

Islam is first introduced to children in the family by both parents if they are both present in the home. However, Muslims believe that children are born with the innate knowledge of Allah. Specifically, that there exists only one true "God" and that is Allah. This knowledge is found within the soul of every human being. This belief is supported by a passage in the Qur'an which states that Allah makes a covenant with his servants before they are born. Allah is seen as Just, so Muslims believe that if a person is never exposed to Islam they will not be judged badly but will be excused by Allah. Arab Muslims believe that Westerners have been exposed to Islam but choose to reject Allah's true teachings.

Muslims further believe that Jesus was a Prophet, whose mission was to return the Jewish people to "True Judaism." Mohammed too was a Prophet, whose mission was to return Christians to "True Christianity." They acknowledge that all Prophets come to us with miracles so that they can prove who they are. Moses, Jesus and Mohammed all had their miracles, which are divine interactions with the physical world. Mohammed's greatest miracle was the revelation of the Qur'an. The Qur'an was revealed to Mohammed directly from Allah. The words themselves are sacred. They set out the Shari'ah Law, which is a comprehensive set of rules governing Islamic living. Thus it is impossible to separate the Islamic faith from everyday life. Shari'ah Law does not separate right from wrong as much as it delineates Permissible Conduct (Halal) from Impermissible Conduct (Haram).

Shari'ah law is updated and explained via Fatwas which are specific rulings made by Islamic scholars through a process called Ijtihad. Shari'ah law is perpetual and infallible. Fatwas are time and circumstance dependant. They give clarification and perspective under circumstances at the time they are made. Some Fatwas are considered unnecessary, such as the Fatwa declaring cigarette smoking harmful and thus against Shari'ah law. One who follows the Fatwa of an Islamic Scholar who permits Haram and forbids Halal, has elevated that scholar to the position of God. This is strongly forbidden in the Islamic faith. Fatwas have been used at times by self-interested scholars for political reasons. (This is a good argument for not blindly following an Islamic Scholar who issues a Fatwa that is clearly wrong.)

Allah apparently changed his teaching on the consumption of alcohol over time, since Jesus drank wine and early followers of Mohammed did too. During Mohammed's lifetime, an absolute prohibition against alcohol was revealed in Shari'ah law. However, even this absolute is not absolute. For if you are stranded in the desert and have nothing to drink and come upon a jug of alcohol and there is nothing else to keep you alive, you may drink the alcohol to save your life and get yourself to safety. However, there are two restrictions: You must not desire the alcohol and you must only drink the minimum amount necessary to sustain your life. (This may be a useful analogy to employ when confronted with a detainee who refuses to answer questions that might hurt his brothers on religious grounds. eg.; You need to cooperate to help yourself. As long as you don't

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desire to hurt your friends and you tell us only the minimum necessary to get you back home to your family, it is the right thing to do.)

Muslims believe that all Jews and Christians are "Disbelievers" That is, they reject the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and continue on a divergent path. From the Islamic perspective, Judaism is seen as promoting "an eye for an eye." Whereas Christianity is seen as promoting "turn the other cheek." Muslims believe in the tenet of "an eye for an eye, but it is better for you if you choose to forgive." Thus the Muslim has the choice to seek retribution in kind or to forgive the transgressor.

9/11 has caused a resurgence in the Islamic Faith in the Arab world. Arab Muslims consider the embassy bombings in Africa, the Cole bombing in Yemen and the 9/11 hijackings in the US, to be acts of reaction and self-defense and not acts of aggression or violence. They believe that the people of the United States feel "injured" by these attacks. Liberal Islamic thinkers may believe these attacks were unjustified, but fundamentalists believe the attacks were akin to the US Military dropping atomic bombs on Japan's civilian population during World War II. That is, they were necessary to stop the U.S. from killing Muslims. Arab Muslims believe that the U.S. and Israel are engaged in the killing of Muslims as a matter of policy and fact.

Immediately after 9/11, the Government scholars in Saudi Arabia spoke out against the acts of the hijackers as against Islam. This is because Islam preaches the protection of innocent women and children and non-combatants. However, shortly thereafter, other scholars said these acts were consistent with the Shari'ah. They based this decision in part on a 500 year old Fatwa which says if the enemy has taken Muslims captive and then is a threat from that enemy, then you can kill the enemy and all of the captives. Under the concept of Waala, Muslims are to love and protect all other Muslims. Muslims hate to see Muslims getting killed. On the contrary, Bara means that Muslims should not take disbelievers on as intimate friends, however, they must be just and fair to them.

Muslims further believe that the American public has a fundamental lack of understanding of its enemy. That is, they don't take into account that their enemy wants to die. Jihad fighters want to become martyrs. Also, since Usama Bin Laden (UBL) works from cells, he does not need Al-Qaida to wage his war against the U.S. So the recent victory over Al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan is a hollow victory.

It is obvious from UBL's actions that he wanted to reach the Muslim public. He met with the Mujahideen, he made video tapes and he was interviewed by the press all in an effort to win public approval. Many Saudi Arabians believe UBL was successful in this endeavor. The Saudi public is generally behind UBL. It is not only the extremists who cheer UBL on. He is well liked by middle of the road Muslims.

Saudi Arabia has the largest number of fundamentalist Muslims in the world, and 60% of its population is under the age of 22. It is very easy to manipulate youthful Muslims into fighting the jihad against the U.S. Although it is illegal in Saudi Arabia to

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call for a jihad against the U.S., one speech in a mosque could result in 2000 young people joining the jihad. Many of those who went to fight jihad were not fundamentalist Muslims

Saudi Arabian Muslims believe that if the U.S. continues its military response against Muslims the suicide acts will continue and the situation will evolve into an Israeli/Palestinian conflict, but on a much larger scale. They fear that the U.S. will feel emboldened by the "victory" over the Taliban in Afghanistan in only two months and say we should have done this before. They believe that unlike the Russians who continue to throw soldier after soldier into the fray of a losing battle, the U.S. intelligently withdrew from Somalia and Lebanon. They are dissatisfied with the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia and blame the current economic problems they face on the presence of these troops. They believe that the U.S. should remove its troops from Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, and not invade Iraq. In addition, they feel that the U.S. should at least make it appear that they are no longer backing Israel in its use of force against the Palestinians. This may be accomplished by wing a Muslim middleman who knows the Religion and culture of Islam. This, they feel, will be the way to end the U.S./Al Qaeda conflict.

Muslims believe that Allah knows all, including the future. They speak about a book in which all things that happen in a man's life are written. They often speak of their fate being in Allah's hands. The Muslim word for fate is "Kadar." They use the word in situations of misfortune, for example when a child is struck by a car and killed. It is said that even the faithful have no control over these things. However, this concept does not wipe out man's free will. That is, man must still take responsibility for his own actions. He must do right instead of wrong and he must do the things necessary to insure cause and effect.

Some Muslim people also want to rationalize away their own negligence as fate. To illustrate this point they speak of a parable told by Mohammed himself in which he sees a man whose camel is wandering off into the desert. Mohammed asks the man if he had tied up the camel and the man replies that he doesn't have to worry about tying up his camel because it is in the hands of Allah. Mohammed replied, no you must first take care of your responsibilities by tying up your camel then you can put it in the hands of Allah. In other words Allah requires that you participate in life by using your God given skills and not simply sitting back and putting life in the hands of Allah. It is only after a Muslim exhausts all of his means, that he can legitimately leave it in the hands of Allah. (Therefore, detainees who invoke the Will of Allah, should be reminded of this parable and encouraged to do what Allah requires, i.e., what is in their power to save themselves.)

Some of the detainees will invariably say they don't have any control over what happens to them. The concept of tawkuil means their lives are in Allah's hands and they rely on Allah to take care of them. (These detainees should be reminded that the test Allah gives them in this life is very difficult and thus interview/interrogation process is part of that test. They should participate in the process as Allah requires and take an active role in their lives. This is what their families would expect of them as well.)

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After the death of the Prophet Mohammed, the Islamic world was ruled by four successive Khalifas (Islamic leaders who ruled over all Muslims) without division. However, after the murder of the fourth Khalifa, Ali, there was a split among Muslims. They divided into the Sunnis, who remained faithful to the Sharia, and the Shites, who began praying to Khalifa Ali, and went their separate ways. Some Shites even worship Khalifa Ali.

Today Sunni Muslims outnumber Shites and consider them a deviant sect. The Shites instituted self-punishment rites to express the guilt they felt for failing to protect their fallen Khalifa, Ali. Ayatollah Khomeini's followers are Shites and are considered strict fundamentalists. Like most other Shites, Khomeini's followers did not fight in the Jihad in Afghanistan.

Like the Hezbollah, most Muslims in Iran and Lebanon are Shites. These people have never been a direct threat to the U.S. On the other hand, Al-Qaida is made up mainly of Sunnis, who are engaged in a jihad against the U.S.

There are many Qur'anic verses regarding martyrdom. These verses speak of the Heavenly incentives of martyrdom. These incentives are meant to push followers of Islam to resist the fear of death and die in the defense of their faith. Most of the Qur'anic verses calling people to jihad and martyrdom were revealed to Mohammed in the 8 years he spent in Medina. In contrast, most of the verses revealed to Mohammed in the prior 13 years he spent in Mecca were peaceful, calling people to worship one God and spreading ethics.

Mohammed led by example, fighting on the front lines of the first Islamic jihad and getting injured at times. However, his followers did their best to protect him from injury. Mohammed spent 13 years in Mecca, then 8 years in Medina where he established an Islamic army before returning to Mecca and going on to conquer most of the known world.

In 2000, a Saudi Arabian scholar issued a fatwa and a public statement that Palestinian suicide bombers are not acts of martyrdom. They are simply acts of suicide, which are against Islam. This is believed to have been motivated by the Saudi government. This attempt to quell suicide bombings seems to have backfired because many Islamic scholars around the world then made televised statements saying the suicide bombings are acts of martyrdom as long as they are not done out of despair. After 9/11, people in Saudi Arabia were celebrating in the streets because they consider these great acts of martyrdom.

The Qur'an has many verses which call believers to martyrdom and it apparently does not envision a time for peace. In fact it calls for Muslims to spread Islam until only one religion prevails, the one that praises the true God, Allah. Each believer has the choice to martyr himself or to find another way to fulfill his faith. At this point in time, however, almost all jihad movements are geared toward self-preservation and not toward spreading Islam.

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In Islam, Faith and Jihad cannot be separated, however, jihad can be a violent or a non-violent struggle. If a jihad should bring Muslims in conflict with Muslims, the Qur'an says they should try to reconcile. Both sides should exhaust every means in their power before putting the conflict in the hands of Allah. If the conflict is not resolved, the aggressor is seen as wrong and true believers are called to join the side of the oppressed.

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