

Is the Fascist Wing of Islam taking Islam over a Cliff?
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"Not in My Name" said an unhappy French Muslim holding up a sign in a demonstration in Paris in response to the murders in the Charlie Hebdo journal office and the Jewish market. "Islam is a Religion of Peace!" protested American basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar on "Meet The Press. "It's not about religion" he insisted, even though all the killers shouted that it was indeed about the insult to their religion and their religion's founder, Mohammad.

So what have we here? Conflicting views of what Islam demands? Of course we do, because religion is not one thing over the entire time of its sojourn. Its believers do not believe one way from its beginnings over the centuries either, yet they are all called one thing.

Christ and early Christians were certainly not the same as the Christians under the Inquisition, and that Inquisition nearly destroyed Christianity altogether, causing it to fragment into the many pieces that remain today, including Christians who remain Christian on Christmas and Easter only. Today's Catholic Church certainly does not have the frightening force it had in 1600.

When Rome occupied Judea, many Jews wanted nothing more than to become Romans. That seemed as comfortable a life as it does to Jews today, assimilated into American life. But the religious zealots realized that Judaism would disappear if that were to happen. They became terrorists, going after both Romanizing Jews and Roman officials until the Romans reacted. The results were terrible. All the Jews were driven out of the Holy Land into exile where they had two choices: give up their religion or change it: melt into the Roman world, which many did, or become the Rabbinical Jews, living painfully in exile, as they did for the next 1900 years. It was scary and lonely, but they survived.

Today, with religion no longer an isolating element, and thanks to the European enlightenment and to America and Israel, Jews have risen to the preeminence that their talents warrant. Take a look at the Nobel prizes year after year and all the other prizes for accomplishment.

Now Islam: in those lands where Muslims are living as a majority, their countries are all in failure mode. Even with oil wealth, they live temporarily in rich welfare states. Muslims make nothing that anybody wants, are backward in accomplishment, and when the oil dole runs out, they will be the backwaters of the world. Unfortunately, their religion and customs will relegate them to permanent backwardness. Keeping women from meaningful education and preference for first-cousin marriages, produce birth anomalies and mental retardation, boding ill for the future.

For those Muslims who have had the foresight to move to the West, many have become accomplished and have assimilated. However, the violent neo-fascist death cults among them are making problems for the rest. Saying "not in my name" may not be enough. Islam is currently not a religion of peace, and its history has been largely militant. Western Muslims must make some hard choices, including becoming secular.

For those in Muslim majority countries, the choices are even harder.

Follow the suggestion of Egypt's President Sisi: drop all the out of date material, especially the Sharia. Take off the headscarves. No gender separation. Stop flogging people for their ideas. Quit cutting off heads and limbs. Have real elections. Have real education; memorizing the Koran is not education. Open the mosques and subject preachers to keen scrutiny. How about that for a start?

People could be Muslim voluntarily by observing the five pillars of Islam, Mohammad's first inspired vision. Those ideas have stood the test of time and would work anywhere. Pray five times a day, fast one month a year, take a pilgrimage once a lifetime, give charity, and remember that there is one creator of the universe. Not a bad creed to live by. Relegate all the rest of the texts as history and poetry.

This is crisis time for Islam as it had been for Judaism and Christianity in the past. The death cult offers only death, not a religion of peace.

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