

## Chapter 6



# ISLAMIC LAW: LIE, STEAL, AND KILL

**N**ot only does Islam command warfare against unbelievers and their subjugation under Islamic rule; it also—as we have already seen in part—sanctions lying, stealing, and killing in order to advance Islam. In fact, Islam doesn't have a moral code analogous to the Ten Commandments; the idea that Islam shares the general moral outlook of Judaism and Christianity is another PC myth. In Islam, virtually anything is acceptable if it fosters the growth of Islam.

### **Lying: It's wrong—except when it isn't**

Muhammad minced no words about the necessity of telling the truth: “It is obligatory for you to tell the truth, for truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to Paradise, and the man who continues to speak the truth and endeavours to tell the truth is eventually recorded as truthful with Allah, and beware of telling of a lie for telling of a lie leads to obscenity and obscenity leads to Hell-Fire, and the person who keeps telling lies and endeavours to tell a lie is recorded as a liar with Allah.”<sup>1</sup>

However, as with so many other Islamic principles, this is largely a matter between believers. When it comes to unbelievers—particularly those who are at war with Muslims—Muhammad enunciated a quite different principle: “War is deceit.”

### **Guess what?**

- ◆ Islam's only overarching moral principle is “if it's good for Islam, it's right.”
- ◆ Islam allows for lying, as well as stealing and killing, in certain circumstances.
- ◆ This leads to large-scale deception campaigns today.

Specifically, he taught that lying was permissible in battle.<sup>2</sup> Thus were born two enduring Islamic principles: the permissibility of political assassination for the honor of the Prophet and his religion and an allowance for the practice of deception in wartime. The doctrines of religious deception (*taqiyya* and *kitman*) are most often identified with Shi'ite Islam and are ostensibly rejected by Sunnis (over 85 percent of Muslims worldwide) because they were sanctioned by the Prophet. However, they can still be found in traditions that Sunni Muslims consider most reliable.

Also, religious deception (practiced on hapless unbelievers) is taught by the Qur'an itself, telling Muslims: "Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers. If any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah; except by way of precaution, that ye may guard yourselves from them" (Qur'an 3:28). In other words, don't make friends with unbelievers except to "guard yourselves from them": Pretend to be their friends so that you can strengthen yourself against them. The distinguished Qur'anic commentator Ibn Kathir explains that, in this verse, "Allah prohibited His believing servants from becoming supporters of the disbelievers, or to take them as comrades with whom they develop friendships, rather than the believers." However, exempted from this rule were "those believers who in some areas or times fear for their safety from the disbelievers. In this case, such believers are allowed to show friendship to the disbelievers outwardly, but never inwardly."<sup>3</sup>

When Shi'ite Muslims were persecuted by Sunnis, they developed the doctrine of *taqiyya*, or concealment: They could lie about what they believed, denying aspects of their faith that were offensive to Sunnis. This practice is sanctioned by the Qur'an warning Muslims that those who forsake Islam will be consigned to Hell—except those forced to do so, but who remain true Muslims inwardly: "Any one who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters unbelief—except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in faith—but such as open their breast to unbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty" (Qur'an

16:106). Closely related to this is the doctrine of *kitman*, or mental reservation, which is telling the truth, but not the whole truth, with an intention to mislead. Although these doctrines are commonly associated with Shi'ites, Sunnis have also practiced them throughout Islamic history, because of their Qur'anic foundation.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Kathir, who was no Shi'ite, explains that “the scholars agreed that if a person is forced into disbelief, it is permissible for him to either go along with them in the interests of self-preservation, or to refuse.”<sup>5</sup>

Jihadists today have spoken of the usefulness of deceptive practices. Remember that the next time you see a Muslim spokesman on television professing his friendship with non-Muslim Americans and his loyalty to the United States. Of course, he may be telling the truth—but he may not be telling the whole truth or he may be just lying. And it's virtually certain that whoever is conducting the interview will not ask him about this passage of the Qur'an.

But what constitutes force in this case? Ibn Kathir seems to envision only physical force, but force can take many forms. Might Islamic spokesmen in this country feel constrained to downplay or deny aspects of their religion that unbelievers might find unpalatable?

## **Theft: It all depends on who you're stealing from**

Islamic law is notorious for mandating harsh punishments—and perhaps most notable is amputation for theft: “As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands. It is the reward of their own deeds, an exemplary punishment from Allah. Allah is Mighty, Wise” (Qur'an 5:38).

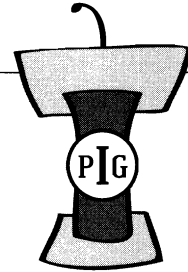
But here again, the situation is different when it comes to unbelievers who are perceived as warring against Islam. We know that the Qur'an makes laws for the division of the spoils of war, mandating that a fifth go to Allah and charitable works (Qur'an 8:41). And after Muhammad signed the Treaty of Hudaibiyya with the Quraysh (see chapter one), he

reassured his confused and disappointed followers with the promise of more spoils: “Allah promiseth you much booty that ye will capture, and hath given you this in advance, and hath withheld men’s hands from you, that it may be a token for the believers, and that He may guide you on a right path.” (Qur’an 48:18–20). The instances in which Muslims actually captured booty in raids are numerous.

### **Murder: It all depends on whom you’re killing**

Muslim apologists like to quote Qur’an 5:32: “Whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind.” However, this oft-quoted verse is not actually the all-encompassing prohibition of murder that it may seem. For one thing, it is addressed to the “Children of Israel” and set in the past; it is not addressed to Muslims. It actually comes as part of a warning to Jews not to make war against Muhammad, or they will face terrible punishment. The point is that Allah warned the Children of Israel not to spread “mischief in the land,” and yet they continued to do so:

On that account We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them Our messengers with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land. The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the



## John Quincy Adams on Islam:

“In the seventh century of the Christian era, a wandering Arab of the lineage of Hagar [i.e., Muhammad], the Egyptian, combining the powers of transcendent genius, with the preternatural energy of a fanatic, and the fraudulent spirit of an impostor, proclaimed himself as a messenger from Heaven, and spread desolation and delusion over an extensive portion of the earth. Adopting from the sublime conception of the Mosaic law, the doctrine of one omnipotent God; he connected indissolubly with it, the audacious falsehood, that he was himself his prophet and apostle. Adopting from the new Revelation of Jesus, the faith and hope of immortal life, and of future retribution, he humbled it to the dust by adapting all the rewards and sanctions of his religion to the gratification of the sexual passion. He poisoned the sources of human felicity at the fountain, by degrading the condition of the female sex, and the allowance of polygamy; and he declared undistinguishing and exterminating war, as a part of his religion, against all the rest of mankind. *THE ESSENCE OF HIS DOCTRINE WAS VIOLENCE AND LUST: TO EXALT THE BRUTAL OVER THE SPIRITUAL PART OF HUMAN NATURE.* . . . Between these two religions, thus contrasted in their characters, a war of twelve hundred years has already raged. The war is yet flagrant . . . While the merciless and dissolute dogmas of the false prophet shall furnish motives to human action, there can never be peace upon earth, and good will towards men.” (Emphasis in the original)

land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter. (Qur’an 5:31–33)

In fact, in light of the Qur’an’s bellicose commands to “slay the unbelievers” (9:5; 2:191), it should be clear that in this case, as in so many others, there is one standard for Muslims and another for non-Muslims. Indeed, the Qur’an stipulates that “it is not for a believer to kill a believer unless it be by mistake” (4:92), but it never makes a similar statement regarding unbelievers.

This led to a predictable double standard in Islamic law. “Killing without right,” according to the Shafi’i school of Sunni Muslim jurisprudence,

“is, after unbelief, one of the very worst enormities.” It stipulates that “retaliation is obligatory . . . against anyone who kills a human being purely intentionally and without right.” However, no retaliation is permitted in the case of “a Muslim killing a non-Muslim.”<sup>6</sup>

An Iranian Sufi leader, Sheikh Sultanhussein Tabandeh, who wielded considerable influence in fashioning the jurisprudence of Khomeini’s Islamic Republic, wrote *A Muslim Commentary on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. While arguing for capital punishment if a Muslim is killed, Tabandeh argues against it if the murderer is Muslim and the victim non-Muslim: “Since Islam regards non-Muslims as on a lower level of belief and conviction, if a Muslim kills a non-Muslim . . . then his punishment must not be the retaliatory death, since the faith and conviction he possesses is loftier than that of the man slain. A fine only may be exacted from him.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Universal moral values? Can’t find them.**

In his landmark book *The Abolition of Man*, the Christian apologist C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) assembled examples of what he called the Tao, or the Natural Law: principles held by people in a wide variety of cultures and civilizations. These principles include “Duties to Parents, Elders, Ances-tors”; “Duties to Children and Posterity”; “The Law of Good Faith and Veracity”; “The Law of Magnanimity”; and more. He illustrates the uni-versality of these principles by quotations from sources as diverse as the Old Testament, the New Testament, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the Bhagavad Gita, Confucius’ *Analects*, the writings of Australian aborigines, and many oth-ers. Completely missing are any quotations from the Qur’an or other Mus- lim sources.

This omission may be due to Lewis somehow lacking knowledge of Islam. Yet this is highly unlikely, given when Lewis lived and the role his country, the United Kingdom, played in the Middle East and Asia. Cer-

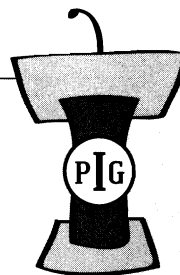
tainly, you would have thought, he could have found illustrations for some of his principles from the Qur'an. The problem for Lewis may have been that Islam simply does not uphold what he calls "The Law of General Beneficence": One is not to be charitable except to fellow believers. The unpleasant fact is that Islam simply does not teach the Golden Rule.<sup>8</sup> Jesus's dictum that "whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Matthew 7:12) appears in virtually every religious tradition on the planet—except Islam. The Qur'an and Hadith make such a sharp distinction between believers and unbelievers that there is no room for any commandment of general beneficence. Unbelievers are to be questioned, suspected, resisted, and fought. That is all. Not tolerated. Never loved.

This is what sets Islam sharply apart from other religious traditions. It is impossible to imagine Sheikh Tabandeh's unembarrassed justification for punishing those who kill unbelievers less harshly than those who kill believers in any modern religious teaching, other than Islam.

### ***PC Myth: Islam forbids the killing of the innocent***

In the wake of the September 11 attacks, many Muslim spokesmen and Middle East analysts in the West assured us that Islam forbids taking innocent life, and that to the vast majority of Muslims around the world,

## **Muhammad vs. Jesus**



"You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire."

**Jesus (Matthew 5:21–22)**

"Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers in fight, smite at their necks; at length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly on them: thereafter is the time for either generosity or ransom, until the war lays down its burdens.... But those who are slain in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost."

**Qur'an 47:4**



## A Book You're Not Supposed to Read

*Umdat al-Salik*, translated by Nuh Ha Mim Keller into English as *Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*: Amana Publications, 1994. This is a Shafi'i legal manual intended as a handy guide to Islamic law for lay Muslims. It is endorsed by Al-Azhar University, Sunni Islam's most revered authority: Al-Azhar's Islamic Research Academy certifies that this book "conforms to the practice and faith of the orthodox Sunni community."<sup>10</sup>

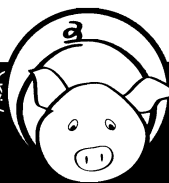
Osama bin Laden's murder of three thousand people in the World Trade Center towers was not fulfilling the requirements of Islamic jihad, but a crime against humanity.

Yet Islamic law is not clear-cut in its condemnation of the killing of non-combatants. It prohibits the killing of women and children "unless they are fighting against the Muslims."<sup>9</sup> This has been widely interpreted as allowing civilians to be killed if they are perceived as somehow aiding the war effort. This is one basis for the common assertion that there are no civilians in Israel. Some Muslim leaders have argued for that on the basis that everyone, simply by virtue of being in Israel, is trespassing on Muslim land and is thus at

war with Islam. Others, like the internationally famous Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, are more nuanced: "Israeli women are not like women in our society because Israeli women are militarised. Secondly, I consider this type of martyrdom operation as indication of justice of Allah almighty. Allah is just. Through his infinite wisdom he has given the weak what the strong do not possess and that is the ability to turn their bodies into bombs like the Palestinians do."<sup>11</sup>

"May Allah rip out his spine from his back and split his brains in two, and then put them both back, and then do it over and over again. Amen."

—"praise" for the author on [RevivingIslam.com](http://RevivingIslam.com)



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- ❖ The Crusades were defensive conflicts
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- ❁ The Qur’an commands Muslims to make war on Jews and Christians
- ❁ The much-ballyhoed “Golden Age” of Islamic culture was largely inspired by non-Muslims
- ❁ What is known today as the “Islamic world” was created by a series of brutal conquests of non-Muslim lands
- ❁ The Crusades were not acts of unprovoked aggression by Europe against the Islamic world, but a delayed response to centuries of Muslim aggression
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