

# "Brothers in Deen": the Quran calls for Coexistence, not Clash



The rise of ISIS and the recent Charlie Hebdo massacre have brought the “clash of civilizations” discourse to a fever pitch. In reality, the Quran calls for a government based on values closely resembling that of Western republics. Equal rights are guaranteed to non-Muslims so long as they fulfill the same two obligations as their Muslim counterparts: follow the law and pay an income tax. Henceforth, they are considered “brothers in the system of life.” No religious conversion is required.

Before we proceed, note that Islam (meaning “submission” to the will of God) is referred to as a “Deen” in the Quran. Deen means “system of life” or “way of governance.” Religion is but a component of Deen. Next, let’s review the verse deemed “the verse of the sword” by critics:

*9:5: “Slay those who ascribe divinity to aught beside God wherever you come upon them, and take them captive, and besiege them, and lie in wait for them...”*

At first glance, this would seem to condone violence against non-Muslims. But, an honest contextual review reveals that this verse references those non-Muslims who keep violating treaties and attacking the Muslim government.

*9:10: “They respect no tie and no pact regarding a believer. They are the transgressors.”*

*9:11: “If they (the warring non-Muslims) mend their ways and establish Salat and pay Zakat, then they are your **Brothers in Deen.**”*

So we are clearly told that non-Muslims are considered “brothers” to Muslims if they are not fighting against them and they fulfill two duties: establish Salat and pay Zakat. “Salat” means the “system that follows closely” (the divine commands). The scope of Salat can vary with context. For instance, the Quran indicates that establishing Salat at a government level eliminates corruption (11:84-87) and all creatures “know their Salat” (24:41), meaning they follow their Divine programming instinctually. At a personal level, Salat defines the Islamic daily prayers but more importantly the

moral code of honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, steadfastness, etc. (70:19-34).

*jizya is not a non-believer's "tribute" to Muslims as commonly believed*

Coming to Zakat, it is commonly defined as "charity", but in actuality it was a government income tax (6:141) in the early days of Islam, and only 100 years after Prophet Muhammad (S) died was Zakat disconnected from state collection (see <http://tinyurl.com/mta34mw>). Notably, the Quranic term for charity is *sadaqa* (9:60). Furthermore, the Quran did not restrict Zakat to its current ineffectual 2.5%.

With this understanding of Deen, Salat, and Zakat, we can appreciate verse 9:11 clearly:

*"If they (the warring non-Muslims) mend their ways and establish Salat (follow the rules of the Islamic government and its code of ethics) and pay Zakat (the income tax), then they are your Brothers in Deen (good citizens of the Muslim state or brothers in your way of life)."*

A parallel can be drawn between this understanding and that of the status of Muslim-Americans, such as myself. I follow the laws of the American Republic, I respect Judeo-Christian American values, and I pay my taxes. Hence, I am considered a good American citizen.

What about the *jizya*? Are Non-Muslims subject to a special tribute? As discussed, their only economic duty is to pay the Zakat tax. *Jizya* is mentioned in the following verse:

*9:29: "Fight against those who reject belief in God and the Last Day, (and keep breaking treaties, 9:13)...until they pay jizya with willing submission."*

First, *kharaj* is the Quranic term used for tribute (18:94), not *jizya*. Secondly, *jizya* comes from the word *jaza* (recompense, see 18:106) and hence means "war reparations" owed by the aggressive rebels, not a non-believers' "tribute" as commonly mistranslated. Evidence aside from the Quran regarding *jizya* can be found in the first true Islamic State constitution written by Prophet Muhammad (S): [The Covenant of Medina](#) and his equally benevolent [Charter of Privileges for the Coptic Christians on Mt. Sinai](#). These landmark human rights documents grant non-Muslims equal rights and make no mention of a tribute.

Certainly some abusive Muslim rulers did burden their non-Muslim subjects with tribute taxation. More in line with Quranic guidance, the Moorish rulers of Spain presided over Muslim, Jewish and Christian subjects for seven centuries without oppressive taxation. This thriving milieu made contributions in all fields of learning, and by many accounts gave birth to the European Renaissance.

Regardless of this nostalgia, the thought of living under any rules remotely "Islamic" repulses Westerners. Take comfort in that 99.99% of immigrant Muslims have no motivation to overthrow Western democracies. It is these republics that uphold Quranic principles such as freedom of religion and expression (2:256), equality before the law (4:135), presumption of innocence (49:6), gender equity (4:32, 33:35), social safety nets (9:60), rule of law (33:60), and strong ethics (70:21-70:33). The barbarism of blasphemy and apostasy laws, stoning, child marriage, the burqa, 72 virgin mythology, intolerance, all beliefs added to Islam centuries after its advent, await in many of their (so-called) Islamic homelands such as Afghanistan, Saudia Arabia, Yemen, etc. Such is the damage

that hate philosophies, including Wahhabism and dictatorial rule have wrought on Islam over the past centuries.

With this latter point, a word to Muslim readers: Islam has been hijacked not only by extremist groups, but also by an orthodox religious establishment that shuns correction of fabricated traditions and misinterpretations which violate human rights and enable extremism. There is an urgency for a Reformation of Islamic thought. Don't sit this one out. Your children and your Brothers in Deen deserve better!

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## "No Comment": m.o. of the passive Muslim majority

*"The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything" - Einstein*

An essay dedicated to:



- the Passive Muslim as a wake up call,
- the Traditionalist as a challenge,
- the Extremist as a denouncement,
- the **Reformer**, the most rare and brave of God's creatures, as a helping hand.

For centuries in the Indian Subcontinent, Hindu widows were obligated to leap into the funeral pyre of their late husbands. As the woman screamed in unimaginable pain, her family members and other onlookers who knew better, stood watching. They had *no comment*, you see. It was not until the 19th century that British conquerors relieved their subjects of the hellish tradition of *suttee*.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, during the Days of Ignorance, a newborn girl was considered a source of shame. Many parents would walk to the open desert and bury the poor infant alive! Sometimes, the

father would compound this grave sin by delaying the decision. It was 3-4 years later he would realize the girl was a burden he could not bear. Imagine the scene: a child of three, doll in her left hand, her father's finger in the right, strolling to the middle of the desert, assuming an afternoon of play awaits. As he begins to dig a hole, eager to help, she too scrapes the ground with her frail fingers. Finally, she is placed in the abyss. She reaches for her father again, only to receive a mound of earth in return. This is to be her resting place. Certainly, there were many in Arabia who realized the inhumanity of it all. But, they had *no comment*.

In Pakistan, Asia Bibi, the lady unfortunate enough to have been born Christian in Pakistan, a land of **apostasy and blasphemy laws**, is due to be hung next year. Her crime? Her Muslim coworkers refused to take water from a "non-Muslim woman" and hurled insults at her. They claim she responded by insulting the Prophet (S), a charge she explicitly denies. Now this mother of five is fighting for her life. Is there any evidence to support blasphemy laws in the Quran and Sunnah (the Prophet's example)?

33:57: "Verily, those who malign Allah and His Messenger, Allah will deprive them of His Grace in this world and in the Hereafter. He has readied for them a humiliating punishment."

\*Note: the punishment is for the Hereafter and is to be administered by God.

History records that the Prophet (S) we know and love had animal entrails and stones hurled at him, suffered the loss of many of his Companions, and his beloved uncle was slain. This is not to mention the heinous insults he endured for years in Mecca. And when He came to power over the people who injured him, he showed *absolute mercy to all*, stating, "I speak to you as Joseph spoke to his brothers. This day there is no reproof against you. You are free."

The blasphemy laws arise from a few narrations such as this, [Sahih Bukhari 59:369](#), which recounts the murder of Ka'b bin al-Ashraf, a Jewish poet who wrote verses about Muslims that the Prophet (S) found insulting. He *supposedly* asked his followers, 'Who will rid me of this man?' and several volunteered.

Whereas the Quran clearly states in 2:256: "There is no compulsion in religion," some Muslim countries have the death punishment for apostasy arising from this narration: [Sahih Bukhari 9:57](#): "He was a Jew and became a Muslim and then reverted back to Judaism." Then Abu Musa requested Muadh to sit down but Muadh said, "I will not sit down till he has been killed. This is the judgment of Allah and his Messenger." Another narration describes that Ali (RA) burned a man to death because he was supposedly commanded by the Prophet (S), "Whoever changes his religion, then kill him" ([Sahih Bukhari 9:84](#)).

#### *Traditions supporting death for apostasy*

and blasphemy are inconsistent with the Quran and Sunnah and should be openly challenged. The vast majority of imams and scholars will never do so. Too many sensible and intelligent Muslims who should know better, or are afraid of upsetting tradition, have *no comment* regarding the matter.

Every year, human rights organizations list Muslim countries as top offenders in **child marriage** cases. Thousands of little girls are destroyed (even killed) in these unholy unions, their childhood

brutally snatched by grooms often 30-40 years their seniors. The Quran is all too clear as to what defines marriageable age: sufficient age to sign a legal contract, ability to consent and to handle finances (4:6, 4:19, 4:21). But, because of the fabricated tradition that our Honorable Prophet (S) married a girl playing with dolls <http://tinyurl.com/5ocsct>, the Author has encountered many intelligent Muslims with daughters of their own, even pediatricians, who utter not a word against this barbarism. They simply have *no comments*.

This week, another young woman was **stoned to death** by ISIS on grounds of adultery. Asked if she had any last words, the accused replied with a coached confession in a terrified, feeble voice. All the while, her complacent father was busy *burying her* to the knees to render her immobile. One can only dream that instead she would have mustered superhuman courage and uttered, "Yes, judge me according to the Quran!"

25:68-71: "...nor commit fornication, for whoever does that shall receive the penalty (see 24:2, non-lethal punishment for the habitual adulterer). *Save him who repents and does good works*; for those, Allah shall change their misdeeds into good works. And Allah is Forgiving, Compassionate."

Stoning is not a punishment prescribed in the Quran for anything. It is mentioned only in the context that disbelievers tried to stone Messengers for bringing the Just Message of Deen. But instead, ISIS and enabling imams the world over support the barbarism of stoning based on these supposedly [authentic traditions](#). The average Muslim has *no comment* regarding the matter.

On the Day of Judgment, "the little girl that was buried alive will be made to ask for what crime she was slain" (81:8). That little girl is a symbol of all the oppressed who have ever lived. Those directly responsible for cruelties will certainly receive their due. What will become of those who stood by, those silent enablers, never challenging the prevailing notions, never demanding reform from their scholars and imams? *No comment...no comment...*

### **Notes:**

If this essay has offended you in any way, you were in need of a *wakeup call*. That was my intent. Most of the imams leading your prayers and the scholars you adore denounce extremism, but they are guarding some fabricated narrations from all challenge (<http://tinyurl.com/lonp32o>) because they were branded "authentic" over a 1000 years ago. These are the fuel for ISIS and the Taliban. Non-Muslims and your children, are being made aware of them. Speak up!

I do not denounce all traditions, only those that contradict the Quran and violate human rights. Many reflect the Divine Light of the Quran. A sample collection of such narrations is located at <http://drshabbir.com/library/ahadith.pdf>. I always have been and will remain a non-sectarian Muslim, worshiping no imam, current or ancient, and I consider the Quran the only infallible source for Islamic beliefs.

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