

The Truth about Muhammad

By Robert Spencer

The Qur'an and Islamic tradition are clear: Muhammad is the supreme example of behavior for Muslims to follow. His importance to hundreds of millions of Muslims worldwide is rooted in the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. In brief, he is "an excellent model of conduct" (Qur'an 33:21). He demonstrates "an exalted standard of character" (68:4), and indeed, "he who obeys the Messenger [Muhammad], obeys Allah" (4:80). The Qur'an frequently tells Muslims to obey Allah and Muhammad: while the Muslim holy book takes for granted that Muhammad is fallible (cf. 48:2; 80:1-12), it also instructs Muslims repeatedly to obey Muhammad (3:32; 3:132; 4:13; 4:59; 4:69; 5:92; 8:1; 8:20; 8:46; 9:71; 24:47; 24:51; 24:52; 24:54; 24:56; 33:33; 47:33; 49:14; 58:13; 64:12).

Any devout Muslim will take this seriously. Muqtedar Khan of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy explains:

No religious leader has as much influence on his followers as does Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the last Prophet of Islam....And Muhammad as the final messenger of God enjoys preeminence when it comes to revelation – the Qur'an – and traditions. So much so that the words, deeds and silences (that which he saw and did not forbid) of Muhammad became an independent source of Islamic law. Muslims, as a part of religious observance, not only obey, but also seek to emulate and imitate their Prophet in every aspect of life. Thus Muhammad is the medium as well as a source of the divine law.[1]

Pedophile Prophet

According to ahadith reported by Bukhari, the Prophet of Islam "married Aisha when she was a girl of six years of age, and he consumed [i.e., consummated] that marriage when she was nine years old." [2] He was at this time in his early fifties. Many Islamic apologists claim – in the teeth of this evidence – that Aisha was actually older. Karen Armstrong asserts that "Tabari says that she was so young that she stayed in her parents' home and the marriage was consummated there later when she had reached puberty." [3] Unfortunately, her readers are unlikely to have volumes of Tabari on hand to check her assertion; contrary to Armstrong's account, the Muslim historian quotes Aisha thusly: "The Messenger of God married me when I was seven; my marriage was consummated when I was nine." [4]

However, other Muslim spokesmen acknowledge what the records say. Islamic scholar Muhammad Ali Al-Hanooti said that Muhammad's marriage to Aisha was the will of Allah, and "Allah usually is not the one who we are allowed to argue with for any ordinance or commandment. The Qur'an says, 'He is not questioned for what He does, but they (people) are questioned for what they do.' Aisha got married when she was

nine, when the Prophet (SAAWS) died, she was nineteen....What is wrong in her marriage of six or nine or whatsoever?"[5]

Child marriages were common in seventh-century Arabia. It is noteworthy that there is no record in the Qur'an or Hadith of Muhammad having to defend his marriage to Aisha- in sharp contrast to his obvious defensiveness over his marriage to his former daughter-in-law, Zaynab bint Jahsh. Moreover, the Qur'an describes a culture in which child marriage is taken for granted. In its directives about the waiting period required in order to determine if one's wife is pregnant before divorcing her, it says: "If you are in doubt concerning those of your wives who have ceased menstruating, know that their waiting period shall be three months. The same shall apply to those who have not yet menstruated" (Qur'an 65:4, emphasis added). In this revelation Allah envisions a scenario in which a pre-pubescent woman is not only married, but also divorced by her husband.

The Ayatollah Khomeini married a ten-year-old girl when he was twenty-eight.[6] Khomeini called marriage to a prepubescent girl "a divine blessing," and advised the faithful: "Do your best to ensure that your daughters do not see their first blood in your house." [7]

Time magazine reported in 2001:

In Iran the legal age for marriage is nine for girls, fourteen for boys. The law has occasionally been exploited by pedophiles, who marry poor young girls from the provinces, use and then abandon them. In 2000 the Iranian Parliament voted to raise the minimum age for girls to fourteen, but this year, a legislative oversight body dominated by traditional clerics vetoed the move. An attempt by conservatives to abolish Yemen's legal minimum age of fifteen for girls failed, but local experts say it is rarely enforced anyway. (The onset of puberty is considered an appropriate time for a marriage to be consummated.)[8]

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that over half of the girls in Afghanistan and Bangladesh are married before they reach the age of eighteen.[9] In early 2002, researchers in refugee camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan found half the girls married by age thirteen. In an Afghan refugee camp, more than two out of three second-grade girls were either married or engaged, and virtually all the girls who were beyond second grade were already married. One ten-year-old was engaged to a man of sixty.[10]

This is the price that women have paid throughout Islamic history, and continue to pay, for Muhammad's status as "an excellent example of conduct" (Qur'an 33:21).

Misogynist

Muhammad had many wives; lists vary but usually include eleven to thirteen women. Islamic tradition invests him with superhuman prowess: "Gabriel brought a kettle from

which I ate," he says, "and I was given the power of sexual intercourse equal to forty men." [11] Contemporary Islamic apologists assert, in contrast, that his many marriages were matters not of lust but of cementing political alliances. One Muslim biographer of the Prophet of Islam surveys the circumstances of each of his marriages and concludes: "Thus do we see that each of these marriages had some solid reasons behind it; passion and lust were not among them." [12] While it is impossible to determine such a thing, there is no doubt that the laws Muhammad laid down for women have given them numerous disadvantages in Islamic societies to this day.

The Qur'an likens a woman to a field (tilth), to be used by a man as he wills: "Your women are a tilth for you (to cultivate) so go to your tilth as ye will" (2:223). It declares that a woman's testimony is worth half that of a man: "Get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as ye choose, for witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her" (2:282). It allows men to marry up to four wives, and have sex with slave girls ("captives that your right hands possess") also: "If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice" (4:3).

The Qur'an also rules that a son's inheritance should be twice the size of a daughter's: "Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females" (4:11). Worst of all, it tells husbands to beat their disobedient wives: "Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them" (4:34).

Muhammad also says that hell will be filled with more women than men: "O women! Give alms, as I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-fire were you (women)...You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you. A cautious sensible man could be led astray by some of you." [13]

With statements like these from the Qur'an and Muhammad, it is no wonder that women in the Islamic world suffer such inequalities.

Draconian Punishments

Two stiff penalties—stoning for adultery and amputation for theft—define Islamic Sharia law for many Westerners, and indeed, they are emblematic of its pre-Medieval harshness and unsuitability for the contemporary world. However, making inroads against them as core elements of Sharia law will be difficult.

Famously, Muhammad challenged the Jews for concealing the penalty of stoning for adultery in the Torah. Islamic apologists in the West like to point out that the Qur'an does not contain this command. It only commands lashes for stoning: "The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment" (24:2). Allah also directs that adulterous women be confined to their homes until they die: "If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four (reliable) witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them to houses until death do claim them, or Allah ordain for them some (other) way" (Qur'an 4:15).

These punishments are harsh enough, but at least they seem to hold out some hope that the traditional Islamic penalty of stoning for adultery, which is still carried out in states that enforce Sharia in its fullness, can be mitigated. However, that hope is illusory. The Hadith says that there is more to the story. According to Umar, the Qur'an originally contained a verse enjoining stoning for adultery, but it was inadvertently dropped:

Allah sent Muhammad with the Truth and revealed the Book (the Qur'an) to him, and among what Allah revealed, was the Verse of the Rajm (the stoning of married person—male and female) who commits illegal sexual intercourse, and we did recite this Verse and understood and memorized it. Allah's Messenger did carry out the punishment of stoning and so did we after him.

I am afraid that after a long time has passed, somebody will say, "By Allah, we do not find the Verse of the Rajm in Allah's Book," and thus they will go astray by leaving an obligation which Allah has revealed. And the punishment of the Rajm is to be inflicted to any married person (male and female) who commits illegal sexual intercourse if the required evidence is available or there is conception or confession.[14]

It is difficult, if not impossible, for Islamic reformers to make headway against this when Umar specifically warns against them.

The penalty of amputation for theft is even more strongly attested, by a verse that remains in the Qur'an: "As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime; and Allah is exalted in power" (5:38). The binding words of Allah, applicable then, now and forever.

Warrior Prophet

Ibn Ishaq reports that Muhammad participated in twenty-seven battles (the parenthetical material beginning with "T." below refers to Tabari's version of the same material):

The apostle took part personally in twenty-seven (T. six) raids:

- Waddan which was the raid of al-Abwa’.
 - Buwat in the direction of Radwa. ‘Ushayra in the valley of Yanbu’.
 - The first fight at Badr in pursuit of Kurz b. Jabir.
 - The great battle of Badr in which God slew the chiefs of Quraysh (T. and their nobles and captured many).
 - Banu Sulaym until he reached al-Kudr.
 - Al-Sawiq in pursuit of Abu. Sufyan b. Harb (T. until he reached Qarqara al-Kudr).
 - Ghatafan (T. towards Najd), which is the raid of Dhu Amarr. Bahran, a mine in the Hijaz (T. above al-Furu’).
 - Uhud.
 - Hamra’u’l-Asad.
 - Banu Nadir.
 - Dhatu’l-Riqā’ of Nakhl.
 - The last battle of Badr.
 - Dumatu’l-Jandal.
 - Al-Khandaq. Banul Qurayza.
 - Banu Lihyan of Hudhayl. Dhu Qarad. Banu’l-Mustaliq of Khuza’a.
 - Al-Hudaybiya not intending to fight where the polytheists opposed his passage.
 - Khaybar.
 - Then he went on the accomplished pilgrimage. The occupation of...
o Mecca. o Hunayn. o Al-Ta’if. o Tabuk.
- Muhammad himself fought in nine engagements: Badr; Uhud; al-Khandaq; Qurayza; al-Mustaliq; Khaybar; the occupation; Hunayn; and al-Ta’if.[15]

Here again, Muhammad’s example is normative. We have seen how jihadists today invoke Badr and Khaybar to exhort Muslims to fight according to the example of the Prophet. It is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain that Islam is a religion of peace when warfare and booty were among the chief preoccupations of the Prophet of Islam. Sincere Islamic reformers should confront these facts, instead of ignoring or glossing over them, and work to devise ways in which Muslims can retreat from the proposition that Muhammad’s example is in all ways normative. If they do not do so, one outcome is certain: bloodshed perpetrated in the name of Islam and in imitation of its prophet will continue.

Islamic Tolerance

The Qur’an says: “Those who believe (in the Qur’an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” (2:62; cf. 5:69 and 22:17). Muslim spokesmen in the West like to quote such verses and to stress the commonality between Islam and Christianity — and sometimes even between Islam and Judaism. They have painted an

irenic picture of Islam's respect for its sister "Abrahamic faiths" – and thereby have given many Jews and Christians confidence that Western countries can accept Muslim immigrants in large numbers without any significant disruptions to their pluralistic societies.

The preponderance of the testimony that the Prophet of Islam left in the Qur'an and Hadith favors not tolerance and harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims, but just the opposite. A fundamental component of the Qur'an's view of non-Muslims is the often repeated and implacable belief in its own absolute truth, admitting of no rival: "The Religion before Allah is Islam" (3:19), or, as another translation has it, "The only true faith in God's sight is Islam." Most Jews and Christians ("People of the Book") are wrongdoers: "If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors" (Qur'an 3:110).

As we have seen, the Qur'an implies that Jews and Christians after the time of Muhammad are renegades who have rejected his prophethood out of corruption and malice. Muhammad weaves his charges against Jews and Christians together by condemning Christians for believing that Jesus was crucified, and Jews for believing that they crucified him: "They said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah'; but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not" (Qur'an 4:157).

The idea that Jews and Christians are accursed recurs several times in the Qur'an. Both have rejected Allah and his messenger Muhammad:

Allah did aforetime take a covenant from the Children of Israel....But because of their breach of their covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard; they change the words from their (right) places and forget a good part of the message that was sent them....From those, too, who call themselves Christians, We did take a covenant, but they forgot a good part of the message that was sent them: so we estranged them, with enmity and hatred between the one and the other, to the day of judgment. (Qur'an 5:12-16)

So far is the Qur'an from modern notions of tolerance and peaceful coexistence that it even warns Muslims not to befriend Jews and Christians — apparently including those who "feel themselves subdued" and are paying the jiyza: "O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust." (5:51).

It is ironic in light of all this that the Qur'an also criticizes Jews and Christians for being intolerant. Allah warns Muhammad that "never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion. Say: 'The Guidance of

Allah, that is the (only) Guidance.’ Wert thou to follow their desires after the knowledge which hath reached thee, then wouldst thou find neither Protector nor helper against Allah” (2:120; cf. 2:135).

A hadith amplifies all this:

On the Day of Resurrection, a call-maker will announce, “Let every nation follow that which they used to worship.” Then none of those who used to worship anything other than Allah like idols and other deities but will fall in Hell (Fire), till there will remain none but those who used to worship Allah, both those who were obedient (i.e. good) and those who were disobedient (i.e. bad) and the remaining party of the people of the Scripture. Then the Jews will be called upon and it will be said to them, ‘Who do you use to worship?’ They will say, ‘We used to worship Ezra, the son of Allah.’ It will be said to them, ‘You are liars, for Allah has never taken anyone as a wife or a son. What do you want now?’ They will say, ‘O our Lord! We are thirsty, so give us something to drink.’ They will be directed and addressed thus, ‘Will you drink,’ whereupon they will be gathered unto Hell (Fire) which will look like a mirage whose different sides will be destroying each other. Then they will fall into the Fire. Afterwards the Christians will be called upon and it will be said to them, ‘Who do you use to worship?’ They will say, ‘We used to worship Jesus, the son of Allah.’ It will be said to them, ‘You are liars, for Allah has never taken anyone as a wife or a son,’ Then it will be said to them, ‘What do you want?’ They will say what the former people have said. Then, when there remain (in the gathering) none but those who used to worship Allah (Alone, the real Lord of the Worlds) whether they were obedient or disobedient.[16]

Jesus will set things right at the end of the world. According to Islamic eschatology, he will return to end the dhimmi status of non-Muslims in Islamic societies — not by initiating a new era of equality and harmony, but by abolishing Christianity and imposing Islam upon everyone. As Muhammad explained:

By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, surely (Jesus) the son of Mary will soon descend amongst you and will judge mankind justly (as a Just Ruler); he will break the Cross and kill the pigs and there will be no Jizya (i.e. taxation taken from non Muslims).[17]

Another hadith has Muhammad saying: “How will you be when the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you and he will judge people by the Law of the Qur’an and not by the law of Gospel.”[18]

The Jews, meanwhile, will in the end times fare little better. Muhammad said: “The last hour would not come unless the Muslims will fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and a stone or a tree would say: Muslim, or the servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me; come and kill him.”[19]

Combine this stripping-away of all legitimacy from Judaism and Christianity with Muhammad's exhortations to fight against Jews and Christians, and it is no wonder that the Islamic world has been at odds with Jews and Christians through the centuries. As the schools of Islamic jurisprudence developed, they constructed upon these hadiths and passages of the Qur'an a legal structure for the treatment of non-Muslims.

The features of this remained remarkably consistent across the centuries, and among all the legal schools. Consider the contemporary Saudi Sheikh Marzouq Salem Al-Ghamdi, who several years ago explained in a sermon the terms in which an Islamic society should tolerate the presence of non-Muslims in its midst:

If the infidels live among the Muslims, in accordance with the conditions set out by the Prophet — there is nothing wrong with it provided they pay Jizya to the Islamic treasury. Other conditions are . . . that they do not renovate a church or a monastery, do not rebuild ones that were destroyed, that they feed for three days any Muslim who passes by their homes . . . that they rise when a Muslim wishes to sit, that they do not imitate Muslims in dress and speech, nor ride horses, nor own swords, nor arm themselves with any kind of weapon; that they do not sell wine, do not show the cross, do not ring church bells, do not raise their voices during prayer, that they shave their hair in front so as to make them easily identifiable, do not incite anyone against the Muslims, and do not strike a Muslim....If they violate these conditions, they have no protection.[20]

In this the Sheikh is merely repeating the classic terms of Islamic jurisprudence for the treatment of non-Muslims in Islamic societies – and he explicitly links these terms to Muhammad's example. We have already seen how insistent Muhammad was about the collection of the jizya. Meanwhile, the second-class status for Christians and Jews, mandated by Qur'an 9:29's stipulation that they "feel themselves subdued," was first fully articulated by Muhammad's lieutenant Umar during his caliphate (634 to 644), in terms strikingly similar to those used by Sheikh Marzouq. The Christians making this pact with Umar pledged:

We made a condition on ourselves that we will neither erect in our areas a monastery, church, or a sanctuary for a monk, nor restore any place of worship that needs restoration nor use any of them for the purpose of enmity against Muslims....We will not . . . prevent any of our fellows from embracing Islam, if they choose to do so. We will respect Muslims, move from the places we sit in if they choose to sit in them. We will not imitate their clothing, caps, turbans, sandals, hairstyles, speech, nicknames and title names, or ride on saddles, hang swords on the shoulders, collect weapons of any kind or carry these weapons.... We will not encrypt our stamps in Arabic, or sell liquor. We will have the front of our hair cut, wear our customary clothes wherever we are, wear belts around our waist, refrain from erecting crosses on the outside of our churches and demonstrating them and our books in public in Muslim fairways and markets. We will not sound the bells in our churches, except discreetly, or raise our

voices while reciting our holy books inside our churches in the presence of Muslims. . . .

After these and other rules are fully laid out, the agreement concludes: “These are the conditions that we set against ourselves and followers of our religion in return for safety and protection. If we break any of these promises that we set for your benefit against ourselves, then our Dhimmah (promise of protection) is broken and you are allowed to do with us what you are allowed of people of defiance and rebellion.”[21]

Even today, although these laws are not fully in force in most countries in the Islamic world, Christians and other non-Muslims still face widespread discrimination and harassment. Robert Hussein Qambar Ali was a Kuwaiti who converted from Islam to Christianity in the 1990s. He was arrested and tried for apostasy, even though the Kuwaiti Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion and says nothing about the traditional Islamic prohibition on conversion to another faith, which, as we have seen, is rooted in the words and deeds of Muhammad. One of Hussein’s prosecutors stated: “With grief I have to say that our criminal law does not include a penalty for apostasy. The fact is that the legislature, in our humble opinion, cannot enforce a penalty for apostasy any more or less than what our Allah and his messenger have decreed. The ones who will make the decision about his apostasy are: our Book, the Sunna, the agreement of the prophets and their legislation given by Allah.”[22]

It is nothing short of staggering that the myth of Islamic tolerance could have gained such currency in the teeth of Muhammad’s open contempt and hatred for Jews and Christians, incitements of violence against them, and calls that they be converted or subjugated. While human nature is everywhere the same and Muslims can, of course, act as tolerantly as anyone else, the example of Muhammad, the highest model for human behavior, constantly pulls them in a different direction. The fact that Western analysts continue to ignore all this demonstrates the ease with which people can be convinced of something they wish to believe, regardless of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Imitating Muhammad today

It is certain that mujahedin throughout the world see Muhammad as the personification of the qualities they are trying to embody. His example cannot be limited to his kindness to his companions and lack of harshness to his servants. When Muslims look to imitate him, they look to the same sources I have used in this book: the Qur’an, the Hadith, and the Sira. They have provided abundant evidence of this in recent years:

- On March 28, 2003, the Palestinian Sheikh Muhammad Abu Al-Hunud warned in a sermon broadcast over Palestinian Authority television against those who would attempt to “mess with Allah’s book, to Americanize the region, Americanize the religion, Americanize the Koran, Americanize Muhammad’s message....” Any doubt that he meant by this that the Qur’an and Muhammad’s

message would be stripped of their violent components were dispelled when he prayed about the Americans in Iraq: "Allah, make their possessions a booty for the Muslims, Allah, annihilate them and their weapons, Allah, make their children orphans and their women widows...."[23]

- On September 5, 2003, Sheikh Ibrahim Mudeiris invoked Muhammad's battles when speaking of the Iraq war in another sermon broadcast by the Palestinian Authority, though his memory of the Battle of Tabuk was a bit faulty: "If we go back in the time tunnel 1400 years, we will find that history repeats itself.... Byzantium represents America in the west.... America will collapse, as Byzantium collapsed in the west....The Prophet [Muhammad] could, by means of unbroken ranks, conquer Byzantium, the greatest power compared to today's America -- and this without a single martyr falling from among the Muslims.... The Prophet could, by means of the unity of the Muslim ranks and its awakening, defeat the America of that time....America is our No. 1 enemy, and we see it as our No. 1 enemy as long as we learn from the lessons of the Battle of Tabouk [which took place in October 630 AD]: 'Make ready for them whatever you can of armed strength and of mounted pickets' [Koran 8:60]. We are prepared and ready, but victory is from Allah...."[24]

- On November 21, 2003, Muslims poured out of the Maiduguri Road Central Mosque after Friday prayers in the Nigerian city of Kaduna, demanding the implementation of Sharia law and distributing flyers stating: "The only solution is Jihad, the type of jihad put into practise by Prophet Muhammed and exemplified by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio and the late Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran. We Muslims should unite and embrace this concept of jihad that will undoubtedly empower us to destroy oppression and oppressors, and in its place establish Islam."[25]

- As late as November 2003, the website of the Islamic Affairs Department (IAD) of the Saudi Arabian embassy in Washington, D.C. contained exhortations to Muslims to wage violent jihad in emulation of Muhammad: "The Muslims are required to raise the banner of Jihad in order to make the Word of Allah supreme in this world, to remove all forms of injustice and oppression, and to defend the Muslims. If Muslims do not take up the sword, the evil tyrants of this earth will be able to continue oppressing the weak and [the] helpless...." It quotes Muhammad delivering Allah's words: "Whoever of My slaves comes out to fight in My way seeking My pleasure, I guarantee him that I will compensate his suffering with reward and booty (during his lifetime) and if he dies, I would forgive him, have mercy on him and let him enter Paradise."[26]

- In December 2003, an Iraqi jihad warrior explained why he was fighting against the American troops there: "The religious principle is that we cannot accept to live with infidels. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, said, 'Hit the infidels wherever you find them.'" The man was, of course, quoting not a saying of Muhammad but Qur'an 9:5, the "Verse of the Sword" – but it is easy to see why he would confuse the two.[27]

- Fawwaz bin Muhammad Al-Nashami, the commander of the jihad group that killed twenty- two people in a jihad attack in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, on May 29,

2004, said that he acted in accord with Muhammad's wishes for Arabia: "We are Mujahideen, and we want the Americans. We have not come to aim a weapon at the Muslims, but to purge the Arabian Peninsula, according to the will of our Prophet Muhammad, of the infidels and the polytheists who are killing our brothers in Afghanistan and Iraq...We began to comb the site looking for infidels. We found Filipino Christians. We cut their throats and dedicated them to our brothers the Mujahideen in the Philippines. [Likewise], we found Hindu engineers and we cut their throats too, Allah be praised. That same day, we purged Muhammad's land of many Christians and polytheists." [28]

- In the run-up to the 2004 American presidential election, a Muslim preacher invoked Muhammad to denounce democracy: "Our Prophet did not run for office in any election....He did not win any political debate. [Instead] he won the war against the infidel." [29]
- A jihadist explaining that the Israeli/Palestinian struggle was more than just a nationalist conflict over land declared: "But all of these people don't realize that our struggle with the Jews goes way back, ever since the first Islamic state was established in Madeenah with Muhammad (SAWS) the Messenger sent to all of mankind, as its leader. Allaah has related to us in the Qur'ân, the reality of the Jews' malice and hatred for the ummah of Islaam and Tawheed, as he says: 'You will surely find that the people with the most enmity towards the believers are the Jews and the polytheists.' (Surah Al-Maa'idah: 82) [Qur'an 5:82]. [30]
- In October 2004, Sheikh Aamer Bin Abdallah Al-Aamer wrote this in the Al-Qaeda online journal Sawt al-Jihad: "Perform the Jihad against your enemies with your [own two] hands, sacrifice your souls and your property in fighting your enemy, as an imitation of [the acts of] your Prophet [Muhammad] in the month of Ramadan [and in order to] enrage your enemies." [31]
- The influential American convert to Islam Hamza Yusuf in November 2004 invoked the Treaty of Hudaibiyya in exhorting Muslims to advance strategically toward their goals. "There are times when you have to live like a sheep," he explained, "in order to live in the future like a lion." [32]
- In a January 2005 article in Arab News, columnist Adil Salahi reminded his readers that Muhammad never made war on a people without first inviting them to convert to Islam: "During the Prophet's (peace be upon him) lifetime the Muslim community had to fight many battles, because there were several sources of danger and many opponents who were keen to suppress the rising voice of the Islamic message. The Prophet made sure that in none of these battles the Muslims would exceed the limits of what is lawful in Islam....[H]e would not launch an attack without alerting the enemy and calling on them to accept Islam and live in peace with the Muslim state." [33] (In May 2006, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran sent a letter to American President George W. Bush, a letter which he later explained was a call to Islam: "The letter was an invitation to monotheism and justice, which are common to all divine prophets. If the call is responded positively, there will be no more problems to be solved." [34])

- London Muslim leader Hani Al-Sibaai in February 2005 justified the slaughters being perpetrated by Al-Zarqawi's mujahedin in Iraq: "Do these people base themselves on Islamic law or not? They claim that they do, and to support it, they say that slaughtering appeared in a hadith by the Prophet, which was pronounced authentic by Sheik Ahmad Shaker. The Prophet told the Quraysh tribe: 'I have brought slaughter upon you,' making this gesture. But these are religious issues that may be disputed....[T]he Prophet drove nails into and gouged out the eyes of people from the 'Urayna Tribe. They were merely a group of thieves who stole from sheep herders, and the Prophet drove nails into them and threw them into the Al-Hrara area, and left them there to die. He blinded them and cut off their opposite legs and arms. This is what the Prophet did on a trifling matter – let alone in war." [35]
- As we saw in chapter eight, in July 2006 a writer on a British Muslim Internet forum declared: "I'm so fed up with these dirty, filthy Israeli dogs. May Allah curse them and destroy them all, and may they face the same fate as Banu Qurayzah!" [36]

Most Western government and law enforcement officials would dismiss all this and similar examples as manifestations of the twisting or hijacking of Islam. But we have seen that all the words and deeds of Muhammad to which the jihadists refer are amply attested in early Islamic traditions. Nor is there a wealth of material in those traditions offering a radically different view of Muhammad.

The Truth About Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion
by Robert Spencer

Did Muhammad Exist?: An Inquiry into Islam's Obscure Origins

By Robert Spencer

Notes

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