

Are Radical Muslims representing True Islam?

Introduction

The world has witnessed many atrocities against Muslims and non-Muslims alike, committed by people who claim to act in the name of Allah. What is the teaching of Islam on how to treat opponents of Islam? This question will be explored by looking at Muslim sources in the Quran, the life of Muhammad, the Hadith (traditions about the words and deeds of the prophet), early Islamic history, and beliefs of radical as well as moderate Muslims. Readers are invited to answer questions which will enable them to come to their own conclusion based on the evidence submitted.

As part of their response, moderate Muslims sometimes say: "The Quran and the Bible both contain verses about war and violence. The Quran has been misunderstood by organisations such as 'Islamic State', 'Al Qaeda', 'Boko Haram', etc. and should not be used as a justification for committing violence."

During the about 1400 years covered by the Old Testament books of the Bible, there were occasions when God commanded the Israelites to take up arms, fight and indeed kill. However, in contrast to the Quran, wars were only to be conducted at a limited time in a small geographical area during their history. The objective as stated in the Old Testament was to punish for example the exceedingly sinful Canaanites and to take over their land. Whenever God's chosen people fell into sin themselves later, he punished them too. Sometimes this was done by allowing foreign armies to conquer the Israelites and take them into exile.

This occurred to illustrate to the world that God is Holy and cannot be disobeyed without dire consequences. It also served for mankind to realize that a relationship with the Creator was only possible in his way. It put sacrifices of animals for the forgiveness of sins at the centre. We are now living in the time of the New Testament where Jesus, as the final perfect sacrifice calls for everyone's repentance and faith in him. He then commands his followers to love their enemies and forgive them. His kingdom has no geographical borders anymore but is found wherever in the world his will is being done.

The fact that in today's age a Christian individual or group is almost never committing physical aggression in the name of Jesus Christ strongly supports this interpretation. The sad chapter of the Crusades in the middle ages can clearly be identified as having nothing to do with true Christian religion and everything with misguided politics of corruption and power. Very regrettably, the rapid decline of the practicing Christian faith in the West has led to judgemental and hypocritical Churches, nominal Christians, selfish societies and politics. It is clear that many of the good things¹ found in the West (e.g. social security education, rights of minorities, etc) were the fruit of a once vibrant faith in Christ. Unfortunately, the crop is shrivelling away because it is increasingly cut off from its root.

What about the teaching of Islam? Is it violent, peaceful or both?

¹ For more details see, <http://www.christianityexplained.net/explainedto/atheists/3.html>

Who to turn to in search of an answer

According to British government figures seventy four terror groups or organisations worldwide are banned under UK law as of 14th August 2014. About 70% of them claim to be Islamic and many have as their ultimate goal to establish an Islamic State governed by Shariah law.²

The official view of Western governments and the majority of law abiding Muslims all over the world is that these terrorists are not Muslims. Nevertheless, in an apparent contradiction they are given a copy of the Quran, the book of Muslims, when they are imprisoned.³ They have been called, 'radical Muslims'⁴ (=going back to the roots of one's faith). Obama called the ISIL fighters, 'religiously motivated fanatics.'⁵ Prime Minister Cameron described them as 'not Muslims but monsters.'⁶

In their efforts to keep unity, governments try to be 'politically correct.' As seen in the rather embarrassing examples above, they are not always successful in doing so. At any rate, due to their sensitive position and task, it is unreasonable to look to politicians for an answer to the question as to whether the Jihadists in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere are Muslims or not.

What about the majority of law abiding Muslims all over the world? Do they know the answer to that very urgent question of these troubled times? With all due respect, like many people who call themselves 'Christians' but have little idea about what they are supposed to believe, so it is a similar situation with the majority of Muslims. The only authorities who can lead to an answer are the Muslim scholars. The word, 'lead' is deliberately used because even they are divided in their opinions.

Where do we go from here? Who among those scholars represent true Islam? With the advent of the Internet and social media considerable power has been given to the people. They can now find the answer to the question, "Are radical Muslims representing true Islam," themselves. Here is how they are able to do this: In what follows Islamic primary sources will be studied, applying commonly accepted logic. Questions will then be asked which will enable the reader to arrive at the right answer regarding the true teaching of Islam.

How to deal with opposition against Islam according to the Quran⁷

There are numerous peaceful verses in Surahs (chapters) given during the early Meccan⁸ period to the people that call for patience when dealing with those who were against Islam. (Surah 73:10,1; 52:45,47,48; 109:1,2,6, etc.)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>

³ http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7995960/ns/us_news-security/t/quran-mishandling-verified-guantanamo/#.VCRzRZ_-iA

⁴ <http://conservativetribune.com/woman-publicly-confronts-radical-muslims-to-defend-her-hometown-watch/>

⁵ <http://www.politico.com/story/2014/09/obama-un-address-111287.html>

⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2014/sep/14/isis-muslims-monsters-david-cameron-iraq-video>

⁷ All verses of the Quran can be accessed here: quran.com

⁸ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/396226/Muhammad/251796/The-advent-of-the-revelation-and-the-Meccan-period>

Nevertheless, several months after the arrival of the Muslims in Medina they started looting Meccan caravans⁹ passing nearby. Consequently, the tribe of the Quraish from Mecca attacked the Muslims a number of times, beginning with the battle of Badr in 624. Muslims were then first given permission to defend themselves by fighting and killing if necessary (Surah 22:39-41). Later this defensive Jihad was not just permitted but commanded against other Arabs who pretended to be Muslims (Surah 2:216,217, 190-194).

Once the Meccans surrendered in 630 AD, most of the pagans in the city became Muslims. However, since Jews and Christians generally did not accept the prophet of Islam, they now became enemies to be actively fought against, along with the pagan unbelievers who did not surrender. (Surahs 9:1-6,11,12,14-16,19-22,28-31,38,39,41, 52,73,81-96,111,122,123; 5:36-38,54)

In case of differences, the teaching of Surahs given earlier were generally replaced by that found in Surahs given later. This is known as the doctrine of abrogation.¹⁰ Since Surah 9 was written in Medina, its commands for offensive Jihad replace the tolerant teachings found in earlier Surahs mentioned above.

A summary of what it means to be a Muslim according to the Quran is found in Surah 33:21,33:

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad SAW) you have a good example to follow... ..and obey Allah and His Messenger..."

How to deal with opposition against Islam according to Muhammad

During 622 to 632 Muhammad either sent out or went on seventy four expeditions, raids and wars.¹¹ These include a few negotiations, violent expeditions, small assassination hit squads, the conquest of Mecca with 10,000 jihadists, and the planned but not executed confrontation of Byzantine Christians with 30,000 holy warriors in Tabuk.

How did Muhammad treat his enemies? The earliest Islamic biography by Ibn Ishaq tells stories of how, once he was in power in Medina, the prophet of Islam arranged for men and women who criticised him to be killed.¹² On one occasion he asked hundreds of Jewish men who stood up against him to dig their own graves. Afterwards he beheaded them. Their wives and children were sold into slavery.¹³ Some early Muslims who changed

⁹ wikiislam.net/wiki/Concerns_with_Islam:_Immoral,_Unjustified,_and_Preemptive_Warfare_and_Violence

¹⁰ <http://islamicencyclopedia.org/public/index/topicDetail/id/48> An-Nasikh -wal- Mansukh, by Ibn Khuzyamh states 113 verses are abrogated by the Sword verse (9: 5), and 9 verses are abrogated by the Fighting verse (9: 29): "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day." See also Sahih al-Bukhari, 6:60:34,53,68 for examples of abrogation.

¹¹ *Muhammad at Medina*, Watt, pp. 2; 339-43

¹² *Sirat Rasul Allah* by Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad*, translated by A. Guillaume, 2002, pp. 364-368 and pp. 675-676: Asma and Ibn Ka'b are murdered for writing poems against Muhammad and Islam. Pp. 550-551: Muhammad gave orders to kill Al-Hawayrith and Sara for insulting him. Abdullah's two girls were to be killed for singing songs about Muhammad. For an online version of this book see:

https://archive.org/stream/TheLifeOfMohammedGuillaume/The_Life_Of_Mohammed_Guillaume#page/n255/mode/2up

¹³ See *Ibid.*, p. 464

their minds about Islam died after Muhammad gave the command to kill those who turn away from Islam.¹⁴

How to deal with opposition against Islam according to the Hadith

Allah's Apostle said: "I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, and offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity, so if they perform that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islamic laws and then their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allah." (Bukhari¹⁵, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 24: Narrated by Ibn 'Umar)

The most reliable hadith¹⁶ collection of Bukhari confirms the teaching from the Quran which progressively moved from tolerance, defensive to offensive fighting against unbelievers (Vol. 1:35, Vol. 4:41-42,44-46,49-50,53,65,66, 72,73,80,96,127,131, 137,146,147, 162b,175,179,182, 186,192, 193,195,196,198,210,216,220,248,258-261,264,267,269, 270,280b,283,286,288,317. Vol.9:50.57)

How to deal with opposition against Islam according to early Islamic history

The following passages on how Islam spread after the death of Muhammad are copied from Islamcity.com. The website apparently, "provides a non-sectarian, comprehensive and holistic view of Islam and Muslims to a global audience":¹⁷

"Umar extended Islam's temporal rule over Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Persia in what from a purely military standpoint were astonishing victories. Within four years after the death of the Prophet the Muslim state had extended its sway over all of Syria and had, at a famous battle fought during a sandstorm near the River Yarmuk, blunted the power of the Byzantines - whose ruler Heraclius had shortly before disdainfully rejected the letter from the unknown Prophet of Arabia."¹⁸

Did those countries threaten Islam in any meaningful way? Did Muslims have to defend themselves against them? The Byzantine empire "... was also near exhaustion,"¹⁹ after narrowly defeating the Persian army during their long war that lasted from 602-628 AD. Does the fact that Muhammed was called 'the unknown Prophet of Arabia,' prove that they were no threat to Muslims? Can the same be said about the next passage:

"..... In Europe, meanwhile, the Arabs had passed into Spain, defeated the Visigoths, and by 713 had reached Narbonne in France. In the next decades, raiding parties continually made forays into France and in 732 reached as far as the Loire Valley, only 170 miles

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 550-551 Some of these stories and additional ones are also found in Sahih al-Bukhari: e.g: Volume 5, Book 59, Number 369, 378, 462, 448, 582, 662 Volume 4, Book 52, Number 286, Book 56, Number 817, 826, Volume 9, Book 84, Number 57

¹⁵ http://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_1_02.php

¹⁶ Traditions about the sayings and doings of Muhammad, witnessed by his followers and passed on through reliable believers.

¹⁷ <http://www.islamicity.com/support/AboutUs.asp>

¹⁸ <http://www.islamicity.com/education/ihame/default.asp?Destination=/education/ihame/3.asp>

¹⁹ <http://notesinhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/battle-of-nineveh-627ad.html>

from Paris. There, at the Battle of Tours, or Poitiers, the Arabs were finally turned back by Charles Martel.²⁰

One also wonders why the web site www.Islamcity.com mentions little about the fact that the era of the first four caliphs was riddled by Muslim on Muslim violence when it came to the question of succession to their leaders. Umar, the 2nd caliph was murdered in 644. Uthman, his successor was assassinated twelve years later. Then Ali, cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, was murdered. Husain, the son of Ali, being the leader of the Shi'ites, was killed alongside his followers in 680. Seventy years later, the Umayyad Caliphate, was brutally eliminated by fellow Muslims. The new leader of the so called Abbasid caliphate is known as "al-Saffah,²¹" which translates as, the 'One who pours out blood.'

How to deal with opposition against Islam according to radical Muslims

The science of applying and interpreting Sharia, (Islamic law based on the Quran and the hadith) is known as Fiqh²² and done by qualified judges and legal scholars. During the first two hundred years after Muhammad's death in AD 632, four main Sunni schools of Fiqh emerged. They were led by these scholars:

- Shafi (d. 820). He lived mostly in Mecca, Arabia but was buried in Cairo, Egypt.
- Malik (d. 795). He lived in Medina, Arabia.
- Abu Hanifa (d. 767). He lived in Kufa, Iraq.
- Ibn Hanbal (d. 855). He lived in Baghdad, Iraq.

Radical Muslims usually follow the Shafi school of thought that allows them to still remain within orthodox Sunni Islam.

The Kharijites²³ ('Those who go out') were the earliest major sect that appeared in the history of Islam, less than 30 years after the death of Muhammad. They opposed Ali and Mu'awiyah. Both wanted to become the next leader of the Muslim community. According to the Kharijites, their ambition for power made them compromise the teachings of Islam. The influence of these Muslim reformers lasted about 500 years and is still found within various groups today. The followers believed in a literal interpretation of the Quran, promoting the acting upon Allah's word not the mere belief in it. Accordingly, those who did not agree with them were killed. Due to their zeal for the Quran the Kharijites were not called disbelievers by other Muslims.

Moving through history there are a number of other Islamic thinkers who have influenced Muslim thought. These include **Ibn Taymiyah**²⁴ (1263 – 1328) who said that in order to be a true Muslim one needs to follow the Quran and what the prophet of Islam said and did about it.

²⁰ <http://www.islamcity.com/education/ihame/default.asp?Destination=/education/ihame/4.asp>

²¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/As-Saffah>

²² <http://www.onislam.net/english/shariah/shariah-and-humanity/shariah-and-life/457831-what-is-fiqh-islam-shariah-law.html?Life=>

²³ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/316391/Kharijite>

²⁴ <http://sunnahonline.com/library/biographies/154-taymiyyah>

Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab²⁵ (1703-1792) from Saudi Arabia and **Shah Waliullah** (1703-1762) took up his ideas. Wahab stayed in Saudi Arabia and aligned himself with the Ibn Saud family. They conquered most of the Arab tribes and created Saudi Arabia. Their spiritual, theological authority came from Wahab and is now known as Wahhabism²⁶.

Waliullah went to Pakistan and founded many Madrassas (Islamic schools) based on Wahhabism. In 1926 Muhammad Ilyas al Kandhlawy²⁷ founded the Tablighi Jamaat with a membership of about 80 millions today. Maulana Abu Ala Maududi²⁸ founded the Jamaat-e-Islami in 1940. They graduated about 1.7 Million students up until 2014, known as the Taliban. Both groups are based on Wahhabi teaching.

Hassan al Bana²⁹ (1906-1949) founded the Muslim Brotherhood. His student was Sayed Qutub³⁰ who died in 1961. He wrote 'In the shade of the Quran,' a verse for verse commentary of the Quran that became the textbook for all radical Muslims around the world and 'Milestones.' His students were Ayman Zawahiri founder of 'Islamic Jihad' and Osama Bin Laden (Al Queda). Out of them came **Hezbollah, Hamas, Muhajiroun, Hizb ul Tahir....** They all use the same teaching: Follow the Quran based on the interpretation and example of the prophet of Islam.

Yusef al Qaradawi³¹ is part of the Muslim brotherhood, and was trained by Sayed Qutub. He lectures regularly about Islam on Al Jazeera TV. He believes in suicide bombers, wife beating and lashing homosexuals. In 2004 Ken Livingstone brought him to London, believing he was a moderate Muslim cleric...

Abu Baker Al Baghdadi has a PhD in Islamic Studies from Baghdad Islamic University.³² He is the self proclaimed Kalifah behind the Islamic State (IS). They want to enforce the conservative Islamic traditions found in the Quran, the hadith and in the example of the prophet of Islam as described above.

How to deal with opposition against Islam according to moderate Muslims

Native speakers tell us that the term "Moderate Muslim" is not known in today's Arabic language. Westerners use it in the belief that surely there must be an alternative to Islam as it is presented literally in the Quran, the life of the prophet and early Islamic history. Some are rightfully questioning the wisdom behind the term since it implies that Islam is not usually moderate.³³

There are, however, contemporary Arab words to describe the conduct of moderate Muslims. They want to be "reformist", "secular" or "modernizing". They believe that Islam

²⁵ <http://www.ahya.org/amm/modules.php?name=Sections&op=viewarticle&artid=180>

²⁶ <http://www.sunnah.org/articles/Wahhabiarticleedit.htm>

²⁷ <http://www.central-mosque.com/index.php/History/shaykh-maulana-muhammad-ilyas-kandhlawi-ra.html>

²⁸ <http://storyofpakistan.com/maulana-abu-ala-maududi/>

²⁹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/256466/Hasan-al-Banna>

³⁰ <http://www.islam101.com/history/people/century20/syedQutb.htm>

³¹ <http://themuslim500.com/profile/sheikh-dr-yusuf-al-qaradawi>

³² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr_al-Baghdadi#cite_note-Abu-7

³³ <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/118391/troubling-phrase-moderate-muslims-only-empowers-islamophobes>

can be made more compatible with the contemporary world. Such attempts were first made by the Mu'tazilites of Baghdad in the 9th century. Eventually, for almost a thousand years what became known as orthodox Sunni Islam prevailed. Reform movements began to appear again as a reaction to advanced Western civilizations and colonialism early in the 19th century. The next century saw the rise of Nationalism in the Middle East and yet more attempts to reform Islam (e.g. the founding of the secular Turkish Republic, independence from UK and France).

Nationalism flourished until Israel won the war against several Arab states in 1967. Since then the Muslim Brotherhood returned to success with their strategy, 'classical Islam is the solution.' The Arab Spring uprising that turned into 'Winter' reveals an ongoing power struggle between radical and moderate Islamic forces. One who claims to represent the latter is:

Sheikh Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri

His "Fatwa on Terrorism and Suicide Bombings" is highly recommended by many moderate Muslims. The foreword was written by Prof. John L. Esposito, another moderate Islamic scholar. The question that needs to be answered is how he can endorse it while making the following admissions in one of his own books (capital emphasis ours):

"Islamic law stipulates that IT IS A MUSLIM'S DUTY TO WAGE WAR NOT ONLY AGAINST THOSE WHO ATTACK MUSLIM TERRITORY, but also against polytheists, apostates, and the People of the Book (at first restricted to Jews and Christians but later extended to Zoroastrians and other faiths) WHO REFUSE MUSLIM RULE. Muslims gave these people two choices: conversion OR SUBMISSION TO MUSLIM RULE with the right to retain their religion AND PAY A POLL TAX (a common practice applied to outsiders, within and outside of Arabia). Muslim jurists saw jihad as a requirement in a world divided between what they called the dar al-Islam and the dar al-harb (LAND OF WAR). The Muslim community WAS REQUIRED TO ENGAGE IN THE STRUGGLE TO EXPAND THE DAR AL-ISLAM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD so that all of humankind would have the opportunity to live within a just political and social order. One school of law, the Shafi, posted a third category, the land of treaty (dar al-sulh), a territory that had concluded a truce with a Muslim government.

Other Quranic verses, sometimes referred to as the "sword verses," are quoted selectively TO LEGITIMATE UNCONDITIONAL WARFARE against unbelievers and were used BY JURISTS TO JUSTIFY GREAT EXPANSION. The argument, developed DURING THE PERIOD UNDER THE EARLY CALIPHS, a time when the ulama enjoyed royal patronage, WAS THAT THE SWORD VERSES ABROGATED ALL THE EARLIER VERSES THAT LIMITED JIHAD TO A DEFENSIVE WAR. "When the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush" (9:5). Yet the full intent of this verse, if it is used in isolation, can be overlooked. It is followed by: "But if they repent and fulfill their devotional obligations and pay the zakat [tax for alms] then let them go their way for God is forgiving and kind" (9:5). ALTHOUGH THIS VERSE HAS BEEN USED TO JUSTIFY OFFENSIVE JIHAD, it has generally been read as a call for peaceful relations unless there is interference with freedom of Muslims. The same is true of the following: "Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, Nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by

God and His Apostle, Nor hold the religion of truth (even if they are) of the People of the Book, Until they pay the tax with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (9:29).³⁴

...Quranic passages referring to jihad as armed struggle fall into two broad categories: defensive, those that emphasize fighting against aggression, AND OFFENSIVE OR EXPANSIONIST, a more general command to fight against all unbelievers and spread the message and public order Pax Islamica of Islam.³⁵

...If some feel a need to justify all jihads as defensive, others do not. Thus, Muslims who insist that the defense of Islam is the only justification for jihad, and that all of the wars in the early days of Islam were defensive, have been criticized by others who believe that the restriction of jihad to defensive wars alone is a product of European colonialism and an unwarranted accommodation to the West...

The common Western image is that Islam is a religion of the sword, that Muslims are required to use every means, including force and warfare, to spread and impose their faith. This issue, like others is subject to a spectrum of opinions. While most Muslim scholars have agreed that it is never justified to wage jihad against non-Muslims simply because of their faith or to convert them, some bluntly state, as Ibn Khaldun, an acclaimed Medieval Muslim historian, did: "In the Muslim community, holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and (the obligation) to convert everybody to Islam either BY PERSUASION OR BY FORCE." Other medieval authors, like their Christian counterparts, went even further, teaching that the purpose of jihad IS TO RID THE EARTH OF UNBELIEVERS."³⁶

Is it not revealing that Prof Esposito admits that it is ancient Muslim scholars and jurists, not Christians, Jews, or liberal scholars that have seen a basis within the Quran to mount offensive jihad? How do we know that he is more qualified than they were in interpreting the Quran and hadith?

Moreover, one wonders why almost all³⁷ of the Qur'an passages that radical Muslims use to justify their violence³⁸ are not being addressed in Dr ul Qadri's book, "Fatwa on Terrorism and Suicide Bombings"? While he does include an extensive condemnation of suicide bombing, Surah 9, verse 111 that recommends becoming a martyr is not discussed. Furthermore, if Dr ul Qadri is promoting moderate Islam, why did he work "... as a legal adviser to the Pakistani government in the shaping of anti-blasphemy laws that were recently used to arrest a mentally-challenged girl for allegedly burning the Koran?"³⁹

Community cohesion: An extreme dream of moderate Muslims?

³⁴ Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam, Oxford University Press, 2002, paperback, pp. 34-35; bold, capital, and underline emphasis ours

³⁵ Ibid., p. 65; underline and capital emphasis ours

³⁶ Ibid., p. 67; underline and capital emphasis ours

³⁷ Surah 2:191-193, for example, is mentioned once (p. 197) but offers no interpretation of, "slay them wherever you come upon them" or to "fight them, till there is no persecution and the religion is Allah's." Surah 8:60 is only mentioned in the "Index of Qur'an Verses," with no explanation.

³⁸ E.g. Surahs 4:89; 8:12,39; 9:5,29,123; 47:4

³⁹ <http://cphpost.dk/news/minister-cancels-appearance-at-anti-radicalism-conference.2632.html>

Most Muslims who attend Quran classes from a very young age are reading in their holy book that Christians allegedly worship three gods, that Mary is one of those gods⁴⁰, that God is Jesus⁴¹ and that Jesus is the son of God in a physical sense.⁴²

As a result Christians are understandably but wrongly looked at as polytheists, blasphemers, as people who hold false understandings and who are cursed⁴³ by God. How do moderates understand these verses and will it ever be possible to win Muslims who believe in the Quran for community cohesion? Can they be blamed for not being willing to bond and display a feeling of togetherness with the 59% of the population in England and Wales who claim to be Christians?⁴⁴

The above mentioned descriptions found in the Quran and consequently taught by Imams in the mosques, of course, do not accurately reflect the Biblical teaching, which has been held by the Christian church throughout the world, well before the beginning of the Islamic religion in the 6th century. However, the comments in the Quran may well be a justified reaction to false teaching held by some isolated heretic Christian cults, operating and being known in the Middle East at that time.⁴⁵ Is it not of crucial importance for the deepening of community cohesion with Muslims to make these facts known to them, and if so, how can it be done?

In light of the violent history of early Islam even admitted by moderate Muslim scholars and later unsuccessful reform attempts, further questions need to be asked.

1. Will it ever be possible to truly modernise Islam?
2. Since it is claimed that the prophet of Islam was a religious, military and political leader, can those who follow him really succeed in separating the three offices? Would that not destroy the very fabric of the messenger and his message?
3. Moderate Muslims frequently say that many verses in the Quran and the hadith used by radical Muslims to justify their brutal actions were descriptive, 'specific to a certain time and place which have since expired',⁴⁶ rather than prescriptive. Why were atrocities allowed during those days but not now? What made that time different from the one we live in? Who tells us what is allowed today if Muslim leaders have been divided for most of Islamic history?
4. Do moderate Muslims endorse the concept of physical jihad, the Sharia, and the caliphate today? The answer is, 'yes,' according to the open letter of Muslim scholars against the Islamic State.⁴⁷ What is moderate about these concepts since they are shared with radical Muslims and therefore give, " ideological oxygen"⁴⁸ to them?

⁴⁰ Sura 5:73-75,116 The Bible teaches that there is one unique God.

⁴¹ Surah 5:17

⁴² Surah 6:100-101, Surah 72:3. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Son of God in a spiritual sense only.

⁴³ Surah 9:30, Surah 1:7 (repeated at least 17 times as part of daily Muslim prayers)

⁴⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-religion.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wace/biodict.html?term=Collyridians>

⁴⁶ <http://lettertobaghdadi.com/index.php>

⁴⁷ <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2014/09/international-group-of-muslim-scholars-refutes-islamic-states-islamic-case-while-endorsing-jihad-sharia-caliphate>

⁴⁸ <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/commentaries/opinion/way-ahead> (see point 3)

5. Do moderate Muslims believe alongside the main Islamic schools of laws that an apostate from Islam has to be killed?⁴⁹ If the answer is, 'yes,' then again, it is difficult to see what should be moderate about such an opinion. If the answer is, 'no,' how is such a position justified within the religion of Islam which is overwhelmingly for the death penalty?
6. In efforts to deconstruct the Quran literarily, moderate Muslims sometimes like to interpret the Quran verses in symbolic ways. Is not the number one rule in interpreting Scripture to take it literally unless there is compelling evidence not to?
7. Some say that failed foreign policies and other grievances Muslims have with the West are the main cause of Muslim radicalism. How is that possible considering that long before the West was being unjust against Muslims, they killed each other right from the start of Islam (e.g Sunnis fought against Shiahs)?
8. If the Quran is literally the perfect word of Allah who has absolute knowledge, as every Muslim is taught to believe, should they not follow it literally and completely as it is written as long as they live?
9. If it turns out that radical Islam is at its root a religious problem, could leaving the religion (not many good aspects of Muslim cultures) be a religious answer for you to be considered besides efforts to modernise it?
10. Someone said, "If what you believe is right, you cannot be too radical." While this is true, one should find out first whether one's belief is right. Rather than killing others, Christians are asked to give their lives for them.⁵⁰ Would you like to find out more about the totally unique message of Jesus Christ?

Please send your comments and/or answers to the questions raised throughout this article to: Oskar1@live.co.uk

⁴⁹ <http://islamqa.info/en/20327>

⁵⁰ (1 John 3:16)