

Today, we're going to focus on an issue that isn't strictly related to science or Christianity, but I believe does play an integral role in the emergence of the New Atheist movement... the religion of Islam. The reason I think that this topic is vitally important for us to understand hinges on two concerns. First, the new atheists (Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens) all express their deep concern over the violence perpetrated by fundamentalist Muslims. And rightfully so! Christians have the very same concerns. Yet, rather than seeking allegiance with Christians with the goal of constructively addressing this threat, they build a "straw man" Christianity that they view as just as dangerous as radical Islam, and dub us the pejorative title... the Christian Taliban.

As of this broadcast, on RichardDawkins.net you can find a front page link to an article about Mike Evans new book, *The Final Move beyond Iraq*. The article was written by Will Bunch of the Philadelphia Daily News. In this article Bunch says, "Look, it's a free country and people are free to print and waste their money on whatever kind of drivel they want. But it's kind of scary when masses of Americans are eagerly awaiting the horrific war in the Middle East that will bring them closer to the day of the Rapture, when they meet Jesus and Jerry Falwell."

This misconception that most Christians actually desire to hasten the return of Christ is hopelessly ill-informed, but a critical component of the New Atheists "straw man" version of Christianity. In contrast, Christians are called by Christ to **be prepared** for His return, but not to do anything to hasten or encourage it. In fact, we can't do anything to hasten it, because the date of Christ's return is predetermined. It will not change based on anything we do. In Matthew 24:36 Jesus says, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Christ's clarion call is to a position of preparedness as described in Matthew 25 in what is known as "The Parable of the Ten Virgins." Most Christians are NOT "eagerly awaiting the horrific war in the Middle East." If they were so preoccupied with this future event, they would be ill-equipped for the introspection and outward action necessary to assure their own constant state of preparedness. Jesus Christ calls us, as His followers, to live lives that reflect the morality we discussed in our last episode... and to share his message of hope and peace with a desperately needy world.

My second concern is that the threat of radical Islam is a very real threat that is often misunderstood today. While the New Atheists would be hard pressed to find a reputable Christian scholar who is encouraging Christians to perpetrate violence in order to hasten their Savior's return, this is exactly what is done in the Middle East, most notably by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. When Ahmadinejad mentions the Hidden Imam, Imam Mahdi, he often follows his comment with words such as "May Allah hasten his reappearance." During his speech at the United Nations last September Ahmadinejad said, "O mighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the emergence of your last

repository, the promised one, that perfect and pure human being, the one that will fill this world with justice and peace." He was referring to Imam Mahdi. And while Ahmadinejad may yearn for a "world with justice and peace," the Qur'an and Hadith teach that this will only be achieved through violence and jihad.

Many Americans believe that Islamic terrorism is purely a response to U.S. aggression. Others believe it has everything to do with oil. Yet, both of these are far too recent occurrences on the timeline of human events to truly account for Islam's exaggerated response.

Many political pundits claim that we are already in the early stages of WWIII, which began back in 2001 with the attack on the World Trade Center. Such sentiments were spoken by President Bush when he referred to the heroes of flight 93 as mounting the first WWIII counter attack. Similar sentiments have been expressed by one of the savviest political minds of our time, Newt Gingrich, who admitted he believes we are in the early stages of WWIII. On Meet the Press last July, Gingrich expressed his belief that "this is [actually] the 58th year of the war to destroy Israel." His meaning was obvious. The day that Israel was recognized by the world as a sovereign nation, was the day Israel became a target for the modern *mujahideen*... an Arab word that simply refers to Muslims who are involved in war, jihad, or most literally, a struggle.

Yet, I am inclined to agree with Joseph Farah, founding editor of World Net Daily, who pointed out that this war is actually WWI. This war that is upon us has defined history for the last 1400 years. It is a much larger war than those that took only a few years to settle during the early and mid twentieth century. Farah says, "There exists a religious totalitarian ideology that seeks global hegemony." Nothing short of annihilation of the state of Israel will satisfy today's Islamofascists. And for some of the most powerful mujahideen, the destruction of the United States is equally as important.

There are only three options viewed as acceptable by Muslim militants. The forced conversion, destruction or subjugation of all infidels, Christians and Jews are the only options that will satisfy Islamic radicals. REPEAT.

What follows is from a December 2005 article in the National Review by Joshua E. London, author of *Victory in Tripoli: How America's War with the Barbary Pirates Established the U.S. Navy and Shaped a Nation*:

"At the dawn of a new century, a newly elected United States president was forced to confront a grave threat to the nation — an escalating series of unprovoked attacks on Americans by Muslim terrorists. Worse still, these Islamic partisans operated under the protection and sponsorship of rogue Arab states ruled by ruthless and cunning dictators.

...

As timely and familiar as these events may seem, they occurred more than two centuries ago. The president was Thomas Jefferson, and the terrorists were the Barbary pirates.

Unfortunately, many of the easy lessons to be plucked from this experience have yet to be fully learned. The Barbary states, modern-day Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, are collectively known to the Arab world as the *Maghrib* (“Land of Sunset”), denoting Islam’s territorial holdings west of Egypt.

The *Maghrib* served as a staging ground for Muslim piracy throughout the Mediterranean, and even parts of the Atlantic. America’s struggle with the terror of Muslim piracy from the Barbary states began soon after the 13 colonies declared their independence from Britain in 1776, and continued for roughly four decades, finally ending in 1815.

Although there is much in the history of America’s wars with the Barbary pirates that is of direct relevance to the current “war on terror,” one aspect seems particularly instructive to informing our understanding of contemporary Islamic terrorists. Very simply put, the Barbary pirates were committed, militant Muslims who meant to do exactly what they said.

Take, for example, the 1786 meeting in London of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja, the Tripolitan ambassador to Britain. As American ambassadors to France and Britain respectively, Jefferson and Adams met with Ambassador Adja to negotiate a peace treaty and protect the United States from the threat of Barbary piracy.

These future United States presidents questioned the ambassador as to why his government was so hostile to the new American republic even though America had done nothing to provoke any such animosity. Ambassador Adja answered them, as they reported to the Continental Congress, “that it was founded on the Laws of their Prophet, that it was written in their Koran, that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found, and to make slaves of all they could take as Prisoners, and that every Musselman [Muslim] who should be slain in Battle was sure to go to Paradise.”

Sound familiar?

The candor of that Tripolitan ambassador is admirable in its way, but it certainly foreshadows the equally forthright declarations of, say, the Shiite Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in the 1980s and the Sunni Osama bin Laden in the 1990s, not to mention the many pronouncements of their various minions, admirers, and followers. Note that America’s Barbary experience took place well before colonialism entered the lands of Islam, before there were any oil interests dragging the U.S. into the fray, and long before the founding of the state of Israel.

America became entangled in the Islamic world and was dragged into a war with the Barbary states simply because of the religious obligation within Islam to bring belief to

those who do not share it. This is not something limited to “radical” or “fundamentalist” Muslims.

...

The Barbary pirates were not a “radical” or “fundamentalist” sect that had twisted religious doctrine for power and politics, or that came to recast aspects of their faith out of some form of insanity. They were simply a North African warrior caste involved in an armed *jihād* — a mainstream Muslim doctrine. This is how the Muslims understood Barbary piracy and armed *jihād* at the time, and, indeed, how the physical *jihād* has been understood since Mohammed revealed it as the prophecy of Allah.

Obviously, and thankfully, not every Muslim is obligated, or even really inclined, to take up this *jihād*. Indeed, many Muslims are loath to personally embrace this physical struggle. But that does not mean they are all opposed to such a struggle any more than the choice of many Westerners not to join the police force or the armed services means they do not support those institutions.”¹

End of Joshua E. London excerpt.

However, Robert Spencer, author of several excellent books on Islam, including *The Truth About Muhammad* and *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam and the Crusades*, disagrees.

Spencer says that “In Islamic law, jihad warfare may be defensive or offensive. Jihad is ordinarily *fard kifaya* – an obligation on the Muslim community as a whole, from which some are freed if others take it up. Jihad becomes *fard ayn*, or obligatory on every individual Muslim to aid in any way he can, if a Muslim land is attacked.” That is what jihadists argue today – that America’s presence in Iraq and Afghanistan makes jihad *fard ayn*, or obligatory on every individual Muslim.

Have you been Ahmadinejadized?

So much of our focus in the United States has been on the War in Iraq that many of us are unaware of the threat that the sovereign Islamic Republic of Iran represents to both Israel and America.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became the president of Iran on August 6, 2005. Shortly thereafter, he spoke at the “World without Zionism” conference in Tehran to an audience that includes representatives of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, members of the Society for the Defense of the Palestinian Nation and hundreds of members of the Islamic Students Union.

¹ <http://www.nationalreview.com/script/printpage.p?ref=/comment/london200512160955.asp>

The poster that adorned the podium at that conference depicted the Earth in the top of an hourglass, with a large grain of sand that bore the Star of David descending rapidly into the chamber below. This, of course, depicts the fall of the nation of Israel. The poster has been replicated and is on the podcast page of our website at thinkagain.us. If you haven't seen this poster, I would strongly encourage you to take a look at it. What should immediately strike you is the broken grain of sand that **already** sits at the bottom of the hourglass. Its red, white and blue design can represent nothing other than the collapsed nation of America.

During this conference, in which he was forthrightly and honestly speaking to his supporters, Ahmadinejad said, "The issue of this [World without Zionism] conference is very valuable. In this very grave war, many people are trying to scatter grains of desperation and hopelessness regarding the struggle between the Islamic world and the front of the infidels, and in their hearts they want to empty the Islamic world. They ask, 'Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism?' But you had best know that this slogan and this goal are attainable, and can surely be achieved."

"When the dear Imam [Khomeini] said that the [Shah's] regime must go, and that we demand a world without dependent governments, many people who claimed to have political and other knowledge [asked], "Is it possible [that the Shah's regime can be toppled]?"

"That day, when Imam [Khomeini] began his movement, all the powers supported the [Shah's] corrupt regime... and said it was not possible. However, our nation stood firm, and by now we have, for 27 years, been living without a government dependent on America. Imam [Khomeini] said: 'The rule of the East [U.S.S.R.] and of the West [U.S.] should be ended.' But the weak people who saw only the tiny world near them did not believe it.

"Nobody believed that we would one day witness the collapse of Eastern Imperialism [the U.S.S.R.], and said it was an iron regime. But in our short lifetime we have witnessed how this regime collapsed in such a way that we must look for it in libraries, and we can find no literature about it.

"Imam [Khomeini] said that Saddam [Hussein] must go, and that he would be humiliated in a way that was unprecedented. And what do you see today? A man who, 10 years ago, spoke as proudly as if he would live for eternity is today chained by the feet, and is now being tried in his own country...

"Imam [Khomeini] said: 'This regime that is occupying Jerusalem must be eliminated from the pages of history.' This sentence is very wise. The issue of Palestine is not an issue on which we can compromise... Very soon, this stain of disgrace [i.e. Israel] will be purged from the center of the Islamic world – and this is attainable."²

² <http://memri.org/bin/opener.cgi?Page=archives&ID=SP101305>

There is much in the preceding narrative to cause us to question the mindset of someone who would say such things. But in order to understand what lies behind these claims, we cannot listen to Ahmadinejad's words with Western ears; we need to understand the Shiite mindset.

First we need to clarify the difference between Sunni and Shiite Islam. Americans have heard these terms used for years in the media, yet rarely are they ever clearly defined.

The fundamental difference between the two lies in each sect's view of the proper chain of authority following the death of Muhammad. After Muhammad died, his close followers elected a leader to succeed him. This leader and subsequent elected leaders are accepted by Sunni Muslims, by far the largest group, comprising about 85% of Muslims worldwide.

Shi'a Islam comprises only about 15% of the world's Muslim population, but Shiites hold positions of power in certain Arab countries, most notably Iran and Syria. Shiite Muslims reject the elected successors to Muhammad, insisting that proper succession can be traced only through a direct blood lineage from Muhammad. Along this line of succession following Muhammad, there were twelve Imams that the Shiites accept. According to Shi'a literature and tradition, the twelfth Imam, known popularly as Imam Mahdi, disappeared in the year 874 at age 5 and went into occultation. Since then he has also popularly been referred to as The Hidden Imam.

At this point it is imperative that we discuss the Islamic doctrine of calculated deception, known as *taqiyyah*, and practiced primarily by Shiite Muslims. In support of this doctrine of deception, the Shi'a attribute the following to Abu Abdullah (Ja'far as-Sadiq):

“Nine-tenths of religion is Taqiyyah (dissimulation), hence one who does not dissimulate has no religion.”

For Shiite Muslims, lying is considered virtuous if its goal is the ultimate victory of Islam over Christians and Jews. The end justifies the means is an axiomatic idiom in Islam. Contrast this with the 9th Commandment of the Christians and Jews, “thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” (Exodus 20:16, KJV) Which would you say is a morally superior stance?

Let's take a critical look at President Ahmadinejad's “Message to the American People” dated November 28, 2006. Remember that for Ahmadinejad, *taqiyyah* is virtuous... His letter begins,

“In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, O Almighty God, bestow upon humanity the perfect human being promised to all by You, and make us among his followers.

Notice the phrase “the perfect human being” in this opening benediction. The perfect human being is a phrase used by Shi’a Muslims to refer to the Hidden Twelfth Imam, Imam Mahdi.

Ahmadinejad continues, “Noble Americans, Were we not faced with the activities of the US administration in this part of the world and the negative ramifications of those activities on the daily lives of our peoples, coupled with the many wars and calamities caused by the US administration as well as the tragic consequences of US interference in other countries; Were the American people not God-fearing, truth-loving, and justice-seeking, while the US administration actively conceals the truth and impedes any objective portrayal of current realities; And if we did not share a common responsibility to promote and protect freedom and human dignity and integrity; Then, there would have been little urgency to have a dialogue with you.”

There is so much in just this opening paragraph of Ahmadinejad’s letter that requires parsing out, not grammatically, but rather to read between the lines and interpret what is really trying to be communicated.

Remember that for Shi’a Muslims the end justifies the means. Taqiyyah is honorable if exercised for the cause of Allah. While the early lines of his opening paragraph place blame for virtually all conflict in the Middle East squarely on the shoulders of the Bush Administration, and may be accepted by many liberal Americans... the blatant use of taqiyyah should be obvious in the line, “And if we did not share a common responsibility to promote and protect freedom and human dignity and integrity.” It is the U.S. Constitution that provides its citizens freedom of speech, freedom of worship, and human dignity. If one speaks out boldly against Islam, or worse, leaves Islam and converts to Christianity, the penalty is death. This hardly promotes freedom.

The Qur’an provides for men to have up to four wives, whom they can beat indiscriminately. This hardly promotes human dignity.

And if taqiyyah is seen as virtuous, we have a serious difference of opinion on the definition of integrity.

Ahmadinejad goes on to say, “Our nation has always extended its hand of friendship to all other nations of the world.” Of course, that clearly doesn’t include Israel, since he goes on to enumerate the perceived crimes of the Zionist regime, which have been blindly supported by the Bush Administration.

It always gets my goat that the media represents Americans as wanting our troops home now, regardless of the outcome in Iraq. While I’m not convinced that the majority of Americans want a complete unconditional withdrawal of our soldiers from Iraq, I am convinced that the Iranian leaders want this. If we leave Iraq without assuring its stability, Iran will easily be able to move in and occupy its newest territory, West Iran (the nation formerly known as Iraq).

Ahmadinejad concludes his message to the American people with some suggestions (as though he is the appropriate person to offer suggestions to the U.S.):

He says, “Now that Iraq has a Constitution and an independent Assembly and Government, would it not be more beneficial to bring the U.S. officers and soldiers home, and to spend the astronomical U.S. military expenditures in Iraq for the welfare and prosperity of the American people?” Democrats who believe that this would be in our best interest should pause to consider who it is that agrees with them here. Could it possibly be that Ahmadinejad has an ulterior motive for making this recommendation?

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