very emotion that the Author wants you to feel as He describes, in great details, the terrible things He will do to you if you don't take Him seriously.

4:56 Those who have disbelieved Our Signs, We shall surely cast them into the Fire; every time their skins are burnt, We will replace them by other skins, so that they might taste the punishment. Allah indeed is Mighty and Wise!

Horror filled passages of unbridled sadism like those which permeate the Koran are particularly effective in the indoctrination of children who will grow up with terrifying pitiless images forever etched in their minds (Appendix: Lessons in Cruelty). Lest they forget, as young people and adults, they will be reminded through their daily devotions, which mostly consist of literally shouting Allah's revelations in a crowd, that this god does not fool around.

The fear is also meant to encourage believing adults and young people into becoming activists in Allah's Cause and increase their chances of avoiding the promised pain by helping Him make believers of unbelievers by whatever means at their disposal, including killing them if they fail to respond to their entreaties to submit to His Will. As an added bonus, murderers of obstinate unbelievers are legally entitled to abscond with the property of the men they kill which includes their wives, which they are encouraged to rape (Appendix: Sex and the Booty), and their daughters. Sons who are not considered old enough to be killed¹ like their fathers may also be taken as booty.

¹ The precedent of sparing some adolescent male captives was established when the last Jewish tribe of Medina surrendered to the Prophet in the war to Islamize the Peninsula expecting God's spokesman to be merciful. Instead, he had all the males beheaded except for those who had yet to grow pubic hair (Appendix: Massacre of the Banu Qurayzah).

Those who would slander their benefactors after Canada welcomed and sheltered believers fleeing god-inspired violence in their homeland in their tens of thousands would like you to think that a fear of Islam is an unfounded fear. Not unlike the MP who introduced Motion 103 in Parliament condemning Islamophobia and racism in the same breath, they seek to mask a rational unease with one which is not: racism. Express a fear of Islam and you risk an end-of-discussion accusation of racism, as if Islam was a race not a religion.

Peace in Our Time, or Else!

A fear of Islam usually manifests itself in two ways:

- 1) a visceral fear based on its glorification of violence directed at the reviled unbelievers in its core religious text;
- 2) a fear not unlike that expressed by sociologist Mathieu Bock-Côté (my translation):

"Aggressive multiculturalism has wreaked havoc in the West", he told *Le Point* in an interview. "The weakening of our great historical and anthropological anchors", he said, "has pushed people to revolt. This is one of the greatest fears of our time, becoming strangers at home."

Legislation seeking to dampen a fear with its origin in a book will have the opposite effect, nurturing a suspicion in the minds of those who have not read the Koran that those who have are correct in raising the alarm. Only an honest discussion about Islam, starting with an unfettered dialogue on the Koran will allay the fear of the other and foster a trust in the other that is sadly lacking and a reason to fear that the worst is yet to come.

The second fear is also real, but we only have ourselves to blame.

The type of people who demonstrably expressed their fear at a meeting of the Peel school board will not go down without a fight even with the odds stacked against them with activists who also understand what is at stake in a position to make changes to our laws which would silence their opponents (the ultimate intent of Motion 103, in my opinion) with the unwitting assistance of those who should know better.

The second fear is a result of government policy and only government can put an end to it. Seal the breaches between Church and State that has allowed a militant religion to invade the secular space and promise to be more vigilant in the future and that fear will simply dissipate. Try to repress it, or simply continue spouting platitudes about unreciprocated tolerance and avoiding value judgements when values is what this is all about, while allowing the invaders to claim more and more territory in the name of peace in our time or else, and the "or else" will be inevitable (Appendix: Chamberlain's Legacy).

From Blacks to Females to the Back

Viola Desmond made history and will now be the first woman, apart from the queen, to be prominently featured on a banknote for standing up against a bigoted policy of blacks to the back in public cinemas in Nova Scotia.

The day before Motion 103 received Parliamentary approval, people in Toronto trampled on pages of the Koran (Appendix: Is Ripping Up the Koran Ever Justified?) partly in protest against females being herded to the back of whatever room they find themselves in to be lectured to by male students during school hours on school property on the revered opinions of a misogynous man and the equally demeaning observation as to their flawed character he conveyed from a deity with the same mindset (Appendix: Stupid and Evil).

Repeating what you will find in the aforementioned appendix, females whether they are menstruating or not, cannot worship in front of males for that would annul the male's prayers. For this bit of information we are indebted to the Prophet's outspoken child bride Aisha.

Narrated Aisha:

The things which annul the prayers were mentioned before me.

They said, "Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman (if they pass in front of the praying people)."

I said, "You have made us (i.e. women) dogs."

Bukhari 9.490

Aisha said [to Muhammad]: "You have made us equal to the dogs and the asses."

Muslim 4:1039

A female also may not lead the believers in prayer or deliver the Friday khutba i.e. sermon if even one man is present, no matter his qualifications or mental acuity. An inferior cannot lecture a superior as to the ways of God. It is only logical.

In the Islamic world women's unequal status is publically affirmed every day during prayers in a mosque or in the open space around Allah's House of Prayer, the Musalla.

Narrated Um Atiya:

We were ordered to bring out our menstruating women and veiled women in the religious gatherings and invocation of Muslims on the two 'Id festivals. These menstruating women were to keep away from their Musalla (open space outside a mosque mainly used for praying).

Bukhari 8.347

With activists petitioning school boards and being granted the right for children who submit to the Will of Allah to congregate for prayers on school property during school hours, children of parents who believe in the equality of the sexes can only hope that their sons and daughters, after witnessing this abasing spectacle and hearing that it is all part of God's plan as revealed in the Koran, will resist the urge to be part of the Almighty's design.

Just as in the time of Viola Desmond, governments at all levels are siding with the bigots, with discrimination based on one's sex for all to see replacing discrimination based on the colour of one's skin. This is another giant step backwards for many, and unlike the racism during Viola's time which is largely a thing of the past, despite the accusations in 103, there is concern that a line is being crossed

by the irrational which will allow it to dominate, if not completely smother its opposite and dooming the fragile exception.

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

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

Mark Lilla, professor of the humanities at Columbia University in The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics and the Modern West (2007)

The Hatred That Isn't

Anti-Muslim hatred has no place in my Canada

Margaret Wentz, Globe and Mail, Apr. 03, 2017

Canadians don't hate Muslims. As for me, a Muslim who will not be stereotyped and to whom I tell my troubles to today (Appendix: A Muslim Mourns the Death of a Christian), and a woman who listened to me then (Appendix: Serendipity), know I love them.

This is not about people; but beguiling scriptures which instil a yearning to kill and be killed (Appendix: Holy Warriors in the Making) demonize unbelievers calling for their elimination or enslavement, demean women demanding they be disciplined in the manner you get an animal, to whom they are compared, to behave ... and everywhere a promise of an eternity of blissful debauchery for those who buy into the Message, and Hell for the rest.

To be what a self-proclaimed Dark Age spokesman for the Almighty wants us to be would redefine what it means to be us (Appendix: A Strange Devout New World) and that is scary for many and the expression of their fear is often mistaken for dislike of those who share a different point of view.

Don't Be Played!

Novelist and essayist, Chahdortt Djavann left Iran for France in 1993. In a scathing book she lambastes the intellectuals and "useful idiots" who, according to her, are being played ... How to effectively combat Islamic ideology would show how, on the issues of the veil, Islamophobia and terrorism "Islamists have mined the debates and any intellectual and political discourse."

Le Point (my translation), Nov. 26, 2016.

Canadians, by and large, are not racist, Ms. Iqra Khalid's claim to the contrary notwithstanding. Accusing non-believers of being both Islamophobes and racists is simply one of the ways that activists in Allah's Cause "have mined the debate" by equating a rational fear of Islam with an irrational fear of people with a different complexion.

Do not let them entice you to carve in Canadian law an inviolate place for the religion which claims exclusivity of the truth and would supplant all others. If you do, then you will have been played and we will all be losers, in the here-and-now if not in the Hereafter.

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

3:85 Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.

In Defence of a Minister's Ignorance

A fear of Islam is a legitimate fear and IS NOT "a hatred of Muslims" to quote the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mélanie Joly; but such is the ignorance of Djavann's "useful idiots".

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

The Koran is a small book by holy book standards at about one tenth the words of the Bible, the King James' version. You would not guess that by the size of most print versions available for sale. Most translations of the Koran contain the complete Cairo Arabic source (Appendix: Mary the Erstwhile Messenger and the Cairo Koran) since any rendition of Islam's core religious text is also meant to be a teaching aid in the study of Arabic and an indoctrination tool.

Nevertheless, it is not this artificial imposing bulk which seems to be the major deterrent to non-believers curling up with this good book, but what Thomas Carlyle [1795 - 1881] described as "a confused, jumble, crude, incondite (disorderly), endless iteration" and Edward Gibbon [1737 - 1794] of The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire fame as "toilsome a reading as I ever undertook; a wearisome confused jumble."

Gibbon's "confused jumble" is largely the result of a concept very much unique to Islam, that of an omniscient deity repeatedly changing his mind (Appendix: Let Me Rephrase That!), and never for the better where unbelievers are concerned.

The Koran is, for the most part, the story of one man's struggle to get his Meccan kin, the Quraysh, to abandon their smorgasbord of deities and to accept him as the one-and-only god's ultimate spokesperson with all the power that conveyed.

When his delivered message did not meet with the expected enthusiasm, his kin suspecting that it was a ploy to make himself their dictator, the god for whom he spoke toughened His position towards those who would not buy into what was on offer and revealed truths, immutable facts revealed to a mortal by a god, were changed or simply abrogated to reflect this hardening of the heart. This only added to the confusion of Carlyle's "incondite endless iteration" where God appears not to be able to correctly recall what He revealed earlier.

The last straw for Allah appears to have been the attempt to smother His Messenger with the stomach of a dead camel (Appendix: Rukaya Saves Her Father).

THAT IS IT! Convert or die, the Verse of the Sword (Appendix: Verse of the Sword) being His last word on the matter with a modicum of mercy to be shown those who believe in a variation of His Eminence. Jews and Christians, and members of an obscure sect called the Sabians, could continue

breathing and worshipping their facsimile of Allah as long as they "submissively" paid the right-to-live tax, the jizya, for "not professing the true religion."

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

It is this overriding pitiless exploitive message of the Koran which those who have been radicalized seek to carry out and the persistent call to martyrdom that has people who have overcome the obstacles described by Carlyle and Gibbons and attentively read the Book justifiably spooked.

The Koran does not only radicalize in one direction, transforming inherently good people into holy warriors bent on death and destruction, but also has an impact on ordinarily decent individuals who will chose to strike out fearing being overwhelmed by those who hold sacrosanct a book which sanctions their murder using the same tactics which God's spokesperson praised as being the most effective.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "I have been sent with the shortest expressions bearing the widest meanings, and I have been made victorious with terror (cast in the hearts of the enemy), and while I was sleeping, the keys of the treasures of the world were brought to me and put in my hand."

Bukhari 52.220

Read the Book, even if you risk being radicalized by it. Read it and be convinced that it would be a crime to make it a crime to express your thoughts about what you have read and the fear it fostered.

Those Who Should Be Taken to Task

Motion 103, in a nutshell, accuses those whose scriptures tell them to love unconditionally of hating those whose scriptures tell them to avoid those who love without reservation lest they be corrupted.

3:118 O believers do not take as close friends other than your own people (other than your co-religionists); they will spare no effort to corrupt you and wish to see you suffer. Hatred has already been manifest in what they utter, but what their hearts conceal is greater still. We have made clear Our Signs to you if only you understand.

A Christian who hangs a cross around his or her neck when appearing in public is advertising that he or she believes in the Gospels. A Jew who wears the yarmulke or even more extravagant headgear when appearing in public is advertising his belief in the Torah. A Muslim who wears a scarf or more expansive head covering, other than as a fashion statement when appearing in public, is advertising that she believes in the Koran.

The words of the Gospel being mostly about loving your neighbour, even your enemy as you love yourself are as benign as holy words can be. The words of the Torah are worrisome only for those who live in the so-called Promise Land, for that holy text favours their extermination (Deuteronomy) so that God's alleged "chosen people" have the place all to themselves. The words in the Koran are in a different category altogether in their advocacy of violence and abject sadism.

Richard Wright, author of *The Evolution of God*, on the exhortation to violence and the celebration of cruelty in the Koran compared to the Bible:

The Koran is a shorter book than the Bible (by a factor of ten); pound for pound, it no doubt features more exhortations to violence. So if you ask which book is “worse” in terms of belligerence, you might say that qualitatively the Hebrew Bible (and hence the Christian Bible) takes the trophy – thanks to that unrivalled embrace of genocide in Deuteronomy – but that quantitatively the winner is the Koran, at least in terms of the frequency of belligerent passages, if not in absolute numbers.

And if, on top of the verses espousing violence in the terrestrial world, you add verses gleefully envisioning the suffering of infidels in the afterlife, the Koran wins the quantitative competition more decisively.

Those who fear the impact of Allah's Words should not have to justify their fear, the cause is self-evident. Those who wear clothing advertising their belief in those Words and who maligned with impunity those who are frightened by them as fear mongers i.e. Islamophobes should be the ones who are taken to task.

A Lie Exposed in Real Time

Bias towards those who would rather answer to a higher law has been the norm in Canada since a 1980 Supreme Court decision (Appendix: *The First Accommodation*) made it an imperative that the preferences of those who wish to live their lives according to revealed truths i.e. immutable facts communicated to a mortal by a god be accommodated everywhere.

The Supreme Court of Canada has been extremely diligent in putting into practice what the Charter later explicitly recognised as the Supremacy of the Church over the State (Appendix: *God in the Canadian Charter of Rights*). The acceptance of the face-covering-veil, the niqab, during the citizenship ceremony a testament to the enduring legacy of discrimination in favour of believers, not the other way around as Motion 103 would have it.

On the day that Parliament voted for a resolution which gave credence to the lie that the religious e.g. Muslims are discriminated against, events in Toronto provided real time proof of the opposite. That same afternoon, the Ontario Liberal government issued a statement in support of the Peel District School Board's decision to allow the religion that will not take no for an answer to hold religious services on school property during school hours.

It did this in spite of an animated protest the day before against an undertaking which gives Islam a beachhead where thoughtful parents expected their children to be safe from the bombardment of the word of god: the ostensibly secular public schools system.

Intimidated by an unwavering persistent religion which seeks to be present everywhere as the Koran demands and will not take no for an answer, politicians at all levels of government have and continue to surrender rights they should be defending leaving their constituents to take matters into their hands including taking issue with that intractable book in their insistence that the Board respect its primary mandate and leave religion out of it. This is not a good thing.

You Are the Arrogant One!

38:2 But the unbelievers are steeped in arrogance and strife.

Arrogance does not become a believer, it becomes you. What you may mistake for arrogance in a believer is contempt; contempt for your condescending tolerance which is insulting for those who hold the truth to be self-evident. Be accommodating, you say to yourself, later they will come around, it's only natural.

That is not what is happening (Appendix: Environics' Survey of Muslims in Canada 2016). Arrogance has that effect on people, it turns them off. Respect that comes from fighting for what you believe in, as activists in Allah's Cause are doing, is what makes converts to your way of thinking.

Our arrogance, whose other manifestation is our can't-be-bothered attitude towards learning what the other is all about, will be our undoing, as arrogance was mine in another context, but I digress. An argument could be made that Ms. Khalid's unwillingness to compromise on the wording of her motion is a sign of arrogance, not contempt, if you ignore that her accusation assumes that, like in the scriptures which are her guide, the truth of what she advances is, for her, self-evident.

Our Pakistan-born daughter of immigrants could serve, as a young woman, as the Poster Child to our failure to bring the kids around to our way of thinking, and children, to use an abused cliché, are the future.

Who Will Save US from Ourselves

Patricia Crone in *Slaves on Horses* writes that Islamic scriptures have "an extraordinary capacity to resist internal criticism, a feature unparalleled in either the Skandhara [the life of the Buddha] or the Gospels, but characteristic of the entire Islamic tradition, and most pronounced in the Koran: one can take the picture presented or one can leave it, but one cannot work with it."

She is wrong. You can work with it if you have the courage. There is no one else who can. As a proud and popular Muslim-Canadian explained to me years ago when I first started writing about the Koran, it was up to non-Muslims to make certain things known if we are to save our country from the fundamentalists. While there is a risk for a non-Muslim to do what I have advocated here, "for a Muslim," he said, "it is a death sentence."

Conclusion

As we accept more and more refugees and immigrants whose values and beliefs are often at odds with our own, which one will change the other for the better, and who is to define what the better is. Today, to favour one over the other, even if you are Muslim, is to invite accusations of being an Islamophobe or of spreading Islamophobia.

If there is a fear of Islam it is not of the person, but of its sacred texts, the Koran in particular. If a discussion of Islamophobia leads to a discussion of the Koran it will be time well spent. For years I have argued on my website for such a discussion. As I pleaded early on, the world desperately needs an honest discussion about Islam, starting with an unfettered dialogue on the Koran, if we are to allay the fear of the other and foster a trust in the other that is sadly lacking and a reason to fear that the worst is yet to come.

Afterword

"For the first time in history, 338 young women filled every seat in the House of Commons in honour of International Women's Day as part of an initiative called Daughters of the Vote, organized by Equal Voice, which advocates to elect more women in politics." On an occasion ostensibly dedicated to the advancement of women, Islamophobia, reading the Globe and Mail's reporting on the event, took center stage.

In his address to the gathering, the Prime Minister did not challenge statements about Canadians being raving Islamophobes or a baffling observation, if you are not familiar with Islamic scriptures, that Canadians, in their defence of freedom of speech, are favouring the growth of a "culture of ignorance".

In Islamic scriptures the period before Islam is generally referred to as Jahiliya, the time of ignorance when world views as numerous and as varied as the colours of the rainbow flourished on the Peninsula. The Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 with his followers marks the alleged transition from ignorance to enlightenment. The year of this exodus is known as the Hijra or Hegira. The Hegira begins the Muslim calendar and is represented as 1 AH or 1 al-Hijra. For the believers, Western Civilization's questioning, multi-coloured world-view is a product of the time of ignorance.

From Ignorance:

I am not aware in the entire history of civilisation of a more gracious, more loving, more vibrant society than that of the Arabs before Islam ... [it was a time] ... of unbound freedom, lofty sentiments, a nomadic and chivalrous way of life, [a land] of fantasy, joy, mischievousness, bawdy impious poetry, refined love-making ...

Ernest Renan, cf. Robert Montagne, La Civilisation du désert (my translation)

To Enlightenment:

They were a people of primary colours, or rather of black and white ... They were a dogmatic people, despising doubt, our modern crown of thorns. They did not understand our metaphysical difficulties, our introspective questioning. They only knew truth and untruth, belief and unbelief, without our hesitating retinue of finer shades.

This people was black and white not merely in clarity, but in apposition. Their thoughts were at ease only in extremes ... they never compromised; they pursued the logic of several incompatible opinions to absurd ends, without perceiving the incongruity.

They were a limited, narrow-minded people, whose inert intellect lay fallow in curious resignation. Their imaginations were vivid, but not creative.

T.E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom

Making no claim to the high road, Trudeau instead, used the occasion to stoke the fires he claims he wants to put out, not omitting to take a swipe at those in Parliament who would not back Motion 103 i.e. the Conservatives because of its implication for freedom of speech:

Do we have a problem with Islamophobia in this country? Yes, we do ... If everyone had just agreed [to Motion 103] and we'd moved on, maybe we wouldn't be addressing the very

scary and real spike in hate speech. Maybe we wouldn't be challenging each other as politicians in the things that we're saying, in the choices we make as leaders to play up divisions and fears.

The Prime Minister made a choice "to play up divisions and fears", his claim to the contrary notwithstanding. What will you do? Enlightenment or ignorance², what will it be? I would choose ignorance. It makes perfect sense in the upside down world we are asked to accept as the better reality.

A Bizarro World

(From: Alice Visits a Mosque to Learn About Judgement Day, Boreal Books, 2012)

45:20 This (Qur'an) is an illumination for mankind, a guidance and mercy unto a people who believe with certainty.

17:82 And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is healing and merciful to the believers, and it yields nothing but perdition for the wrongdoers.

More than six thousand revealed truths later, only fifteen more to go before Allah concludes His "illumination for mankind" and He is still at it, talking about punishment and pain and burning people in a raging fire.

THE FIBRE

111 Al-Masad

In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful

111:1 Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, and may he perish too;

111:2 Neither his wealth nor what he has earned will avail him anything.

111:3 He will roast in a flaming fire,

111:4 And his wife will be a carrier of fire-wood,

111:5 She shall have a rope of fibre around her neck.

If compassionate is defined as being aware of the suffering of an other and wishing to relieve it, and merciful as being unconditionally kind and forgiving then these are not the virtues we would

² Wilferd Madelung in his seminal *The Succession to Muhammad - A study of the early Caliphate*, Cambridge University Press, 1997 comes to a conclusion supported by Leone Caetani (Sep 12, 1869 – Dec 25, 1935), the great Italian-Canadian scholar and "pioneer and founding father in the application of the historical method on the sources of the early Islamic traditions" that without the massive expansion outside the Peninsula and the brutal suppression of dissent at home after the death of the Prophet, the Arabs would have returned to that wonderful world they once knew.

The great conquests outside of Arabia had turned the mass of the Arabs, deprived of their former freedom and reduced to tax-paying subjects by the Quraysh (the tribe from whom Muhammad hailed and from which, with the short exception of the caliphate of Ali, the early rulers of the believers would be chosen) and the ridda (War of the Apostates) into a military caste sustained by a numerically larger non-Arab, non-Muslim subject population. It may be questioned whether the caliphate of Quraysh would have lasted very long without this imperial expansion ... the successful diversion of all energy into vast military conquests, in the name of Islam, kept any longing for a restoration of the past at bay.

associate with someone who brags about roasting a man over an open fire, with his wife, tethered like an animal, supplying the firewood that fuels the flame that is burning her husband. Two people of good will could not find common ground because of a definition of compassion which is irreconcilable with Western values, that only those who believe with certainty are deserving.

Alice: What is right about allowing criminals into Paradise but sending honest, decent people, men and women, and children too young to understand, to burn in Hell for not believing?

Imam: A sin is what God says it is? And Allah said that not believing in Him and only Him is the greatest sin of all, and that believing in Him is believing with unshakable certainty in everything He has revealed.

Alice: But ...

Imam: Should not people who commit the greatest sin of all not suffer the greatest punishment? No believer is completely evil all the time, which is why Allah weighs their bad deeds against their good deeds before deciding on their fate. But a person who does not believe in Allah and only Allah is being evil all of the time; committing the greatest sin of all, all of the time. Do you think such a person should be entitled to any mercy or compassion?

Alice: I don't know whether to laugh or cry that such a question would even come up.

Imam: It is not a laughing or a crying matter; it is a simple question which very much defines what Islam is all about. Women are only starting to understand what men who fight in the Way of Allah have understood for a long time.

Alice: It's no joke, I know. Judgement Day cannot be a joke for so many who, you say fight in the Way of Allah willing to kill those who would dismiss what you have told me, what Allah revealed about Judgement Day, as the ranting of a madman.

Imam: If you can't believe in God, in whom shall you believe? Allah, on many occasions, vouched for His Messenger's sanity, including when He asked people to rise and reflect that there was "no madness" in the Prophet, the peace and blessings of God be upon him. Allah said.

15:6 They say: "O you, to whom the Reminder (the Qur'an) is revealed, you are indeed a madman.

34:46 Say: "I only give you one exhortation, that you arise for Allah in couples and singly, then to reflect that there is no madness in your companion (the Prophet). He is merely a warner on the eve of a terrible punishment."

Alice: I want to believe in God, in a god who is into reducing suffering not increasing it, and whose mercy is unconditional. I find it difficult to identify with Allah's definition of compassion and mercy, especially after what was revealed about Judgement Day.

Imam: What was revealed is that Allah will show mercy and compassion to those deserving of His Mercy and Compassion, the believers. DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND!

Alice: I do, in a bizarre sort of way.

Imam: What do you mean?

Alice: I used to read some of my brother's comic books. Superman was my favorite, superman had his doppelganger ...

Imam: Doppelganger???

Alice: An opposite. Bizarro was superman's opposite. He lived on a "bizarro world" where up was down, left was right, go meant stop, goodbye meant hello ... Bizarro is a term often used to describe a person or thing that uses a twisted form of logic.

Imam: "Bizarro world" is an interesting way to describe the world of the unbelievers.

Alice: Bizarro came to mind when Allah revealed that "the charmer" is the name of angels who beat up unbelievers while flying them to who-knows-where - Hell or to be judged; it is so confusing.

Imam: He is Allah; He can call His angels whatever He wants.

Alice: Of course. And He constantly refers to Himself as the Compassionate, the Merciful; yet, the actions and verdicts of the Judge presiding over Judgement Day would lead some to believe that His understanding of Compassion and Mercy are different, perhaps even the opposite of what, for example, Western dictionaries define as compassion and mercy.

Imam: A bizarro-world's definition.

Alice: The believers are going to Paradise because they have earned it and have no need of Allah's Compassion or Mercy. As to the criminals He welcomes into Paradise, His Compassion and Mercy amount to a pardon. Wouldn't real compassion and mercy have been to forgive those who, through no fault of their own, and in many cases because of Allah's admitted deliberate premeditated actions, failed to believe?

Imam: They failed to believe because of their arrogance, and Allah does not guide the arrogant.

Alice: Yes, many refused to submit because they were arrogant, I am sure; but for many, the Prophet was, and is just another claimant to a special relationship with humanity's alleged invisible friend in the sky; and it did not help that his message was so different than that of all the Messengers he said came before and with whom he claimed a kinship - Jesus in particular.

Imam: Jesus simply misunderstood Allah when He revealed that you should love your neighbour. Allah's command was that you should love the believers as you love yourself.

Alice: ... and hate those who do not believe.

Imam: HOW COULD YOU LOVE THOSE FOR WHOM ALLAH HAS RESERVED SUCH A PAINFUL PUNISHMENT?

Alice: And there we are.

Imam: It is time for you to go home young lady.

Alice: [picking up her shoes, she turns to leave, but not before] Allah is right, and that makes me sad.

Imam: What makes you sad?

Alice: That we can never be friends. I could not take you as a friend, even if that was what you wished, knowing that by doing so I was dooming you to an eternity of agony on fire in Allah's Hell. I could never be that cruel.

Imam: [the imam is moved somewhat] Worship Him and only Him, accept that there will be a Judgement Day as He describes, and believe with certainty and everything will be alright and we can all be friends.

Alice: If only it was that easy. So much pain, so much sorrow, so much horror ... and for what?

Imam: For a place in Paradise. Go home and praise Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful at every opportunity and never forget what was revealed to you today.

Alice: [leaving the spotlight] How could I forget; how could anyone forget.

Imam: [returns to his Friday prayers]

1:1 In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful,

1:2 Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds,

1:3 The Compassionate, the Merciful,

1:4 Master of the Day of Judgement,

1:5 Only You do we worship, and only You do we implore for help.

...

Appendices

A Muslim Mourns the Death of a Christian

When Don died on August 17, 2006 Sohrab wept. Don was one of four middle-aged mildly-schizophrenic impoverished Christian men whom he cooked for and looked after in a rundown house in the Ottawa French enclave of Vanier. The house was the property of a Pentecostal Minister. In return for looking after the men, Sohrab was given free room and board and a small stipend.

Muslims are not expected to mourn, let alone associate with unbelievers the way Sohrab did, or look after their welfare. An Islamic Tradition maintains that when Allah saw His Messenger weeping over the tomb of His mother (she died when the Prophet was just a child) after a vision where he saw her burning in Hell, Allah told His Prophet that He did not want to see him weeping for an unbeliever ever again.

Allah would show, what non-Muslims would consider compassion for dead unbelievers this one and only this one time – he resurrected the Prophet's parents, Abdullah and Amina, long enough for them to pronounce the Shahadah, the Muslim declaration of faith, and be admitted into Heaven.

On another occasion when the Prophet was again seen by Allah weeping and praying for an unbeliever, a recently deceased uncle who had sheltered him, protected him from his enemies, who had been the father he had never known (the Prophet's father died before he was born), He sent the angel Gabriel to reprimand him. The Prophet's uncle and protector, Abu Talib, had died an unbeliever. Gabriel, in no uncertain terms reminded the Messenger about Allah's warning about not weeping for an unbeliever.

God's right-hand angel may also have told God's Messenger that it was pointless to pray for unbelievers since they automatically go to Hell, and their sentence cannot be appealed, for only believers are entitled to any compassion or mercy from Allah.

I do not know if Sohrab also prayed for his departed friend. If he did, in the eyes of Allah, he is doubly guilty.

How Sohrab and I Became Friends

"It was the best of times," he said.

"It was the worst of times," I replied, "A Tale of Two Cities."

"You know Dickens?"

"Of course, I know Dickens!" I said. "Have you read Bleak House?"

"Yes, I have," he replied. "Do you read Shakespeare, I just love Shakespeare."

"Yes, I have read Shakespeare."

"How about Hemingway?"

"For Whom the Bell Tolls, The Sun Also Rises, that guy and the sea."

I may have rhymed off a few more.

"Marx, Engel, Nietzsche, Goethe?", he asked.

"I know of them," I admitted. I had taken a course in Marxian economics called Marx's Theory of Value at Simon Fraser University during my I think I want to be an economist phase.

We discussed Engel's influence on Marx and his significant contribution to Das Capital and how managers of capital have replaced the owners of capital as those who are disproportionately rewarded for their contribution to the economy.

At one point during our discussion he remarked how nice it was to meet someone in a bar who could talk about more than beer and sports (the last time we would ever meet in a bar setting). I did not feel it was necessary to explain that Canadians have been conditioned not to indulge in more than superficial discussions with members of other cultures for fear of offending.

He wanted to discuss literature and poetry and that was fine with me, although, when it comes to poetry I know what I like and that's about it.

At one point our discussion veered into the nature of evil. What can you expect when you throw Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche into the mix. He was convinced that everyone was born good, that "evil" was a learned behaviour, and that religion was the great teacher.

I listened to what he had to say, for he obviously had had to come to terms with the nature of evil in a very personal way.

I don't usually give out my phone number to someone I've just met in a bar. However, when he took out a book from his well-stocked book bag and asked me to write my number in it, I couldn't resist. The book was Emma by Jane Austin; the book that had marked my transition from I think I want to be economist to I want to be a writer.

Sohrab called the very next day and asked if we could meet for coffee at a Tim Horton's on Bank Street, a few blocks from Parliament Hill. On my way, I picked up a copy of Reading Lolita in Tehran by Azar Nafisi. From our discussion the previous evening, I assumed he had not read it. I was wrong. When I offered it to him as a gift he gracefully decline. He had read the book.

"As a memoir it was okay," he said, "but it was not literature" (An opinion with which I strongly disagreed at the time. That was until we collaborated on Days of Pain and Madness about his time in Iran's notorious Evin prison as a guest of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Now I only mildly disagree.)

He also had a book for me, a pre-war biography of Goethe by Von Houston Stewart Chamberlain ... in German. I had assumed he had not read Lolita, he had assumed from our discussion that I could read German. We both agreed that we may have had a little too much to drink the night before.

I then asked the question that was uppermost in my mind.

"Are you a Muslim?"

"Yes, I am Muslim;" he replied "I was born in Iran, the son of a carpet maker."

I sort of apologized for asking him about his faith, but for me it was important. I explained that I had a somewhat obscure website where I occasionally wrote about Islam and I would love to have his opinion.

He had brought with him some of his poetry which he took out of that same well-stocked book-bag and asked if I would take it with me to read so I could tell him what I thought of his writing next time we met.

I immediately started making excuses to avoid having to read his poems. As he was putting those rumpled sheets of paper back into his bag I recognized the look.

"Give me a few of your poems and let me read them now," I said.

I read the first poem.

"That is a very lonely poem," I heard myself saying.

It was a completely inadequate description of the poem of a man whose life experiences completely transcended the simple cottage-like existence of ordinary Canadians. An unedited excerpt:

All my being is like a dark verse

which repeatedly

takes you into sun rising infinite growth and ornaments

and my entire existence

being squeezed and forced

through small hole of

emptiness

So I consider my life

is spent sooner than

half my days in this

dark world wide

the intellectual release had

been none,

the less marked

than the physical

By servitude

and have the mind in prison

I must say

bravery is fear my friend

And I feel

exiled and squeezed

like a thin line of substance,

twisted and drawn out to infinity

His love of literature was only exceeded by his love of carpets, oriental carpets, with an Iranian's affection for the Persian variety.

"Do you know," he boasted "that one of the oldest rugs in the world was a Persian rug found at the bottom of a Russian lake? Did I know that when Islam came to Persia, making carpets was forbidden? It was only when some carpet makers came up with the idea of weaving verses from the Koran into their carpets that the ban was lifted. "It is from that period," he said, "that we have the Muslim prayer rug."

Sohrab, since coming to Canada as a refugee, made his living cleaning and restoring oriental carpets. He claimed to have been called to Brian Mulroney's house when he was Prime Minister to remove a stain from a carpet that had resisted all modern techniques to eliminate it. A simple treatment, he explained, using yogurt did the trick.

On another occasion he said he was called in to repair a beautiful, expensive silk carpet that the Shah of Iran had given the late Mitchell Sharp when he was Secretary of State for External Affairs. It seems Mr. Sharp's dog had chewed off a corner. He simply got some silk thread and re-wove the damaged portion of the carpet. Mr. Sharp was so impressed with his repair, he said for he recommended him to Canada's first female Secretary of State for External Affairs whose apartment, from Sohrab's description, had more riches from antiquity than many museums.

He continued talking about how he had fixed rugs for the rich and powerful of Ottawa. I took him at his word, even though his humble circumstances left me wondering. The reason should have been obvious.

A Strange Devout New World

(From: *Between a Pillar and a Hard Pace*, Boreal Books, 2014)

Allah did not create man so that he could have fun. The aim of creation was for mankind to be put to the test through hardship and prayer. An Islamic regime must be serious in every field. There are no jokes in Islam. There is no humor in Islam. There is no fun in Islam. There can be no fun and joy in whatever is serious.

Ayatollah Khomeini

Should Islam emerge triumphant from the battle between progress and backwardness and extra-terrestrials visit this world, they will find it devoid of music, devoid of colour, devoid of fun and laughter, devoid of songs sung by females, devoid of the beauty of a woman's face and form, devoid of art that is not limited to meaningless geographical figures and above all, devoid of wonder, spontaneity and imagination.

In this bleak predictable world where the exercise of freewill means death, they will witness a form of collective brainwashing where everyone, like pre-programmed automatons, constantly interrupt whatever they are doing to get down on their hands and knees and kiss the ground and mouth many of the same phrases they said earlier, and will repeat later, most in praise of a mythical narcissistic deity which cannot be praised enough.

The extra-terrestrials will undoubtedly have an idea, from intercepted radio and television signals of what the people of earth were like when progress was not everywhere a sin, and empirical knowledge came from enquiry and reason and not from a spokesperson for a deity. They may even wonder how such a reversal could have come about.

A Woman Who Loved Women and the Intimacy of Igloos on Cold Arctic Nights

(From: Shooting the Messenger, Boreal Books, 2008)

Unlike Kelowna, rents in Ottawa were prohibitively expensive, but there were alternatives for those short on cash. One of these was Pestalozzi College, an urban commune named after Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi [1746-1827] the famous, or infamous depending on your point-of-view, Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer. It was a college in name only. It was a modern twenty-story apartment building on one of the National Capital's more famous street: Rideau Street. A prized location only a short distance from Parliament Hill and an even shorter distance from Ottawa U. (l'Université d'Ottawa), Ottawa's downtown, bilingual university (enrolment 34,000+).

It was the layout of the apartments that made Pestalozzi special and made the rent affordable. Most apartments consisted of three or four small spartanly furnished bedrooms: a bunk bed with pull-out drawers, a closet and a desk. In some configurations, you had two or three small bedrooms and one large bedroom with two bunk beds, two desks and one closet. The bedrooms opened onto a central living and dining area. Depending on the number of bedrooms, you shared one or two bathrooms. Unless you went to Pestalozzi as a group you had no idea who your communal companions would be.

I moved into an empty apartment with three one-bunk bedrooms and one large two-bunk bedroom. With the start of the fall semester the building quickly filled up including my little corner of the world on the 16th floor. First to check in after me were Bob and Marina who took the larger bedroom.

Bob was a tall, thin young man with long black hair. He had this booming voice, or should I say booming laugh. Bob did not so much talk as laugh, a slightly hysterical laugh. He also had this vaguely frantic disposition, bouncing around the apartment like the proverbial butterfly. Bob was more into fashion and make-up than most women I have known, and better at it. Bob and Marina's large bedroom would occasionally double as a makeshift beauty salon for the residents of Pestalozzi. Bob's makeovers were nothing short of spectacular.

Bob was your stereotypical gay guy. Marina however, was not your stereotypical lesbian. Marina was a short, slightly overweight, large-breasted young woman. She may have been considered overweight by today's standards but perhaps not to her Inuit community from which I suspect she came from. Like Bob, she had long black hair. Unlike Bob, who wore his hair like Jesus Christ Superstar – that is unkempt, but so clean it sparkled – she always had hers tied back, which only emphasize her pleasant round face. Marina taught Inuit part-time at Ottawa U.

I never got close to Bob, for perhaps obvious reasons, but with Marina, it was different. We never really became bosom buddies, no pun intended, but she was the only one I found comforting when things did not go as expected. Marina was into Tarot Cards, usually 72 cards, 22 of which represent virtues and vices, death and fortune and are used to ostensibly tell the future. Whenever I felt my life was going down the tube, the cards always predicted that times would get better, which they usually did.

Marina had also been the victim of multiple sexual assaults until she came up with her own solution to stopping the attacks on her person. Her radical solution was not to resist and to laugh at her disconcerted assailant as he attempted penetration and even after. In her "milieu" rape was somewhat commonplace. She said that for a rapist a struggling women (or girl) is half, if not most of the fun. She

took the fun out of it by not resisting. Laughing at her assailant meant she was diminishing him as opposed to him diminishing her. After her reputation was made, the rapes and attempted rapes stopped. Short-term discomfort for long-term relief; it had to take guts.

Years later I would join the Department of Indian Affairs as a consultant on a project which included using computer technology to identify children at risk of sexual interference in remote aboriginal and Inuit communities. But that is a story for the sequel to this whistleblower's tale.

On a few occasions, Marina asked me to accompany her to a strip club a few blocks west on Rideau Street so she could hook up with a girl or a woman who understood her. In those days, if you were a woman, you did not go to a strip club without a male escort. Your male friend would camouflage your intentions to buy a girl a beer and later invite her over to your place for a bout of intimacy.

Marina became a model for me on how to talk to women. I already knew how to listen. From the conversations I had with her and the conversations she had with women and girls she fancied, I came to appreciate that women want to be treated both as sexual objects and as human beings – not unlike men. Marina, the woman who loved women and the intimacy of igloos on cold arctic nights, was partly responsible for my finally needing the fingers of my other hand to count the women I would get to know as friends and lovers.

Canada recognized women as persons in 1929, 52 years after Confederation. It had only taken a few years after my discovery of women as sexual beings to come to the same conclusion. Having come to the conclusion that women were people too, it was only natural that I would extend the same courtesy to Bob, his short, curly blond-hair boyfriend and their pasty little-orphan-Annie look-alike acquaintance. When the boys were short of cash or sundries he would go down to the park behind Ottawa's premier hotel next to the Parliament Buildings dodging queer-hunters with bats and broomsticks to tend to the men and boys waiting in the bushes where the Rideau Canal meets the Ottawa River.

The area behind the Chateau Laurier has since been extensively renovated and most of the action has moved to a park on Ottawa's other river, the smaller Rideau. You can still, however, get your mind and other parts of your anatomy blown in a variety of ways a short distance from Parliament Hill.

With the arrival of Pierrette from Québec City and André from Mont-Laurier (a small Quebec town in north-western Quebec) our little, randomly thrown together commune was complete. Pierrette was studying dietetics at Ottawa U and would end up being André and my cook, and a wonderful cook she was (André and I did the dishes). I always have been lucky that way, which is why I never learned how to prepare a proper meal. Pierrette was a slightly taller, thinner version of Marina. She wore her hair the same way.

Pierrette was a natural leader, although our community acknowledged no such person in theory. You picked up after yourself and kept the place clean because Pierrette expected you to. She was a woman of few words, but when she spoke you listened: a single, loud "ÇA VA FAIRE" (that's enough) when she was studying was enough to quiet even the most raucous crowd. Like André, she had difficulty with the English language, which may explain why she and André did not associate much with Marina, Bob and friends.

André worked as a disk jockey at a local radio station on the Québec side of the Ottawa (Outaouais) River. To this day, he remains the funniest person I have ever met. Dinners were a laugh riot. It wasn't long before Pierrette fell in love with André. He was not interested. André is the only man I have ever

known who expressed no interest, in the more than eight months we were together, in an intimate relationship with either sex.

Many weekends, when Pierrette and André returned home, Marina and I would share a bunk with Bob and Blondy on the other makeshift bed, sharing a joint and listening to Pink Floyd, the Stones, Led Zeppelin or whatever, talking late into the night. It was not all small talk or rambling on the politics and pop-philosophy of the day. We also talked about Adam Smith, Hume, Kant, Nitzhe's influence on Wagner's music... German philosophers seemed to be a favourite of Bob and the blonde guy.

With the end of the school year Pierrette moved back to Québec City. André would shortly find a job with Canadian Arm Forces Radio and leave for Germany. The dynamics of the commune were about to change with soulmates of Bob taking over the space vacated by Pierrette and André. It was time to move on, but first a visit with a well-dressed woman living in a mess.

Pestalozzi College has since been redeveloped into a typical apartment building and is now called Horizon Towers, the urban commune concept having fallen into disrepute — too many visits by the police and the fire department I suspect. Shortly after leaving Pestalozzi, I went to work for the Federal Government. It was a bitter-sweet experience.

Blasphemy Laws - A Tale of Two Victims

Jakarta governor Ahok sentenced to two years in prison for blasphemy ... Jakarta's Christian governor has been sentenced to two years in prison after a trial that was widely seen as a measure of religious pluralism in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country.

The Guardian, May 9, 2017.

It all started with an opponent citing a verse from the Koran which he said warned Muslims against voting for a Christian. What verse is not mentioned in any reports I have read including from CNN and the BBC. It does not matter, verses warning Muslims against associating with Christians are "so numerous", to quote Abu Yusuf Riyadh-ul-Haq, an Islamic scholar based in the United Kingdom, "I can't recite every one of them" (Appendix: Can We Be Friends?).

Ahok, said that was not the case, and for that he was tried for blasphemy. In 2016, a crowd estimated at 200,000 marched through Jakarta, some demanding that he be put to death for claiming what we in the West, who do not know any better, take for granted.

Saying a god did not really mean it will usually not get you killed if it is meant to soften some of the more hateful things gods may have inadvertently let slip; but not if that god is Allah. That is blasphemy of the worst kind, adding insult to injury, accusing the most omnipotent of omnipotent gods of not being clear in His instructions when He decreed that He is!

11:1 [This is] a Book with Verses which are elaborately formulated and clearly expounded from the Wise, the All-Aware.

It is also ridiculously easy for Muslims to fall into the blasphemy trap as did a fifteen year old Pakistani boy who misunderstand a question about whether he believed in the teachings of the Prophet.

In January 2016 as reported by the BBC, fifteen year old Qaiser was in a crowd celebrating the Prophet's birth at a mosque in a village in Pakistan. A cleric, having worked the crowd into a state of frenzy shouted, "Who among you is a follower of Muhammad?" Everyone raised their hands.

"Who among you doesn't believe in the teachings of the Holy Prophet? Raise your hands!" he then bellowed.

The young Qaiser, thinking he was being asked if he believed in the teachings of the Holy Prophet, raised his hand. He was the only one to do so.

"BLASPHEMER" screamed the cleric!

The boy then ran home, which was only a few hundred yards from the mosque, and cut off the hand that had blasphemed God's Messenger, put it on a platter and bleeding profusely, returned to the gathering.

A birthday celebration then turned into a celebration of the boy who had cut off his hand as a show of love for the Prophet.

To avoid innocent people being harmed for even inadvertently maligning humanity's alleged omnipotent invisible friend, Parliament should consider making blasphemy a right not a crime.

Can We Be Friends?

(From: Shared Prophets, Boreal Books, 2012)

"Allah has warned us in the Koran, do not befriend the kuffar (a derogatory term for unbelievers), do not align yourself with the kuffar; the verses are so many and so numerous I can't recite every one of them."

From an exhortation made to students from a British madrassa by Abu Yusuf Riyadh-ul-Haq, an Islamic scholar based in the United Kingdom, not to associate with Christians and Jews. BBC documentary, British Schools, Islamic Rules

We were made to love each other, the proof is in the many believers who take Jews and Christians as friends in spite of a god who tells them that they must not lest they be corrupted and join their friends in Hell. Do not be depressed by the following sample of revelations where Allah's deep-seated animosity towards the unbelievers, Christians and Jews mostly, is all too evident, for what cannot be denied is that we love each other no matter what. It is what comes naturally even if gods would have us believe otherwise, and in that there is hope.

3:186 You shall be tried in your possessions and yourselves, and shall hear from those who received the Book before you (the Jews and the Christians) and from the idolaters, a lot of abuse; but if you forebear and guard against evil, that indeed is a mark of great determination.

3:187 And when Allah made a covenant with those who were given the Book: "You shall reveal it to mankind and not conceal it", they simply cast it behind their backs, and sold it for a small price (rejecting God's directives, Moududi). Evil then is their deal.

3:188 Do not think those who are pleased with what they have done and loved to be praised for what they have not done, immune from punishment; a painful punishment is in store for them.

3:189 And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Allah has power over everything!

2:212 Life in this world has been made alluring for those who disbelieve. They mock those who believe; but those who fear Allah will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. Allah provides for those whom He wills without measure.

8:73 As to the unbelievers, they are friends of one another. If you do not do this (subdue the unbelievers), there will be great sedition and corruption in the land.

45:19 They will avail you nothing against Allah; and indeed the wrongdoers are friends of each other, but Allah is the friend of the God-fearing.

Allah does not associate with unbelievers; they are evil, good only as fuel for His Hell, kindling for His Fire? Unbelievers are people who cavort with devils. Allah doesn't associate with unbelievers,

and, if you are a believer, unless it is absolutely necessary, He expects you to do the same, unless you want to join them in Hell.

3:28 Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends, rather than the believers. Whoever does that has nothing to do with Allah, unless you guard against them fully! Allah warns you to beware of Him (warns you of His anger); and unto Him is the ultimate return!

If you did not get the message the first time you are reminded again.

3:118 O believers, do not take as close friends other than your own people (other than your co-religionists); they will spare no effort to corrupt you and wish to see you suffer. Hatred has already been manifest in what they utter, but what their hearts conceal is greater still. We have made clear Our Signs to you if only you understand.

3:119 There you are, you love them, but they do not love you, and you believe in the entire book (all Scriptures). When they meet you, they say: "We believe", but when they are alone they bite their fingertips with rage. Say: "Die of your fury. Allah knows what is hidden in the hearts!"

3:120 If you are visited by some good fortune, it vexes them; and if you are visited by some misfortune, they rejoice at it; but if you forbear and fear Allah, their wiles will not hurt you at all. Allah knows fully what they do!

And again:

4:144 O believers, do not take the unbelievers for friends, instead of the believers. Do you wish to give Allah a clear proof against you?

And again, with a specific warning about associating with Christians and Jews:

5:51 O believers, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends; some of them are friends of each other. Whoever of you takes them as friends is surely one of them. Allah indeed does not guide the wrongdoers.

Those "in whose hearts is a sickness" who ignore this warning will live to regret it and Hell, the final destination for "losers" will be waiting.

5:52 Yet, you will see those in whose hearts is a sickness hastening to woo them, saying: "We fear that a misfortune will befall us." However, it may be that Allah will bring victory or some other matter from Him; whereupon they will regret what they concealed within themselves.

5:53 And the believers will then say: "Are those the ones who swore by Allah their most solemn oaths that they were indeed with you?" Their works will come to nothing and thus they will be losers.

Once more, with a specific warning about associating with family members who don't believe, even if it means losing money - and don't pray for their salvation.

9:23 O believers, do not take your fathers and brothers as friends, if they prefer disbelief to belief. Those who take them as friends are the wrongdoers.

9:24 Say: "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your relatives, the wealth

you have gained, a trade you fear might slacken, and dwellings you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger or than fighting in His way, then wait until Allah fulfils His Decree. Allah does not guide the sinful people.

If a believer associates with unbelievers Allah will question his or her motivation, imputing to the believer a desire for the glory that rightly and only belongs to Him.

4:139 Those who take the unbelievers as friends, instead of the believers – do they seek glory from them? For all glory belongs to Allah.

A believer is not expected to participate in a conversation where the Koran is not taken seriously and accepted as being the literal word of God. To take part in such a discussion is risking being labelled a hypocrite by Allah.

6:68 And when you see those who talk scornfully about Our Revelations, turn away from them, until they engage in another discourse. And should the devil cause you to forget, do not sit down after the reminder with the evil-doing-people.

6:69 The righteous are in no way accountable for them; it is only a reminder so that they may fear [Allah].

4:140 He has revealed to you in the Book that, should you hear the Revelations of Allah being denied or mocked, you should not sit with them until they engage in some other discussion. Otherwise, you are like them. Allah shall assemble all the hypocrites and the unbelievers in Hell;

Hypocrites cannot expect any mercy from Allah and will be confined to the lowest most miserable part of His Hell.

4:145 Surely, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire, and you will not find any supporter for them.

4:146 Except for those who repent and mend their ways, hold fast to Allah and are sincere in their obedience to Allah – those will be among the believers; and Allah shall grant the believers a great reward.

4:147 Why should Allah punish you, if you are thankful and faithful? Allah Himself is Thankful, All-Knowing.

If you must leave a discussion do so gracefully, if haughtily, while reminding those who don't share your beliefs that they are oblivious.

28:55 And when they hear idle talk, they turn away from it and say: "We have our works and you have your works. Peace be upon you; we do not desire the company of the ignorant."

A religion is a solemn thing; don't associate with religious people who have fun worshipping God and enjoy life.

6:70 And leave those who take their religion for sport and who are deluded by the life of this world, and remind by it (the Qur'an), lest any soul should perish of what it has earned (on

account of the person's deeds). Apart from Allah, it has no protector or intercessor; and if it offers any ransom, it will not be accepted from it. Such are those who are turned over [to be punished] on account of what they have earned. They will have a drink of boiling water and a very painful punishment, because they disbelieved.

A believer must not take as a friend anyone who would deny or make fun of what Allah has revealed in the Koran whether they are Christians or Jews (People of the Book) or your run-of-the-mill unbeliever. If they do so, they will join their friend in Hell.

5:57 O believers, do not take as friends those who take your religion as a mockery or a sport, be they from among those who received the Book before you, or the unbelievers. Fear Allah if you are true believers.

People of the Book as transgressors:

5:59 Say: "O People of the Book, do you resent anything we do other than that we believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed before, and that most of you are transgressors?"

Unbelievers are not welcomed into Allah's Mosques.

9:17 The unbelievers should not enter Allah's Mosques bearing witness thereby against themselves that they are unbelievers. The works of those are vain and in the Fire they will abide forever.

9:18 Only he who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, performs the prayers, gives the alms and fears no one but Allah, shall visit Allah's Mosques. Those shall be reckoned among the rightly guided.

Believers are not expected to take orders from unbelievers, nor tend to their injuries.

33:45 O Prophet, We have sent you as witness, a bearer of good news and a warner,

33:46 Calling to Allah by His Leave, and an illuminating beacon.

33:47 Announce to the believers that they will have a generous bounty from Allah.

33:48 And do not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites, overlook their injury and trust in Allah. For Allah suffices as Guardian.

Another verse about not being friends with certain people, namely, all the people previously mentioned.

60:13 O believers, do not befriend a people against whom Allah is wrathful and who have despaired of the Hereafter, just as the unbelievers have despaired of the dwellers of the tombs (those buried in graves, Yusuf Ali).

For Allah, a believer has no friends except His Eminence, His Eminence's Spokesman and those who bow down before His Eminence.

5:55 Your only friends are Allah, His Messenger and those who believe, performing the prayer and giving the alms, while they bow down.

5:56 Whoever takes Allah, His Messenger and those who believe as friends [must know] that Allah's party is indeed triumphant.

A Muslim who befriends Christians or Jews is an evildoer, revelation 5:79.

5:77 Say: "O People of the Book, do not exceed the bound of your religion unjustly and do not follow the fancies of a people (your ancestors) who went astray in the past and led others astray and strayed from the Right Path."

5:78 Those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus, son of Mary; that, on account of their disobedience and their aggression.

5:79 They used not to forbid one another from committing any of the evils they were committing. Evil is what they did!

5:80 You (the Prophet): see many of them befriending the unbelievers. Evil is what their soul prompts them to do. They have incurred Allah's Wrath and they will suffer torment forever.

5:81 Had they believed in Allah and the Prophet, and what has been revealed to him, they would not have taken them as friends; but many of them are evildoers.

Allah is okay with People of the Book i.e. Jews and Christians believing in their respective Torah and the Gospels, after all, He is the acclaimed author of both plebeian antecedents to His Masterpiece, the Koran; but it is normally not enough not to be considered evildoers.

5:65 Had the People of the Book believed and warded off evil, We would have remitted their sins and admitted them into the Gardens of Bliss.

5:66 And had they observed the Torah and the Gospel and what was revealed to them from their Lord, they would have eaten amply from above them and below their feet. Among them is a moderate group, but evil is what many of them are doing!

Allah must have really been fond of His greatest Messenger to admit that He would still have protected him even if he failed to deliver His Message.

5:67 O Messenger, proclaim what has been revealed to you from your Lord; but if you do not, you would not have delivered His Message. Allah will protect you from mankind. Allah surely does not guide the unbelieving people!

It is not enough to believe in the Torah and the Gospel, you must believe in the Koran, "what has been revealed to you from your Lord, revelation 5:68. Unfortunately for the Prophet, the more he revealed of Allah's Koran the more some people disbelieved. He need not concern himself with them, as Allah will remind him here, and on other occasions.

5:68 Say: "O People of the Book, you have nothing [that counts] until you observe the Torah and the Gospel and what has been revealed to you from your Lord." Surely that which has been revealed to you (the Prophet) from your Lord will only make many of them increase in arrogance and unbelief; so do not be sorry for the unbelieving people.

A verse out of nowhere, it would seem, which appears to contradict the evildoer designation of most Jews and Christians encountered in revelation 5:66.

5:69 Surely, the believers, the Jews, the Sabians and the Christians whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds shall all have nothing to fear and they shall not grieve.

A universal declaration this is not. Exceptions, in the Koran, are the rule. Only two verses after this resounding declaration Allah has Jesus repeat the following exception; that those who believe that he (Jesus) is the Son of God are “evildoers” and that their “dwelling is Hell.”

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

The two intermediary revelations:

5:70 We made the covenant with the Children of Israel and sent forth Messengers to them. Whenever a Messenger brought them what they did not like, they accused some of lying and killed some.

5:71 They supposed that there will be no punishment, so they became blind and deaf. Then Allah forgave them; but again many of them became blind and deaf. Allah is fully aware of what they do!

In Allah’s history of the Jews and Christians, there was a time ...

57:16 Is it not time that the believers’ hearts should bow down at the mention of Allah and the truth which was sent down, and not to be like those who were given the Book previously, but as time went by, their hearts hardened, and many of them are sinners now?

There is a type of unbelievers whom Allah considers believer-appropriate as friends, but how you identify them could be problematic based on Allah’s description of who they are; and you really would not want to make a mistake and end up in Hell.

3:199 Of the People of the Book, there are some who indeed believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to you (the Qur’an) or has been revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allah and not selling Allah’s revelation for a small price. Those will have their reward with their Lord; indeed Allah’s Reckoning is Swift.

Be afraid, be very afraid.

3:200 O believers, forbear and vie in forbearance and steadfastness; and fear Allah so that you may prosper.

Chamberlain's Legacy

Islam is constantly challenging and denigrating Western morality and values, and in a society that ostensibly considers free speech a hallmark should be allowed to do so. Islam's claim to a higher morality is based on revealed truths which, by definition, are unassailable. Islam would like their unassailable truths, and the "perfect human being" who conveyed them to be tacitly, if not explicitly, beyond reproach.

Western countries that have made criticism of religion in general, and Islam in particular a crime e.g. Britain, the Netherlands, Austria..., have effectively surrendered to the forces of intolerance without a fight.

The West has implicitly, if not explicitly, accepted Islam's argument that limits should be placed on criticism of religious beliefs, thereby allowing radical Islam to advance almost unchallenged. This gradual surrender of basic freedoms in the face of religious intolerance is slowly neutering the most effective weapons against the spread of religious tyranny: freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

Winston Churchill, after the end of the Second World War, when the war still had no official name, was asked what they should call the war that had just ended and cost more than 30 million lives. He said "the unnecessary war." The war would have been unnecessary if the democracies had stood steadfast in the face of Hitler's demands instead of rewarding aggressive behaviour.

I was reminded of Churchill's response when looking at a photograph of a protest-march towards the Danish embassy in London during the so-called "cartoon protest". Large signs waved about emphasized the marchers' cry that the cartoonists be "butchered" forthwith along with anyone who has fun at the perfect religion's expense cannot be ignored, but ignore them we did.

I am sure that Churchill, if he were still alive, would have labelled the democracies' timid response - which involved mainly apologizing for their citizens exercising their right to freedom of expression and freedom of speech and promising to severely restrict these fundamental rights where religion was concerned - as rewarding aggressive behaviour.

The fear of random death for their citizens at the hands of those who will not forgive even the mildest criticism of their faith has caused these governments to conclude a Chamberlain-like peace which cannot last.

Will the outcome be the same, a bloody, global war to dwarf all wars to try to regain cherished freedoms carelessly thrown away?

Environics' Survey of Muslims in Canada 2016

Environics' findings are in italics.

A Consequence of Abetting Holy Homophobia

Almost half of believers polled, 43%, agreed with the statement: "Homosexuality SHOULD NOT be accepted by society".

In 2006, to counter a similar rise in homophobia, the Netherlands, to assess if potential immigrants from mainly Islamic countries would be troubled by the more liberal attitudes they would encounter, required them to view a film in which two men are shown kissing in a meadow. Opponents said that this was a subterfuge to limit Muslim immigration, which is telling in itself, and the practice may have been discontinued.

In Canada, an imam who openly denounces homosexuality as a sin was given the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contribution to Canada. He was also, as reported in the Globe and Mail (May 2, 2016), feted "surrounded by mayors, police chiefs and dignitaries, celebrating 26 years of the Canadian Council of Imams... Mr. Quick isn't just any imam. The 66-year-old is followed on social media by thousands of young Muslims. He has close to 2,300 Twitter followers, more than 800,000 likes on Facebook, 12,000 fans on Instagram."

Holy homophobia must be denounced as vigorously, if not more than your regular kind considering its provenance. No one who has gotten to know gays and lesbians as warm, kind, smart, generous human beings as I have (Appendix: A Woman Who Loved Women) could condemn them, as does the duplicitous Creator who gave them the genes that make them unique, his spokesperson the Prophet Muhammad, and imam Quick

A Generational Time Bomb

Our survey found that young Muslims are often more religious than their immigrant parents. For many, their religious identity is becoming more important to them – not less.

An obsession with traditions, selective memory loss and a willingness to abandon one's capacity to reason is rapidly becoming, in many Western countries, a young people's psychosis. For young people who have never experienced the old ways this obsession with traditions and rituals appears to come from contact with teachers, religious scholars and preachers versed in the old ways. This contact being facilitated, if not forced, by parents who want their children to adopt beliefs and customs which they themselves questioned when they were young. The same parents who fled oppressive or dysfunctional regimes to live secure productive lives in the West.

They are the same parents who insisted that the religion that created most of the conditions that made their lives miserable in their native land be taught to their children, or at least accommodated in the public school system and in the public space in their adopted countries. They got their wish and now, like us, are reaping the rewards.

More people looking to scriptures for guidance can only lead to less integration. How could it be otherwise?

Evidence of a Conflicted Citizenry

Among those who consider both religion and country to be very important to their identity (72% of the population), half (50%) say that being Muslim is more important, compared with 15 percent who place greater emphasis on being Canadian, and 27 percent who maintain that both parts of their identity are equally important.

The Classroom Too Is For Praying

Believers were asked "Should Muslims in Canada have the right to pray in public schools? 75% said yes.

The merchant in the Prophet may have been the first to invent the now ubiquitous behavioral modifier that are reward-points with his concept of, for lack of a better expression, I like to call frequent-prayer points. This is unique to Islam and can only lead to even greater demands to allow prayers in the public school system. It's all about the rewards! When you see people rushing into the street to perform the obligatory prayers, it's not only because of the consequences of not praying at the decreed times and in the manner prescribed, but also for the increased rewards that come with praying with a crowd of worshippers.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "If the people knew the reward for pronouncing the Adhan and for standing in the first row (in congregational prayers) and found no other way to get that except by drawing lots they would draw lots, and if they knew the reward of the Zuhr prayer (in the early moments of its stated time) they would race for it (go early) and if they knew the reward of Isha and Fajr (morning) prayers in congregation, they would come to offer them even if they had to crawl."

Bukhari 11.589

A Non-Freudian Assessment of a Woman's Mind

More than half (53%) of Muslim women surveyed say they wear a hijab, chador or niqab in public, with this proportion up from 42% in 2006.

The proliferation of the veil, whose popularity appears to increase in lockstep with a surge in obsession with religion, must inevitably lead to a blurring of the line between the secular and the ostensibly holy and less freedom for women.

We could use Freud's insights into why women would militate for an outcome that is clearly not in their interest by serving as walking advertisement for a religion whose founder and his out-of-this-world Mentor hold them in such low esteem (Appendix: Stupid and Evil).

Holy Warriors in the Making

A child is not born a holy warrior. The process of creating suicide bombers and willing executioners for the likes of Islamic State, al-Qaeda, the Taliban and Boko Haram begins with rote-learning by millions of children of and the most appalling mainstream piece of religious text ever revealed. Muslim children in traditional Islamic societies or families are expected to have read and more or less understood the Koran, in Arabic, from cover to cover before they reach the age of seven. The ceremony of Khatmi-Qur'an celebrates this achievement.

As teenagers, in madrassas (Islamic schools) around the world, and as young men attending Friday prayers at a mosque and listening to vitriolic sermons, they will be reminded of the good life after death for those who kill and die for Allah and the superiority and greater rewards of those who join the fight in His Cause over the homebodies.

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

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

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

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

They will be told of the Prophet's praise of self-immolation, a death so wonderful, he preached, that if a martyr could, he would leave his opulent martyr's home in the sky to return to earth to do it again..

Firdaus

(From: 1,001 Sayings and Deeds of the Prophet, Boreal Books, 2015)

Martyrs get the best of what Paradise as to offer in terms of accommodations.

Narrated Samura:

The Prophet said, "Last night two men came to me (in a dream) and made me ascend a tree and then admitted me into a better and superior house, better of which I have never seen. One of them said, 'This house is the house of martyrs.'"

Bukhari 52.49

Upon reaching Paradise, a holy warrior who has died slaughtering unbelievers in Allah's Cause e.g. a suicide bomber, should take the Prophet's advice and insist on staying at the Firdaus, the name by which "the house of martyrs" is known by in Paradise, he has earned it.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "Whoever believes in Allah and His Apostle, offer prayer perfectly and fasts the month of Ramadan, will rightfully be granted Paradise by Allah, no matter whether he fights in Allah's Cause or remains in the land where he is born."

The people said, "O Allah's Apostle! Shall we acquaint the people with the good news?"

He said, "Paradise has one-hundred grades which Allah has reserved for the Mujahidin who fight in His Cause, and the distance between each of two grades is like the distance between the Heaven and the Earth. So, when you ask Allah (for something), ask for Al-firdaus which is the best and highest part of Paradise."

Bukhari 52.48

Martyrdom is not so bad, do it once and you will want to do it over and over again, and you have the Prophet's word on that

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

The Prophet said, "Nobody who dies and finds good from Allah (in the Hereafter) 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 (in Allah's Cause)."

Bukhari 52.53

Are you mad?

Narrated Anas:

Um (the mother of) Haritha came to Allah's Apostle after Haritha had been martyred on the Day (of the battle) of Badr by an arrow thrown by an unknown person.

She said, "O Allah's Apostle! You know the position of Haritha in my heart (i.e. how dear to me he was), so if he is in Paradise, I will not weep for him, or otherwise, you will see what I will do."

The Prophet said, "Are you mad? Is there only one Paradise? There are many Paradises, and he is in the highest Paradise of Firdaus."

The Prophet added, "A forenoon journey or an afternoon journey in Allah's Cause is better than the whole world and whatever is in it; and a place equal to an arrow bow of anyone of you, or a place equal to a foot in Paradise is better than the whole world and whatever is in it; and if one of the women of Paradise looked at the earth, she would fill the whole space between them (the earth and the heaven) with light, and would fill whatever is in between them, with perfume, and the veil of her face is better than the whole world and whatever is in it."

Bukhari 76.572

God in the Canadian Charter of Rights

(From: Teach Your Children Well, Boreal Books, 2012)

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms begins with an affirmation with which a substantial minority (if not a majority) of Canadians would disagree, and on which most historians must choke; that doing God's work was uppermost on the minds of those who drafted the British North America Act (BNA) of 1867, with the rule of law a close or distant second.

Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law:

Nowhere in the British North America Act of 1867 is God even mentioned. The only possible reference to God, and it's a tenuous one, is the proclamation that Canada's government is still subservient to the British monarch, the head of Henry VIII's church:

The Executive Government and Authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen.

The "supremacy of God" in the Canadian Charter is a copycat restatement of the "one nation under God" declaration in the American Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy (1855-1931), a Baptist minister. It originally did not include the phrase "one nation under God." The good reverend wanted the pledge to apply to everyone, not just those who believed in an all-powerful invisible friend. It was President Eisenhower who, in 1954, convinced Congress to amend the pledge to include "one nation under God."

The first amendment to the American Constitution, (the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights) declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

It could not be clearer, and it is this clarity of language and intention which has successfully repelled repeated attempts by religious forces to establish a beachhead in secular territory. There is no leeway in the American Bill of Rights for judges to impose their own interpretation of the meaning of the First Amendment as it applies to the separation of State and Church, and thereby blur the line between the secular and the sacred as has happened in Canada. In Canada, that line is in danger of disappearing altogether.

Is Ripping Up the Koran Ever Justified?

Police intervened at a Toronto-area school board (Peel) meeting on Wednesday evening after members in the audience shouted anti-Muslim rhetoric, tore pages from a Koran and stepped on the religious text.

Globe and Mail, March 23, 2017

Every year the University of Ottawa, the capital's largest, is host to Islam Awareness Week. Ground zero for this event is the Jock Turcot Centre, "a multi-purpose facility, offering many venues for students, faculty, alumni, and others, to meet and relax." At this event, anyone can pick up a free copy of the Saudi funded translation of the Koran. Its free distribution, courtesy of Saudi subsidies, has made it the most widely read and quoted edition of the Koran on the planet.

Professor Khaleel Mohammed, Department of Religious Studies at San Diego State University on the Saudi Koran:

From the beginning, the Hilali and Muhsin Khan translation reads more like a supremacist Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian polemic than a rendition of the Islamic scripture...

Islam being the later religion which the prophets of the Bible failed to anticipate means that its one prophet could denounce with impunity the message of those who came before, Jesus in particular. The injurious speech of a god may not deserve to be trampled on, but its amplification by mortals, as the Saudis have done in a book they peddle as the word of God may not warrant the same consideration.

Adding insult to injury, the Saudi Koran concludes with evocatively titled denunciations squarely aimed at recruiting Christians in Allah's Cause. Example: FINALITY OF PROOF ON THE FABRICATION OF THE STORY OF THE CROSS (capitalization theirs) and BIBLICAL EVIDENCE OF JESUS BEING A SERVANT OF GOD AND HAVING NO SHARE IN DIVINITY.

In both invectives, writers of the gospels are extensively quoted in support of the Koran's assertion that Jesus did not die on the cross and that Allah does not share power with a son and those who make that claim are committing the greatest sin of all, Shirk, an "unpardonable sin" to quote the Saudi Koran.

Any investigation into Islamophobia as the Heritage Committee intends to do following the vote in favour of Motion 103, must consider the source of much of this alleged fear, which is what is written.

The Koran would have the community of believers, because of what it asserts is their superiority in faith, rule the universe and purge it of undesirables. In 1925 a man published a book in which he made the same claim for his community based on its alleged racial superiority.

What both supremacist doctrines have in common is how this is to be achieved.

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

The near success of the latter and the continued success of the former is largely due to the adoption of this strategy combined with clear instructions as what to do about your inferiors should they find themselves at a disadvantage.

Bavaria has maintained a ban on the publication of the 1925 supremacist polemic even after the author's copyright expired in 2016. Banning or ripping up books except perhaps in protest, even those which contain invitations to genocide and are as openly contemptuous of your beliefs as is the Saudi Koran is not the answer.

Nonetheless, something must be done to alert people to their message and ways found to effectively counter it and not be intimidated by affirmations that it is an expression of the Will of the Almighty who can't be bothered to do His own dirty work.

Reads well, but shops would be very reluctant to stock something on this subject that isn't by a scholar or authority of some kind or other. If you could get some endorsements.

In looking to satisfy a publisher's requirement that I obtain the endorsement of a religious scholar or authority of some type before they would consider publishing *Pain, Pleasure and Prejudice*, the then Rector of Saint Paul University arranged for me to meet with an eminent European theologian and guest lecturer who had written extensively on Islam and the Koran.

He asked if my book presented the Koran and the Prophet in a positive light.

When I answered "no, not always", he handed me back my manuscript. His concern was that the Bible also contained questionable passages, and for him to endorse a book that contained even mild criticisms of the Koranic text was to invite retaliation in kind.

That ship sailed 1,400 years ago.

Lessons in Cruelty

(From: Jihad in the Koran, Boreal Books, 2015)

What about the Koran's relentless graphic description of sadistic torture and pain? As an adult you may be able to dismiss Allah's bragging about torturing and burning men, women and children, in His Hell as metaphorical excesses, sadistic flights of fancy, but what about the kids? Children raised in the Islamic faith are encouraged, if not compelled, at the earliest age to memorize the Koran; the prize for the best memorizer being a choice place in heaven.

There is a very common ceremony practiced throughout most of the Muslim world called Khatmi-Qur'an. It is the ceremony to recognize and celebrate a child's first full reading of the Koranic text in Arabic. Muslim children in traditional Islamic societies or families are expected to have read and more or less understood the Koran, in Arabic, from cover to cover before they reach the age of seven.

What kind of twisted perception of the concept of mercy and compassion will such children be left with after memorizing the following verses about Allah, on Judgement Day, not caring about the people that He condemns to burn in Hell in perpetuity for not believing in Him, "for what you used to do?"

52:13 On the Day they will be driven into the Fire of Hell by force.

52:14 "This is the Fire which you used to deny.

52:15 "Is this magic or do you not see?

52:16 "Burn in it. Bear up or do not bear up; it is the same for you. You are only rewarded for what you used to do."

What kind of warped understanding of the concept of mercy and compassion will children be left with after reading about how the *Compassionate One* takes obvious pleasure in the punishment He inflicts.

11:105 The day (*Judgement Day*) it comes, no soul shall speak without His Leave. Some of them shall be wretched, some happy.

11:106 As for the wretched, they shall be in the Fire; they shall have therein groaning and moaning;

What happens to the mind, to the personality of a child who commits, must commit to memory, not only the hate filled verses we have discussed so far, but others that are even more impressive in their attention to detail when it comes to the deliberate, cold-blooded application of torture. For instance, the *Compassionate One* replacing the burnt skin of unbelievers burning in His Hell so that the torment of their skin roasting in His Fire never ends.

4:56 Those who have disbelieved Our Signs, We shall surely cast them into the Fire; every time their skins are burnt, We will replace them by other skins, so that they might taste the punishment. Allah indeed is Mighty and Wise!

In Allah's Hell, the fantastical vision of pain and torment quickly gives way to the more mundane, but just as gruesome, just as painful torture and never-ending suffering with which any child can relate. For a non-believing adult the following brutality may seem like the plot of some of the more violent

Saturday morning cartoons their kids watch. For believing children the following is real, and not the product of a cartoonist's imagination. Somewhere in time and space, in Allah's bizarre universe, He is actually doing to real people what some children may fantasize about but eventually dismiss, as they grow older, as *immoral, sadistic behaviour*.

14:16 Behind him is Hell, and he is given stinking water to drink.

14:17 He sips it but can hardly swallow it, and death surrounds him from every side, but he will not die; and beyond this is still a terrible punishment.

18:29 And say: "The Truth is from your Lord. Whoever wishes, let him believe; and whoever wishes, let him disbelieve." We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire whose canopy encompasses them all. If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten brass which scalds the faces. Wretched is that drink and wretched is the resting-place!

22:19 Here are two adversaries who dispute about their Lord. To the unbelievers, garments of fire shall be cut up and over their heads boiling water shall be poured;

22:20 Whereby whatever is in their bellies and in their skin shall be melted.

22:21 And for them are iron rods (to beat their heads with).

22:22 Every time they want, in their gloom, to get out of it (the Fire), they are brought back into it. [And it is said to them]: "Taste the agony of burning."

Such is the punishment from Allah for not believing in His Book and His Messenger, and don't bother saying you're sorry, it won't do you any good.

23:101 And when the Trumpet is blown, they will have no kinship to bind them on that Day and they will not question one another.

23:102 Then, those whose scales are heavy – those are the prosperous.

23:103 But those whose scales are light – those are the ones who have lost their souls. In Hell they will dwell forever.

23:104 The Fire lashes their faces, and therein they shrivel.

23:105 "Were not My Signs (this Qur'an) recited to you, but you used to denounced them as lies?"

23:106 They will say: "Lord, our misery overcame us and we were are an erring people.

23:107 "Lord, bring us out of it (Hell); then, if we revert we are indeed wrongdoers."

23:108 He (Allah) said: "Rot in it and do not talk to Me.

It's all about winners and losers, with the losers getting all the pain and the winners all the pleasure.

23:109 "There was a group of My servants who used to say: 'Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy on us; you are the best of the merciful.'

23:110 "But you took them for a laughingstock, till they made you forget My Name, while you were mocking them.

23:111 "I have rewarded them this day for their forbearance, making them the winners."

Pleasure or pain, which will it be?

47:15 The likeness of the Garden which the God-fearing have been promised is this: rivers of water not stagnant, rivers of milk whose taste has not changed, rivers of wine delighting its drinkers and rivers of distilled honey. Therein they have every variety of fruit and forgiveness from their Lord too. Are they to be compared with those who dwell in the Fire forever and are given to drink boiling water which will rip up their bowels?

What happens to the mind of a child who commits to memory, not only the horrific descriptions of what Allah will do in His Hereafter to those who refused to submit to His Will, but what He expects the believers to do, in the here-and-now, to those who would abandon Islam. On at least three occasions, Allah, in the person of Pharaoh, will remind the child labouring to memorize verses of inconceivable brutality that Allah's recommended punishment for leaving Islam is having your hands and feet cut off on alternate sides then to be crucified upon the trunks of trees – palm trees if they can be found.

As the child memorises these techniques for inflicting unbelievable pain and humiliation on those who would dare leave Allah's perfect religion for one less perfect or for no religion at all, he will be reminded that childhood offers no protection from a vengeful, unforgiving god when it comes to unbelievers and apostates. The spontaneous, cold-blooded murder of a child by Khidr because Allah fears his lack of commitment to Islam will cause his parents distress, forever etched in the young impressionable mind: *this God does not flinch at killing children who don't do as they are told and replacing them with children who will.*

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

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

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

What happens to the mind of a child who commits these horrifying descriptions of pain and suffering to memory? What happens to the mind of a child who is required to repeat many of these cruel, pitiless, sadistic verses as part of the five daily mandatory prayers³ to a god who claims to be the personification, the embodiment of compassion and mercy?

THE BACKBITER

104 Al-Humazah

³ All five mandatory ritual prayers must begin with the first chapter of the Koran followed by a minimum of three verses from the Koran.

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

- 104:1 Woe unto every backbiter and slanderer,
104:2 Who amasses wealth and counts it diligently.
104:3 He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal.
104:4 Not at all; he shall be cast into the Smasher.
104:5 And if only you knew what is the Smasher.
104:6 It is Allah's kindled Fire,
104:7 Which attains even the hearts.
104:8 Upon them it is closing in;
104:9 On pillars stretch out.

What do Muslim children dream about after reading about the *Smasher* and people bound to pillars while the *Smasher* creeps towards their hearts to burn it?

What do they fantasise about during their waking hours? Do they ever forget the tortured and tormented verses, including those that encourage mutilation of alleged wrongdoers, which they memorized under the benevolent encouragement of their teachers, imams, parents and guardians?

What do these well-intentioned teachers of Islamic "morality" think they are doing? What do they think they are doing when they tell the children to pay particular attention to revelations about Allah's heroes such as the many Prophets who disowned parents, family members and close relatives who refused to submit to His Will?

What do they think they are doing when they invite children to read Allah's often repeated instructions not to associate with unbelievers, and the even more compelling revelations that demand that Christians and Jews who are invited to become Muslim but decline, and refuse to pay a ransom to save their lives, be murdered in cold-blood?

What do they think they are doing when they invite children to read revelations that damn and curse people who believe in more than one god, Indians for example, and instruct the believers to kill them on the spot if they are invited to become Muslim but refuse; that for polytheists not even a ransom can save their lives?

Let Me Rephrase That!

(From: Let Me Rephrase That!, Boreal Books, 2015)

Of all the incongruities that devotees of a religion steeped in incongruities have to accept, the concept of abrogation has to be the most outlandish. Abrogation, i.e. retraction, annulment ... is common in the real world as better information replaces old information.

In the world of revealed truths i.e. immutable facts communicated to a mortal by a god, abrogation should not even be the exception, it defies logic, and there lies the incongruity, the weirdness. For the rational mind, it is inconceivable that a god, in a book He claims to have written, in Arabic no less (classical Arabic⁴ is assumed), at the beginning of time, if not earlier, and in which He lays claim to infallibility, has to retract, annul, abolish, modify ... what He said earlier.

The incongruity takes even more bizarre proportions when you consider that God carved His book in a tablet which He keeps close by and from which He quotes to the angel Gabriel who will then communicate to the Prophet Muhammad the latest immutable fact from on High about the observable universe and our place in it. An incontrovertible observation which God himself will later prove, by second-guessing Himself, to have been no such thing.

85:21 Yet, it is a glorious Qur'an,

85:22 In a Well-Preserved Tablet.

43:3 We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that perchance you may understand.

43:4 And, indeed, it is in the Mother of the Book, with Us, lofty and wise.

A saying of the Prophet places the Koran on the Throne itself, in all likelihood on Allah's lap.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "When Allah completed the creation, He wrote in His Book which is with Him on His Throne, 'My Mercy overpowers My Anger.'"

Bukhari 54.416

It is difficult for many to conceive of God getting it wrong with this handy flawless aide-memoire of a tablet at His disposal. Contemporary scholars, unlike their mostly Arab classical counterparts who came up with the more than two hundred abrogated verses around the eleventh century, are divided on the concept of abrogation, and the uncomfortable contradictions it entails.

⁴ Classical Arabic (CA), also known as Qur'anic or Koranic Arabic, is the form of the Arabic language used in literary text from Umayyad and Abbasid times (7th to 9th centuries). It is based on the Medieval dialects of Arab tribes. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the direct descendent [of Classical Arabic]... While the lexis and stylistics of Modern Standard Arabic are different from Classical Arabic, the morphology and syntax have remain basically unchanged (though MSA uses a subset of the syntactic structure available in CA). The vernacular dialects, however, have changed more dramatically ...

Tradition has it that the caliph Ali, after reading the Qur'an with errors in it, asked Abu al-Aswad al Du'ali to write a work codifying Arabic grammar. Khalil ibn Ahmad would later write *Kitab al-Ayn*, the first dictionary of Arabic ..."

From Modern Arabic poetry 1800-1970: the development of its forms and themes by Shmuel Moreh

The Arabs were, and most still are eminently at ease with opposites:

This people was black and white not merely in clarity, but in apposition. Their thoughts were at ease only in extremes ... they never compromised; they pursued the logic of several incompatible opinions to absurd ends, without perceiving the incongruity.

T.E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom

The modern potential believer is not as easily accommodating of concepts that defy common sense, as were the converts of old or those fortunate enough to have been born to believing parents and therefore benefiting from a rigorous uncompromising indoctrination into reveal truths from early childhood.

The difficulty in getting converts to accept the inherent absurdity of a know-it-all omnipotent god not getting it right the first, even the second time around may explain the attempt by contemporary scholars to refute the very concept as abrogation as did Muhammad Asad (1900-92) who argued that classical scholars misinterpreted passages relating to abrogation, citing verse 10:64 as evidence of the immutability of Allah's Words.

10:64 Theirs is the good news in the present life and the Hereafter. And there will be no alteration of the Words of Allah. That is the great triumph.

Not so, according to another contemporary expert by the name of Ahmad von Denffer (1949-present). For this eminent scholar, understanding abrogation is central to the correct application of Allah's laws. Denffer quotes four revelations to Asad's one, where God admits to changing His mind.

2:106 Whichever verse We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring instead a better or similar one. Do you not know that Allah has the power over all things?

13:39 Allah blots out and confirms what He pleases; and with Him is the Mother of the Book.

16:101 And if We replace a verse by another – and Allah knows best what He reveals – they say: “You [Muhammad] are only a forger.” Surely, most of them do not know.

17:86 If We please, We certainly can blot out that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad, Moududi); then you would find no guardian to assist you against Us.

Allah even acknowledged that His changing His mind was causing problems for His spokesman whose detractors thought it strange, an omnipotent all-knowing god who could not get it right the first time. These open-minded individual reached the only possible conclusion: their kin, the first would-be Arab spokesperson for the Almighty was making it up as he went along, and told him so to his face, calling him a forger in revelation 16:101. They knew more than Allah was willing to admit judging by the non-answer Gabriel communicated to the Prophet in response to the forgery accusation.

16:102 Say: “The Holy Spirit has brought it down from our Lord in truth, in order to reassure the believers, as a guidance and good news to those who submit.

Mary the Erstwhile Messenger and the Cairo Koran

Most, if not all of the more than fifty original inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock are Koranic in origin. It is difficult to say which are not, if any, because Allah's book of revealed truths has gone through a number of revisions and redaction, the last, the so-called Cairo edition, was completed in the 1920s at Al-Azhar University and is the basis of all modern (twentieth, twenty-first century) mainstream translations.

The inscriptions in question are seventh century in origin which, according to Estelle Whelan, writing in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, "have generally being ignored or dismissed because of apparent departures from the 'canonical' text, as represented by the Cairo edition." Including, it would seem, the inscription where Mary, the mother of Jesus, has the status of Messenger. On the inner octagonal arcade of the Dome of the Rock you can read the following inscription pertaining to Mary's status:

Mary, was only a Messenger of God, and His Word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and say not 'Three' - Cease!

In the seventh century, Mary was considered a Messenger of Allah, today she is no such thing, and the Cairo edition is clear on the concept.

Estelle Whelan goes on to explain how we got to the Cairo edition (lightly edited to conform to the naming convention used throughout most of this site e.g. al-Madinah changed to Medina):

In the last two decades a controversy has arisen over the period in which the text of Muslim scripture became codified. The traditional Islamic view can be summarized as follows.

Both Abu Bakr (632-34) and Umar (634-44) made efforts to gather together the scraps of revelation that had been written down by the faithful during the lifetime of the Prophet, on bones, on palm leaves, on potsherds, and on whatever other materials were at hand, as well as being preserved in "the breasts of men."

But it was the third caliph, Uthman (644-61), who first charged a small group of men of Medina with codifying and standardizing the text.

Alarmed by reported divergences in the recitation of the revelation, he commissioned one of the Prophet's former secretaries, Zayd b. Thabit, and several prominent members of Quraysh - Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr, Sa'id b. al-'As, and Abd al-Rahman b. al-Harith are those most often mentioned - to produce a standard copy of the text, based on the compilation in the keeping of Hafsah, daughter of Umar.

If there was disagreement over language among members of the commission, it was to be resolved in accordance with the dialect spoken by Quraysh.

Once the standard text had been established, several copies were made and sent to major cities in the Islamic domain, specifically Damascus, Basra, Kufa, and perhaps others.

Although there are variations in detail, for example, in the list of names of those who served on Uthman's commission and in the list of cities to which copies were sent, this basic outline is not in dispute within the Muslim world.

Oral recitation nevertheless remained the preferred mode of transmission, and, as time passed, variant versions of the text proliferated - the kind of organic change that is endemic to an oral tradition.

In addition, because of the nature of the early Arabic script, in which short vowels were not indicated and consonants of similar form were only sometimes distinguished by pointing, writing, too, was subject to misunderstanding, copyist's error, and change over time.

In the early tenth century, at Baghdad, Abu Bakr Ibn Mujahid (d. 936) succeeded in reducing the number of acceptable readings to the seven that were predominant in the main Muslim centers of the time: Medina, Mecca, Damascus, Basra, and Kufa.

Some Qur'an readers who persisted in deviating from these seven readings were subjected to draconian punishments.

Nevertheless, with the passage of time, additional variant readings were readmitted, first "the three after the seven," then "the four after the ten."

The modern Cairo edition, prepared at al-Azhar in the 1920s, is based on one of the seven readings permitted by Ibn Mujahid, that of Abu Bakr 'Âsim (d. 745) as transmitted by Hafsa b. Sulayman (d. 796).

Estelle Whelan's narrative of how the first two written versions of the Koran were produced concurs with my own writing on the origin of the Book. What is important to retain from her article is that the Cairo edition is based, at a minimum, on a second-hand verbal transmission. Not even the alleged scraps of the original codex in the Khast-Imam Madrassa in Tashkent, Uzbekistan appear to have been consulted which raises doubts as to their authenticity.

It is possible that Mary's apparent demotion in Allah's book of unchanging truths was simply an error in communication, oral transmissions being notoriously unreliable? Yes, but not so unreliable as to make a mistake of this magnitude.

Could some powerful men e.g. caliphs, in their arrogance and to further their own agenda, literally take a page out of Allah's Book (God in His Book of immutable facts admits to changing His mind and sending one revealed truth to repeal or modify another) and changed the meaning of God's Words in one of the editions of the Koran that followed the transmitter's passing?

Her demotion had to be deliberate and may have had something to do with the sayings of the Prophet which were collected more than one hundred years after his passing in which he makes his views about women abundantly, if depressingly clear.

They could, of course, demote her, but not dismiss her completely, the GREATEST needing a lesser messenger in the person of her son to attest to his pre-eminence among Allah's better known spokespersons.

Massacre of the Banu Qurayzah

(From: Jihad in the Koran, Boreal Books, 2015)

With Medina secure for the time being the Prophet received an order from the angel Gabriel to attack the Banu Qurayzah whose leaders are said to have plotted with the Meccans during the Battle of the Ditch.

Narrated Aisha:

When Allah's Apostle returned on the day (of the battle) of Al-Khandaq (i.e. Trench), he put down his arms and took a bath. Then Gabriel whose head was covered with dust, came to him saying, "You have put down your arms! By Allah, I have not put down my arms yet."

Allah's Apostle said, "Where (to go now)?"

Gabriel said, "This way," pointing towards the tribe of Bani Quraiza. So Allah's Apostle went out towards them.

Bukhari 52.68

He marched on their fortress just outside Medina with three thousand jihadists. When he neared the fortress he called out to its defenders: "O brothers of monkeys and pigs! Fear me, fear me." The simian reference would make its way into the Koran as a persistent reminder of the perfidy of the Jews and an incitement for future generations of the righteous.

2:65 And you surely know those of you who violated the Sabbath; We said to them: "Be [like] dejected apes."

2:66 Thus We made that an example to their contemporaries and to those after them, and an admonition to the righteous.

Another revelation in the same vein:

7:166 Then, when they disdained arrogantly what they were forbidden, We said to them: "Be miserable monkeys."

After twenty five days, the Banu Qurayzah asked for a mediator. The Prophet sent Abu Lubabah who matter-of-factly informed the Jews that the Prophet had slaughter on his mind.

When they saw him (Lubabah), the men rose to meet him, and the women and children rushed to grab hold of him, weeping before him, so that he felt pity for them. They said to him, "Abu Lubabah, do you think that we should submit to Muhammad's judgment?"

"Yes", he said, but he pointed with his hand to his throat, that it would be slaughter.

Tabari

The Banu Qurayzah asked the Prophet to be allowed to go into exile. God's Messenger rejected their proposal and insisted that they submit themselves to his judgment. Abu Lubabah would not be a witness to the result of his negotiations with the Jews. It was probably just as well.

Abu Lubabah felt guilty that he had broken his promise of secrecy with Muhammad. To atone for his 'misdeed' he went straight to the mosque and bound himself with ropes to one

of the pillars. This pillar is known as the 'pillar of repentance' or the 'pillars of Abu Lubabah'.

Abul Kasem

Lubabah spent six days chained to his pillar. He was freed by the Prophet after God's Messenger received the following revelation.

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

Ignoring Lubabah's warning, the Banu Qurayzah surrendered en-masse to the Prophet. They agreed to a proposal by God's Messenger that a mortally wounded believer by the name of Sad bin Mu'adh decide their fate.

Some people (the Banu Qurayzah) agreed to accept the verdict of Sad bin Mu'adh so the Prophet sent for him. He came riding a donkey, and when he approached the Mosque, the Prophet said, "Get up for the best amongst you." or said, "Get up for your chief."

Then the Prophet said, "O Sad! These people have agreed to accept your verdict."

Sad said, "I judge that their warriors should be killed and their children and women should be taken as captives."

The Prophet said, "You have given a judgment similar to Allah's Judgment."

Bukhari, 58.148

A trench was dug in Medina's marketplace and the estimated seven-hundred male and teenaged boys of the Banu Qurayzah were beheaded with the Prophet of Mercy looking on.

...the messenger of God commanded that furrows should be dug in the ground for the Banu Qurayzah. Then he sat down, and Ali and al-Zubayr began cutting off their heads in his presence.

Tabari

The messenger of God went out into the marketplace of Medina and had trenches dug in it; then he sent for them and had them beheaded in those trenches. They were brought out to him in groups ... They numbered 600 or 700—the largest estimate says they were between 800 and 900 ... the affair continued until the Messenger of God had finished with them.

Tabari

One woman was also beheaded that day. During the siege of the fortress of the Banu Qurayzah she had killed a Muslim soldier by dropping a millstone on his head. Her death as narrated by the Prophet's child bride Aisha.

Only one of their women was killed. By God, she was by me, talking with me and laughing unrestrainedly while the Messenger of God was killing their men in the marketplace, when suddenly a mysterious voice called out her name, saying, "Where is so and so?"

She said, "I shall be killed."

"Why?" I asked.

She said, "a misdeed that I committed."

She was taken away and beheaded.

Aisha

God's Messenger had ordered that all Jewish males with pubic hair were to be killed; but he did spare one boy who took refuge with a Muslim woman who pleaded with the Prophet to spare the boy's life. Her pleading for mercy may not have been necessary if the following story as told by the boy in question is accurate.

I was among the captives of Banu Qurayzah. They examined us, and those who had begun to grow hair (pubes) were killed, and those who had not were not killed. I was among those who had not grown hair.

Abu Dawud

The dead men's wives and daughters were sold into slavery, except for the beautiful widow Rayhanah which God's Messenger made his concubine. Rayhanah turned down the Prophet's marriage proposal thinking it unseemly considering the recent mass murder of male members of her tribe.

Sad bin Mu'adh also died that day. The Prophet said that Allah's throne shook when he died, so moved was the Almighty by the death of a man who had the courage to cold-bloodily send His enemies to their death and their wives and daughters into slavery. It should not come as a surprise that Allah was all shook up when he greeted Sad bin Mu'adh in Paradise; after all, not only did He approve of Sad bin Mu'adh's decision but it was His terrorizing of the Jews which drove them to seek mercy from His Messenger, with His knowing full well that none was forthcoming.

33:26 And He brought those of the People of the Book who supported them from their fortresses and cast terror into their hearts, some of them you slew and some you took captive.

Not to be overlooked was the property of the deceased i.e. the booty which provided Allah, and still does, with the means of rewarding the willing executioners of His alleged enemies.

33:27 And He bequeathed to you their lands, their homes and their possessions, together with land you have never trodden. Allah has power over everything.

News of the massacre spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula and not unlike the massacres committed by those who follow the example of the Prophet today inspired both fear and admiration.

One thing the massacre made perfectly clear is that you had to choose a side; you could not remain neutral in the war between the believers and unbelievers of which the Arab civil war was the opening gambit. You either chose to become a Muslim and agreed to fight and kill to establish Allah's Kingdom on earth or you became a target of the believers, to be hunted down and slaughtered.

Many converted to Islam after the massacre, not only because they believed that a man who would do such a thing could not be stopped, but to join in the general pillage of the unbelievers' property. All you had to say was "I declare there is no god except God, and I declare that Muhammad is the Messenger of God" and you could with impunity kill or enslave those who refused to say those magic

life-saving words and help yourself to their property, their wives and their daughters for your troubles, and still be guaranteed a place in Paradise.

There is a lesson to be learned in what happened to the Jews of Medina.

Rayhanah

Of all the Prophet's female conquest, Rayhanah's is the most pathetic. This is why I wanted to say a few words about her and the man who orchestrated the massacre of her kin even if they are not directly concerned with the arguments contained in my submission. *B. P.*

Tamam Kahn, the author of *Untold - A History of the Wives of Prophet Muhammad*, admits, in what is very much a panegyric to the man and his wives, that Rayhanah is "not usually listed as a wife" of God's Messenger. Gheorghiu writes that she only agreed to become his concubine, seeing it as unseemly to accept the Prophet's marriage proposal after he had just ordered the beheading of all the men and boys (males with traces of pubic hair) of her tribe after the battle of the Ditch. Also referred to as the battle of the Trench as in the following:

After the battle of the Trench [Rayhanah was] marched into the courtyard with the several hundred other women and their children to be claimed as a reward by the Muslim soldiers, while the Qurayzah man were led away to be executed.

Rayhanah was not only a beautiful young woman. "Rayhana's name means 'extremely fragrant' and Muhammad loved perfumes" making her even more irresistible to God's Messenger. Perfume was one of the three things he loved the most:

The Holy Prophet said: "From the things of the world, I regard women and perfume highly, but prayer is the light of my eyes."

Al-Khisal

You might call it an obsession:

The Most Noble Messenger was so fond of applying perfume that he would skip his supper so as to procure his needed perfume. If perfume was not at his disposal, he would soak the perfumed scarf of his wife and rub his face with it so as to be perfumed. Likewise, before going out he would always look at himself in the mirror or water, and groom himself to such an extent as to always be an embodiment of adornment and dressing well. He would apply so much perfume that his beard had turned white as a result.

An-Nisa'i

Rayhanah's life with the Prophet was short and tumultuous: some say she converted to Islam, others that she died as a slave of Muhammad, and still others that she was allowed to rejoin her Jewish community, which is somewhat unlikely as she is buried, along with other wives of God's Messenger, in Baqi cemetery of Medina. She died a short two years after the massacre of the men and boys of her tribe. Her age and how she died remains a mystery; all that we know is that the beautiful, tragic Rayhanah died young.

I would not exclude suicide. It must have been difficult to be intimate with a man, even an extraordinary man, who was responsible for the death of your father, your husband, your male relatives and the enslavement of your female kin.

Rukaya Saves her Father

(From: From Merchant to Messenger, Boreal Books, 2012)

8:30 And [remember (Muhammad)] when the unbelievers plotted against you, so as to confine you, kill you or expel you. They schemed and Allah schemed, but Allah is the Best of schemers.

There were at least two attempts on the Prophet's life during his time in Mecca. One rather disgusting attempt occurred about three years after he received the first communication from the Angel Gabriel. He was kneeling in prayer at the Ka'ba when a fellow by the name of Abu Jahl came up behind him with the stomach of a dead camel which he placed like a sac on top of the Prophet's head intending to suffocate him. Somehow, Abu Jahl managed to get God's Messenger completely inside the camel's stomach which he then sealed with the intestines of the animal.

None of the men who witnessed the attempted murder intervened; but one woman rushed to the house of the Prophet and told Rukaya what was being done to her father. She rushed to the Ka'ba and liberated her dad from the camel's stomach saving his life⁵.

Some of the Prophet's followers may have wondered why God did not punish, then and there, those who had attempted to suffocate His greatest and last messenger using a dead camel's stomach. Allah had a ready answer:

8:33 And Allah did not wish to punish them while you (Muhammad) were in their midst, and Allah was not going to punish them while they were asking for forgiveness.

Some Meccans obviously regretted being part of the plot to kill the Prophet or not coming to the aid of God's spokesman and asked for forgiveness.

The Prophet owed his life to a brave teenaged girl while males stood by and watched. It was also a female, his first wife Khadijah, whose faith in her husband and wealth ensured his success as a merchant and later financed his activities as a budding prophet. Knowing this, it is even harder to fathom Allah and His Messenger's distrust and disparagement of females and the restrictions they have placed on their freedom of movement and action.

If the interdiction against women leaving the house unaccompanied by a close male relative or guardian had been in effect when the attempted suffocation of God's Messenger's was made, the Prophet's progress would have come to an abrupt halt.

⁵ My account of Rukaya saving her father is from what many consider the definitive non-Arab biography of God's Messenger: *La Vie de Mahomet*, Robert Lafont, 1962 by Virgil Gheorghiu. Arab scholars tend to argue that it was six year old Fatima the Prophet's favourite daughter and future wife of Ali who saved her father's life not her then fourteen year old older sister, and that the Prophet's assailant was a fellow by the name of Aqabah ibn Moeet..

The people of the Quraysh were trying every trick to trouble him. One day while he was performing Salâh in the Haram, on the instigation of the pagans of Makkah, Aqabah ibn Moeet brought the entrails of a camel and placed it on his neck whilst he was prostrating. Someone told Fatimah (R.A.) who was then just six years old. She came running and removed the stuff and cursed the non-believers.

Khadijah

The man who would become famous as the Prophet Muhammad owed his success as a merchant to an older woman who hired the good-looking, allegedly illiterate young man to lead her caravans. During his lifetime, God's Last and Greatest Spokesman would officially marry between twelve and fourteen women depending on who you read. This is not counting concubines and slave-girls.

For twenty-three years Muhammad was married to Khadijah (also spelt Khadija) and only Khadijah. It was her third marriage, the Prophet's first. He was twenty-five; she was forty when they tied the knot. It was this same successful businesswoman, now his wife, who reassured her husband when he began having visions that it was God talking to him, not Satan or some other godless creature. This was before the Prophet became aware that the devil took the form of a woman.⁶

Khadijah proved to her husband that it was an angel. She told him to get undressed; she did the same and they embraced. Do you still see him, she asked? No, said God's Messenger! Then it must have been an angel, she said, because an angel would not have remained to stare at a naked couple embracing.

The Prophet recounted a conversation between Adam and other of Allah's lesser messengers in the hereafter in which the first man paid Khadijah the supreme compliment. From *La vie de Mahomet* by Virgil Gheorghiu, page 79, my translation:

“One of the things that Allah gave to Muhammad and not to me, was a wife like Khadijah who helped him carry out God's will, while my own wife, Eve only encouraged me to disobey (God).” *Adam*

Khadijah gave birth to two, maybe three sons depending on who you read, and four girls. All of the Prophet's sons would die in infancy. The youngest daughter, Fatima, was the only offspring of God's Messenger to have descendants. She was married to Ali, the fourth caliph (the fourth successor to the Prophet). Two other girls, Rukaya (also spelt Ruqayya) and Umm Kulthum, he gave in marriage to his companion Uthman of the Umayyan clan. Zaynab, the eldest, was given to her maternal cousin Abu al-Aas ibn al-Rabee.

Khadijah died destitute and penniless in a makeshift habitat in a ravine on the outskirts of Mecca. After discovering Islam some fifteen years after they were married, the now forty-something Muhammad would spend all of his and his wife's wealth on the promotion of his new religion. She would not live long enough to witness her husband triumph over his enemies; a triumph which would not have been possible if Muhammad's first wife had been any other than the wise, wealthy, supportive, self-sufficient, erudite Khadijah. She could not have foreseen that after Islam, the right to learn, the independence and the freedom she enjoyed and which made it all possible would be severely curtailed, even denied her sister co-religionists.

⁶ Jabir reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) saw a woman, and so he came to his wife, Zaynab, as she was tanning a leather and had sexual intercourse with her. He then went to his Companions and told them: The woman advances and retires in the shape of a devil, so when one of you sees a woman, he should come to his wife, for that will repel what he feels in his heart.

Sahih Muslim

Serendipity

On Crescent Street in Montréal there is a two story building with two spacious outdoor balconies. One is an extension of a well-appointed dining room which takes up the entire top floor; the other, an extension of the first floor Cheers-like bar, only bigger. Beneath it all is a night club where disco went to die, and found a new lease on life. The building, the restaurant, the bar and the disco is called Thursdays or in French "Les Beaux Jedis", but even its French clientele call it Thursdays.

Thursdays, at opening time, welcomed a handful of young female free-lancers in the sex trade into its basement disco. This was to give the impression to passing males that the dance bar was a place frequented by young women. In return, these young ladies were allowed to tactfully practice their trade - no active solicitation allowed. Thursdays is where I met Mary.

It was late Tuesday night and the place was not very busy. It was not because it was Tuesday at Thursdays. Thursdays was usually busy every day of the week, but there was a raging snow storm outside when she walked in, the most stunning black woman I had ever seen.

There was the white of her eyes as they searched the semi-darkness that was Thursdays' disco; then there was her long braided black hair that swung back and forth as she made her way to the bar where I was sitting.

I must have been blind, for there was that body with nothing but curves wrapped in a short, tight, white satin-like dress covered with a white mesh-like material that ended in fringes that brushed against and stroked her skin as she walked.

My eyes were still working their way down when she sat down two stools to the left of me and crossed her legs showing a muscular blacker-than-coal thigh straining against the white mesh. My eyes started back in the opposite direction.

Her dress was square cut along the top with only the crest of her ample perfectly round breasts showing - so close together that you couldn't have slipped a piece of paper between them. It was only a matter of time before our eyes met, and when they did, I said hi, she said hello. I said bonjour, she said bonsoir. She asked if she could move closer. I said bien sur.

She spoke near perfect French, not that high pitch hysterical pretentious French spoken by Parisian snobs and garçons de café, but a happy melodious French, not unlike in tone to the English that you might hear on a beach in Jamaica.

With so few of us in the bar the DJ didn't mind, after I slipped him a few dollars, playing a few tunes from my disco days. I asked Mary if she would join me on one of Thursdays' two dance floors. She chose the one with the disco ball and the circular rotating platform.

I couldn't dance then and still couldn't, but that was okay, Mary did enough dancing for the both of us. I was quite happy just to stand there shuffling my feet and watching her. She danced wildly, she danced gracefully, she danced seductively moving around the entire space never taking her eyes off me. Eventually, still swaying her hips in that sensual sideways motion with just a hint of back and forth action, she moved closer and closer until she was close enough to wrap her hands around the back of my neck and thrust those hips forward so hard that I thought she might have broken something.

When it was time to leave I offered to walk her to her car. When we got outside the snow had really piled up. My hotel was just across the street. She asked if she could park her car in the underground parking lot of the Chateau Royale and spend the night. I agreed. I think it was when we were alone in the elevator that she mentioned that if we got to know each other better, there would be a price to pay. The relationship would mature, but not necessarily the way that is already being played out in your minds.

I wanted to know about the world she left behind. I remember the first time I asked her about her home in Africa. We were having dinner at Thursdays' second floor restaurant, outside, on the patio, on a warm summer evening. I wanted to hear about the lions, the tigers, the tropical rain forest, the endless summers... She laughed. Her country was not like that at all. It was dirt roads, arid dusty fields, no wildlife to speak of and, as far as the tropical forest was concerned, there was almost none left.

At other times, not that night, she talked about her family. Her father and mother remained in Africa. She hinted at a relationship which seems to have been her prime motivator in immigrating to Canada and that was to escape a marriage in the Islamic tradition, which she once described as "god-sanctioned rape."

Years later, I remembered what she had said about this Allah when I walked into my local Chapters and spotted a pyramid of Korans on sale. On the back cover, Publishers Weekly wrote: "Succeeds in expressing the meanings of the original Arabic in simple readable English."

Out of curiosity mostly I purchased a copy of Majid Fakhry's Al-Azhar approved "English Translation of the Meanings". A first reading more than lived up to Thomas Carlyle's [1795 - 1881] description of the Koran as "a confused, jumble, crude, incondite (disorderly), endless iteration". No wonder few non-Muslims know anything about the Book.

The Koran is a short book by holy book standards: an English translation will run to about 77,700 words; the approximate size of a typical 300 page book.

It was then that I decided to use my training and twenty years of experience in systems analysis to bring order to Islam's core religious text so that anyone could, in a few minutes or at the most an hour or two, find out all that Allah has to say on any subject. Pain, Pleasure and Prejudice was the result.

Merci Marie.

Sex and the Booty

(From: Jihad in the Koran, Boreal Books, 2015)

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

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

Some of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) were reluctant to have intercourse with the female captives in the presence of their husbands who were unbelievers. So Allah, the Exalted, sent down the Qur'anic (verse 4:24)⁷ "And all married women (are forbidden) unto you save those (captives) whom your right hands possess."

Abu Dawud 2.2150

Until God's Messenger made his views known, some holy warriors were also unsure about whether coitus interruptus was halal. They consulted with the Prophet who made his and what has to assume God's views on a believer withdrawing his member from his captive's vagina prior to ejaculation.

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

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

Bukhari 34.432

Abu Sirma said to Abu Sa'id al Khadri (Allah be pleased with him): O Abu Sa'id, did you hear Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) mentioning al-'azl?

He said: Yes, and added: We went out with Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) on the expedition to the Bi'l- Mustaliq and took captive some excellent Arab women; and we desired them, for we were suffering from the absence of our wives, (but at the same time) we also desired ransom for them. So we decided to have sexual intercourse with them but by observing 'azl (Withdrawing the male sexual organ before emission of semen to avoid conception).

But we said: We are doing an act whereas Allah's Messenger is amongst us; why not ask him?

⁷ 4:24 Or married women except those your right hands possess (captives of war or slave-girls). This is Allah's decree for you. Beyond these it is lawful for you to seek, by means of your wealth, any women, to marry and not to debauch. Those of them you have enjoyed, you should give them their dowry as a matter of obligation; but you are not liable to reproach for whatever you mutually agree upon, apart from the obligatory payment (the dowry). Allah is indeed All-Knowing, Wise.

So we asked Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him), and he said: It does not matter if you do not do it, for every soul that is to be born up to the Day of Resurrection will be born.

Imam Muslim 8:3371

As reported by the BBC, the Prophet's views on coitus interruptus and by extension contraception have encouraged "more conservative Islamic leaders have [to] openly campaign against the use of condoms or other birth control methods, thus making population planning in many countries ineffective."

While a majority of Islamic Schools of Law allow contraceptives within a marriage setting, all are against men having a vasectomy or women a tubal ligation for this would be interfering with Allah's right to schedule a pregnancy at some point in the future.

Stupid and Evil

HE SAID IT FIRST!

Narrated abu Said al-Khudri:

The Prophet said, "Isn't the witness of a woman equal half that of a man?"

The women said, "Yes."

He said: "This is because of the deficiency of the woman's mind."

Bukhari 48.286

Stupid and evil!

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar:

Allah's Apostle said, "Evil omen is in the women, the house and the horse."

Bukhari 62.30

Narrated Usama bin Zaid:

The Prophet said, "After me I have not left any affliction more harmful to men than women."

Bukhari 62.33

Allah, in the Koran, reminds us that women are inferior (2:228, 4:34) which is why He has put men in charge; that they have trouble doing simple arithmetic and remembering things (2:282); that a female has no more rights when it comes to sex than an inflatable doll (2:223); and that she can be beaten if she refuses do as her keeper demands (4:34), and then some.

2:228 Divorced women should keep away from men for three menstrual periods. And it is not lawful for them to conceal that which Allah has created in their wombs, if they truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. Their husbands have the right in the meantime to take them back, should they seek reconciliation; and women have rights equal to what is incumbent upon them according to what is just, although men are one degree above them (what is meant here is that the men have a superior authority). Allah is Mighty, Wise.

2:282 O believers, when you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down. Let a scribe write it for you with fairness. No scribe should decline to write as Allah has taught him. So let him then write and let the debtor dictate. He should fear his Lord and not diminish the debt in the least. If the debtor is feeble-minded or weak or ignorant, then let his guardian dictate with fairness. And call to witness two witnesses of your men; if not two men, then one man and two women from such witnesses you approve of, so that if one of them (the two women) fails to remember, the other will remind her ...

2:223 Your women are a tillage for you. So get to your tillage whenever you like. Do good for yourselves, fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him. And give good news to the believers.

4:34 Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made some of them excel the others, and because they spend some of their wealth. Hence righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen which Allah has guarded. And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them. Should they obey you, do not seek a way of harming them; for Allah is Sublime and Great!

The Prophet, in his *last sermon*, summarized all the basic beliefs of Islam and all the duties of a Muslim which includes men looking after the morons whom Allah has made lawful to them (in *Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah's* translation a place where a woman resides with a husband is her prison).

Treat the women kindly, for verily, they are like prisoners in your house and are incapable of looking after themselves. For verily, you have taken them because Allah allowed you to and it is His words that have made their persons lawful to you.

In *S. F. H. Faizi's* translation women are mentally-challenged helpers who can be physically disciplined and denied the bare necessities (clothing and food) if they don't do as they are told, or you suspect of committing *improprieties*.

Treat the women kindly, since they are your helpers and are not in a position to manage their affairs themselves. Fear Allah concerning them, for verily you have taken them on the security of Allah and have made their persons lawful unto you by words of Allah ...

It is your right upon them that they must not allow anybody save you to come to your bed and admit none to enter your homes whom you do not like but with your permission. And it is for them not to commit acts of impropriety, which if they do, you are authorized by Allah to separate them from your beds and chastise them, but not severely, and if they refrain, then clothe and feed them properly.

Perhaps nowhere is the low esteem and contempt in which Allah and His Messenger hold females more evident than in the hadiths about women interfering with a man's prayers. A sample:

Narrated Aisha:

The things which annul the prayers were mentioned before me. They said, Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman (if they pass in front of the praying people).

I said, "You have made us (i.e. women) dogs ...

Bukhari 9.490

Ikrimah reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas, saying:

"I think the Apostle of Allah said: 'When one of you prays without a sutrah (a barrier), a dog, an ass, a pig, a Jew, a Magian, and a woman cut off his prayer, but it will suffice if they pass in front of him at a distance of over a stone's throw.'"

Abu Dawud 2.704

It is not only menstruating women who are barred from the mosque, but also those who have recently engaged in sexual activities.

Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin:

The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) came and saw that the doors of the houses of his Companions were facing the mosque. He said: Turn the direction of the houses from the mosque.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then entered (the houses or the mosque), and the people did [not] take any step in this regard hoping that some concession might be revealed.

He (the Prophet) again came upon them and said: Turn the direction of these (doors) from the mosque I do not make the mosque lawful for a menstruating woman and for a person who is sexually defiled.

Abu Dawud

Skilled in the Art of Deception
(Women and the Koran, Boreal Books, 2012)

In Allah's uncomplicated Paradise, women are simply His way of rewarding men for believing in Him, for their loyalty. In heaven, as it is on earth, women exist to serve men. For them, serving men is its own reward.

In Allah's Universe women are naturally drawn to men; wanting to have sex with men is what they yearn for. This irrepressible longing to want to touch and be touched is why they must be restrained from their natural tendencies to want to seduce every man in sight and bring chaos to the orderly world of the Koran.

In the Koran, it is the females (married and unmarried, maid-servants, slaves-girls, post and pre-pubescent girls) who lust after the naked male body who are almost always the sexual aggressors.

A female can also be expected to lie about a sexual assault, falsely accusing a man of attempted rape when in reality she was the aggressor. From the story of Joseph in Egypt whose benefactor's wife would have him sleep with her, by force, if necessary:

12:25 They raced to the door, and she ripped his shirt from behind. When they met her husband at the door, she said: "What is the penalty of one who intended evil for your wife except imprisonment or severe punishment?"

12:26 He (Joseph) said: "She sought to seduce me." And a member of her household bore witness: "If his shirt was torn from the front, then she is telling the truth and he is a liar.

12:27 "But if his shirt is torn from behind, then she lies and he is one of the truthful."

Exceptionally, Allah, when recounting this encounter, acknowledges that men can be the aggressors in the pursuit of intimacy and how you can tell. However, if it is her word against his, it is clear in the Almighty's generalization about women's guile (notice the plural form of woman, "you women", in verse 12:28) who is to be believed.

12:28 When he (the husband) saw that his shirt was torn from behind, he said: "This is part of your guile, you women. Your guile is indeed very great."

Allah's "carte-blanche" dispensation⁸, revelation 2:223⁹ quoted earlier, when it comes to the sexual demands of married men, in effect, makes rape impossible in a marriage setting even if a beating was required to get her to consent.

Narrated Umar ibn al-Khattab:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife.

Abu Dawud 11.2142

A beating of course will not be necessary if women are always in a state of heightened arousal as Allah and His Messenger would have us believe. Do God and his spokesperson know something about women that most men don't? This would explain why a bride undertakes in writing to never deny her husband access to what Allah and His Messenger refer to as "her private parts"; a stipulation which Allah's spokesperson said was the cornerstone of a marriage agreement¹⁰, thereby making her the sinner should she resist her husband's God-given right to have his way with her at the drop of the proverbial hat.

The only other reason I can think of why a woman would allow herself to be ploughed at a man's discretion, continuing with Allah's metaphor, is out of a fear of God. If this is the case, than Allah is indeed "the Best of schemers" as He reminds us in revelation 8:30 and women's guile will never get the best of Him.

8:30 And [remember (Muhammad)] when the unbelievers plotted against you, so as to confine you, kill you or expel you. They schemed and Allah schemed, but Allah is the Best of schemers.

⁸ Actually, there is one exception to Allah's encouragement of what we might consider sexual aggression on the part of a husband, and it all has to do with His and His spokesman's unnatural obsession with a woman's menstrual cycle.

2:222 And they ask you about menstruation, say: "It is an impurity." So keep away from women during their menstruation and do not approach them (do not have sexual relations with them) until they are clean. Once they get clean get to them as Allah commanded you. Allah loves the repentant and loves those who purify themselves.

⁹ A companion of the Prophet said that what Allah meant was that a woman had to submit to whatever sexual position demanded by her husband to avoid having a child with a birth defect.

Narrated Jabir:

Jews used to say: "If one has sexual intercourse with his wife from the back, then she will deliver a squint-eyed child." So this Verse was revealed: "Your wives are a tilth unto you; so go to your tilth when or how you will." (2.223)."

Bukhari 60.51

¹⁰ **Narrated Uqba:**

The Prophet said: "The stipulations most entitled to be abided by are those with which you are given the right to enjoy the (women's) private parts (i.e. the stipulations of the marriage contract)."

Bukhari 62.81

The First Accommodation

(From: Teach Your Children Well, Boreal Books, 2012)

The Constitution of 1982 may boast that “Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God”, and the first freedom guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms may be religion, but, perhaps surprisingly, it was not the Constitution or the Charter on which the Supreme Court based its watershed decision giving revealed truths (alleged immutable facts communicated to a mortal by a god) precedence over man-made laws. The precedent setting case was one alleging discrimination in the workplace.

The decision in Ontario Human Rights Commission and Theresa O'Malley vs. Simpsons-Sears Limited is cited by the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Difference, better known as the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on Reasonable Accommodations, as the watershed ruling which opened the floodgates to religious “accommodation” in Canadian law.

O'Malley vs. Simpsons-Sears was not a Charter challenge but a challenge under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Supreme Court of Canada had to decide whether the retailer, Simpson-Sears was guilty of discrimination based on creed contrary to Ontario Human Rights Code R.S.O. 1980, c. 340, s. 4(1)(g). O'Malley vs. Simpsons-Sears was also the first significant victory for the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

The OHRC, which continues to champion religious rights, is both revered and reviled. To those who would see religious belief and traditions given the force of law, it is a godsend; to writer George Jonas it is the Ontario Medieval Rights Commission intent on turning back the clock on human rights, especially those of women. His views being prejudice perhaps by the OHRC's attempt at doing for Muslims what it did for Christians and Jews beginning with Ontario Human Rights Commission and Theresa O'Malley vs. Simpsons-Sears.

Ms. O'Malley had joined Simpsons-Sears in 1971. As a condition of full-time employment she was required to work Friday evenings on a rotating basis, and two Saturdays out of three. In 1978, Ms. O'Malley became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Seventh-day Adventists must strictly observe the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. As a result of her newfound-faith, Ms. O'Malley could no longer work on Friday evenings and Saturdays, the busiest time of the week for most retailers, and Simpsons-Sears was no exception.

To accommodate her religious beliefs Simpsons-Sears offered her part-time employment and told her that if a permanent position became available which did not require her to work on Friday evenings and Saturdays, and for which she was qualified, she would be considered for the job. The Federal Court of Appeal considered this more than a sufficient attempt to accommodate Ms. O'Malley religious beliefs.

The Court, cognizant that Simpsons-Sear could not completely satisfy Ms. O'Malley's demands without discriminating against employees who did not share her beliefs and would find their working conditions adversely affected, accepted Simpson-Sears' sensible fairness argument that “An employment rule, honestly made for sound economic and business reasons and equally applicable to all” was not discriminatory.

Not so, said the Supreme Court of Canada in overturning the Federal Court ruling. The Supreme Court of Canada in its decision in favour of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and Ms. O'Malley

wrote that "... the Court of Appeal, having decided that intentional discrimination had to be shown, did not consider the question of accommodation".

The fact that Simpson-Sears, in everything it did to be accommodating to Ms. O'Malley, had tried to be fair to all its employees and not discriminate did not matter. It had a duty, according to the Supreme Court of Canada, to accommodate the religious beliefs of Ms. O'Malley even if in seeking to accommodate those beliefs it discriminated against those who did not share them. This concept of "reasonable accommodation" in the workplace of one group at the expense of another, the Supreme Court of Canada extended to the educational sector in 2006.

The Supreme Court, in *Multani v. Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys* ruled that children could bring concealed weapons to school i.e. a dagger (the kirpan), if it was a religious requirement. They could do this even if it placed both armed and unarmed children at considerable risk during normal schoolyard confrontations and gave an advantage to the children carrying concealed weapons.

The deliberate discrimination in Canadian law in favour of those who believe in a higher God-given law – for all intent and purpose the meaning of reasonable accommodation – is now understood to apply everywhere in Canadian society from "labour relations, public and private-sector suppliers of goods and services, lawmakers, and regulatory authorities."¹¹

¹¹ Report to the Québec Minister of Education on Integration and Reasonable Accommodation in the Schools (2007).

Verse of the Sword

(From: Let Me Rephrase That!, Boreal Books, 2015)

The Verse of the Sword is without a doubt the most far-reaching revelation of the Koran. It abrogates more than half of the 240 or so rescinded revealed truths. The aptly named verse is undoubtedly familiar to every jihadist and is the overriding revelation for these holy warriors. According to the imminent Egyptian theologian Abu al-Fadl 'Abd ar-Rahman Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti (d. 1505), "Everything in the Qur'an about forgiveness and peace is abrogated by verse 9:5."

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

You will find the Verse of the Sword in the incendiary surah *Repentance* - *Ultimatum* in Muhsin Khan's translation of the Koran. According to Khaleel Mohammed, assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies at San Diego State, Khan's Saudi-approved and promoted translation is "the most widely disseminated Qur'an in Islamic bookstores and Sunni mosques throughout the English-speaking world."

Khan, born in 1927, is unequivocal about the reach of the chapter of the Koran where the Verse of the Sword is found and I quote: "God revealed *Ultimatum* in order to discard restraint and to command Muslims to fight against all the pagans as well as against the People of the Book if they do not embrace Islam or until they pay religious taxes."

Should your inclination be not to "kill the idolaters wherever you find them" as Allah first recommends, but to take them as captives, you must still kill the pagans i.e. infidels you have corralled unless they "repent afterwards, perform the prayer and pay the alms", that is become one who submits to the Will of Allah, the most widely accepted meaning of Muslim.

The Verse of the Sword and Genocide

Based on Muslim chronicles of the period, and the demographic calculations done by historian K.S. Lal in his book *Growth of Muslim Population in Medieval India*, the Verse of the Sword is, in all likelihood, responsible for the largest known slaughter of followers of a lesser god, or gods. Dr. Lal estimates that between 1000 CE and 1500 CE the population of Hindus decreased by 80 million; meaning that for much of that period the death rate among Hindus exceeded their birthrate. If the eminent historian's estimates are even remotely accurate, this period would have witnessed the largest cold-blooded killing of an indigenous people in all written history.

A Declaration of War

The Verse of the Sword was received near the end of the Prophet's life when the world was very much his for the taking with Muslim armies poised to overrun much of the Middle East and North Africa. God's spokesperson had already issued his ultimatum to the various rulers of the kingdoms and

provinces that bordered the Peninsula, that they must convert or be invaded and converted by force. The bloodthirsty Verse of the Sword made that threat even more credible.

A copy of the Prophet's ultimatum has been preserved in the old Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. It is addressed to the governor of Egypt, a fellow by the name of Muqawqis. The last sentence of the ultimatum has a particularly ominous tone (*italics mine*).

From Muhammad the servant and Prophet of Allah, to Muqawqis, the leader of the Coptic tribe. There is safety and security for those believers who follow the correct path. Therefore I invite you to accept Islam. If you accept it, you shall find security, save your throne, and gain twice as much reward for having introduced Islam to your followers. If you refuse this invitation, let the sin of calamity which awaits your followers be upon you. You too are People of the Book; therefore let us come to a word common between us that we worship none but Allah and shall equalise anything with him. Let us not abandon Allah and take others for lords other than him. If you do not consent to this invitation, bear witness that we are Muslims.

If you do not consent, we are Muslims; we do not make idle threats. Allah echoed His Messenger's warning to the People of the Book:

3:64 Say: 'O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between you and us, that we worship none but Allah, do not associate anything with Him and do not set each other as lords besides Allah.' If they turn their backs, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'

The Verse of the Sword has a companion verse, revelation 9:111, the Salvific Covenant (do this for me and I will do this for you, save you, give you Paradise).

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

The Verse of the Sword and the Salvific Covenant, taken together, is the Koran's equivalent of a Declaration of War on humanity, a universal jihad until all of humankind bows down before His Eminence. The Verse of the Sword does more than nullify the scattering of verses that could be interpreted as recommending mercy and compassion for unbelievers, or believers who don't believe hard enough, but consolidates for the holy warrior many of the verses about killing Allah's real and imaginary enemies in one concise unassailable paragraph.