

An Open Letter to a Traditionalist Muslim Friend



AN OPEN LETTER TO A TRADITIONALIST FRIEND describing Quran-based reform:

The following is my communication with a friend which you guys may find useful in understanding the Quran-centric viewpoint of reform.

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Salaam,

I am sending this email summarizing and clarifying my points as promised. Your open-mindedness and willingness to research is very refreshing.

1) Background:

My father, Dr. Shabbir Ahmed (Florida) is a learned man (call him scholar if you wish) of Classical Urdu, Persian, Iqbaliyat, and Quranic Arabic who has written 50+ books about Pakistan and Islamic Reform. Mashallah, he was one of the first prominent back-to-Quran reformers in America some 25 years ago. His "Criminals of Islam" created a stir worldwide in the 1990s, bluntly identifying many ancient imams/scholars as violators of Human Rights and his "Quran as It Explains Itself" exposition/translation of the Quran is free from all superstitions and oppressive rendition and it appeals to reason and humanity (you can download at http://www.ourbeacon.com/wordpress/?page_id=21).

We are absolutely NON-SECTARIAN and come from a long-line of reformist thinkers ancient and modern such as Jamaluddin Afghani, Mufti Muhammad Abduh, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Fazil Deeniyat, Dr Ghulam Jeelani Barq, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Allama Muhammad Asad, GA Parvez, Dr Maurice Bucaille, Allama Inayatullah Mashriqi, Allama Aslam Jairajpuri, Imam Raghیب Isfahani, Khateeb Baghdadi, Allama Shibli, Syed Sulaiman Nadawi, and other ijtehad-minded (independent thought) and Quran-first scholars who recognized false hadith and histories as the root cause of the Decline and Fall of Muslims.

2) Current State of the Muslim World and its Cause

The Quran repeatedly identifies human rights violations as the cause of destruction for all doomed societies. Non-Quranic beliefs from “sahih” hadith, such as death for apostasy and blasphemy, intolerance, Arabic dress code and appearance, child marriage, sex slavery, gender oppression, stoning for adultery, and superstition have all been part and parcel of the Muslim World for over 1000 years with varying degrees of expression in society. These false beliefs were entrenched by corrupt imams, kings, and the rich to control minds and hearts starting 1200 years ago. Sometimes, if the environment is depraved enough, these “sahih” hadith based beliefs become fully manifest as a hellish theocracy...witness Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, etc.

Now, you correctly stated that the hadith did not create ISIS or the Taliban. True. But, those extremists have their ideology informed not by Hitler’s Mein Kampf or Marx’s Communist Manifesto, but by Bukhari and company’s “sahih” hadith books. Identify the problem and clean it up. I published a 800 word brief essay describing just a handful of “sahih” hadith none of us would want to suffer through: [The Hadith Must be Re-examined](#).

3) Current Imams

You are right to state that not all traditionalist imams should be labeled the same. But, the proof is in the pudding when you have the most popular AMERICAN “authorities” stating the following:

a) One prominent scholar justifying sex slavery of women POWs, not considering that returning them to their homes is a possibility: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9cDJTVbQEc> and defending death for apostasy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpyyXcogAPg>

b) A popular “shaykh” justifying death for blasphemy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoFbbIgAcbk> and his website declares all the ancient scholars “Champions of Islam” regardless of their perverse beliefs.

c) Another imam who is claiming to exorcise demons in Memphis, TN! All the while charging fees for it and collecting all sorts of donations [in this video](#).

d) they all promote the Arab dress code and appearance as some sort of “Islamic” costume

e) Worst of all, all of them to varying degrees block and speak against true reform of entrenched false traditions that destroy Human Rights and Reason. Their views may evolve with time, but in the meanwhile they are acting like Foolish Friends of Islam. It is no wonder the Quran warns:

9:34: “O You who have chosen to be graced with belief! A great many

religious leaders, rabbis, priests, monks, mullahs, yogis, and mystics devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and debar them from the Path of Allah. All those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the Cause of Allah, to them give tidings (O Prophet) of a painful doom.”

4) Zakat and Sadaqa:

Another damaging aspect of the clergy, especially in “Muslim” countries is that they divert money into mosque expansions, madrassa classes, etc. Whereas these funds could be used to fund dedicated charity programs and small business empowerment programs, micro-loans, etc. They have no right to call their collections “zakat”, which was the money collected into ONE Central Treasury

in the time of the Prophet (S) and used to build infrastructure, security, education, welfare, everything needed to allow citizens to “grow” (“zaku”, “growth”) to their potential. No imam can circulate wealth to fulfill these societal needs. It is a government function. The income and welfare taxes we pay are the only equivalent of Zakat now. (Note: hadith limit Zakat to 2.5%, but not the versatile Quran)

Above and beyond the duty of Zakat (the tax) is all that is surplus of our needs which the Quran tells us should be kept moderate. That giving is called “sadaqat” or charity as defined in 9:60.

Note, that Western Republics have efficient tax bases (30-60%) that circulate wealth effectively to provide Welfare and Equal Opportunity, hence the need for charity to survive is minimal in the West, whereas in “Muslim” countries the tax base is corrupted by irresponsible citizens and thief politicians. All the while the thousands of masjids are rife with “zakat” and “saqada” funds. The citizens feel they have fulfilled “God’s Right” (by depositing funds at the mosque) which is more important to them than honestly paying taxes to the government or funding empowerment programs. Charity never can eliminate poverty, only central funds invested into education, jobs and infrastructure backed by welfare safety nets produce lasting results. That is the wisdom of the Quranic Zakat.

For reference on original purpose of Zakat, Saqadat and the supposed tax on non-Muslims called Jizya, see my 800 word brief published essay: [The Quran Calls for Coexistence](#).

5) Human Rights, God’s Rights, and the supposed 5 Pillars

The Quran in no way distinguishes Rights of God from Human Rights. Here is a telling verse that directly tells us that God’s Right is equal to the Rights of Man:

6:141: He it is Who creates Bounties for you, such as gardens that are cultivated, greens that are wild, palm trees of various kinds, crops in diversity, olives and pomegranates, fruits that are similar and diverse. Enjoy them, but give Him His Right. Render the poor what is their Divine Right, on the day of the harvest. Do not waste the Bounty of Allah. He does not love the wasteful.

This false dichotomy between God’s Right and Human Rights was created over a millennium ago so that the clergy could introduce concepts into Islam to exercise mind-numbing control while destroying human rights. The biggest such fabricated concept is the 5 pillars of Islam. As Ghamidi sahab pointed out at his seminar, and many reformers are aware, Shahada, Ritual Prayers, 2.5% charity, Fasting, Hajj are nowhere listed as the central tenets or “pillars of Islam” in the Quran, but were established via Bukhari hadith. These ritual actions are mentioned in the Quran (not as pillars), but what about more important societal concepts stressed repeatedly throughout the Quran, such as: Justice, Ethics, Jihad (internal and external), Human Rights, Reason, Understanding the Quran, Fighting Oppression and Upholding the Good.

Indeed, if there is a “pillar” of Islam, it is the ENTIRE QURAN which even our most intelligent Muslims do not wish to comprehend. Why should they, when they have been nurtured to believe that if they do these rituals they are good Muslims...end of story. Even ISIS and Taliban are better at those rituals than we are. Are they good Muslims? Who will challenge an oppressive interpretation if the right to Reason and to stand for Justice is blurred by the shadow of the 5 pillars? This is the millennium old system created by corrupt imams and paranoid caliphs bearing bitter fruit to this

day.

6) Is it not good enough to just be a good person, not hurt people, and just do the ritual stuff? Reform is difficult...

I wrote an essay entitled, "No Comment" (<http://quranaissance.com/no-comment/>) last year and I was told it brought some people to tears. In it, I described the silence of the passive Muslim majority in the face of terrible Human Rights violations occurring in the name of Islam the world over. I quoted this verse:

81:8-9: "And when the little girl that was buried alive is made to ask for what crime she was slain."

In my understanding, that little girl represents all the oppressed who ever lived. They will testify against all the oppressors and also all of those who stood silently by with "no comment". My conscience is clear that for all my imperfections, I will not have to face these victims in the Hereafter. As people with resources, intelligence, and freedom of expression, it is our duty to do our part against this injustice.

7) The Impact of Reform

I am happy that after 4 years, there are several dozen people in Orlando that have adopted reformist thinking at least partially by my efforts and well over a hundred in my estimation that have begun to at least think. Beyond Orlando, the back to Quran reform movement has millions of supporters worldwide gathering momentum. There was a time that I would advise you to be discreet with this communication. Not so any more. I do not fear defamation or even worse any longer. Please share as you wish.

8) You asked. "Is Music Haram?"

Rest assured that Music is not forbidden in the Quran. The hadith are all over the place for and against music. That is why they can never achieve the stature of the Quran which states:

4:82: "Will they not then, try to understand this Qur'an? If it were from other than Allah they would surely have found in it much contradiction."

Traditionalists refer to verse 31:6 to ban music, claiming "frivolous narrations" refers to music and poetry:

31:6: "But among men there is many a one that prefers "frivolous narrations" (LAHWAL HADITH), so as to lead [those] without knowledge astray from the path of God, and to turn it to ridicule. For such there is shameful suffering in store."

But "lahwal hadith" are not a reference to music! But, rather senseless narrations of any kind, such as this one:

"The Prophet said, 'If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him'" (Sahih Bukhari Vol 4, Book 52, No. 260).

Music IS mentioned favorably in the Quran but the traditional translations hide the reference:

Surah 34:13 "They worked for (Solomon) as he desired, making (JIFANIN KALJAWAB) forts, statues, sculptures, paintings, music instruments, images, pools, and boilers well-dug into the ground."
JIFANIN KALJAWAB = Any work of utility or enjoyment and entertainment; Jiff: stringed music instrument

Surah 30:15: "As for those who attained belief and fulfilled the needs of others, they will be made happy in a meadow of delight listening to beautiful music." (Hibr = delightful music, in the original Quraish Arabic dialect of the Prophet (S)).

Forbidding things not made unlawful is a serious offense!

7:32: "Say, "Who has forbidden the beauty and nice things Allah has brought forth for His servants, and the pure clean things of your choice?"

5:87: "O You who have chosen to be graced with belief! Do not deprive yourselves of the good things of life that Allah has made Lawful to you. But commit no excesses.

Salaam and Regards...see you at the concert!

Fawad