

Games Muslims Play

Given Islam's violent history and the unfavorable contrast of its oppressive practices against 21st century values, Muslims are hard-pressed to repackage their faith in the modern age. **Some** of its leading apologists have come to rely on tricks involving semantics and half-truths that are, in turn, repeated by novices and even those outside the faith.

This is a document (which we hope to improve on and expand over time) that exposes some of these games and helps truth-seekers find their way through the maze of disingenuous (often blatantly false) claims about Islam and its history.

[“If Islam were a violent religion, then all Muslims would be violent.”](#)

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[Muhammad preached 'no compulsion in religion' \(Qur'an: 2:256\)](#)

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“If Islam were a violent religion, then all Muslims would be violent.”

The Muslim Game:

Most Muslims live peacefully, without harming others, so how can Islam be a violent

religion? If Islam were the religion of terrorists, then why aren't most Muslims terrorists?

The Truth:

The same question can easily be turned around. If Islam is a religion of peace, then why is it the only one that consistently produces religiously-motivated terrorist attacks each and every day of the year? Why are thousands of people willing and able to cut off an innocent person's head or fly a plane into a building while screaming praises to Allah? Where's the outrage among other Muslims when this happens... and why do they get more worked up over cartoons and hijabs?

Rather than trying to answer a question with a question, however, let's just say that the reason why most Muslims don't kill is that (regardless of what Islam may or may not teach) *it's wrong to kill over religion.*

Consider that many Muslims would not even think of amputating a thief's hand. Does this mean that it is against Islam to do so? Of course not! In fact, this mandate is clearly found in one of the last verses in the Qur'an ([5:38](#)) and in the example of Muhammad according to the Hadith ([Bukhari 81:792](#)).

Muslims may believe whatever they want to about what Islam says or doesn't say, but it doesn't change what Islam says about itself. As an ideology, it exists independently of anyone's opinion. As such, it may be studied objectively and apart from how anyone else practices or chooses to interpret it.

The Qur'an plainly teaches that it is not just proper to kill in the name of Allah in certain circumstances, but that it is actually a requirement. Muslims who don't believe in killing over religion may be that way out of ignorance or because they are more loyal to the moral law written in their hearts than they are to the details of Muhammad's religion. Those who put Islam first or know Islam best know otherwise.

In fact, few Muslims have ever read the Qur'an to any extent, much less pursued an honest investigation of the actual words and deeds of Muhammad, which were more in line with [hedonism, deception, power and violence](#) than with moral restraint. The harsh rules that Muslim countries impose on free speech to protect Islam from critique also prevent it from being fully understood. In the West, many Muslims, devout or otherwise, simply prefer to believe that Islam is aligned with the Judeo-Christian principles of peace and tolerance, even if it means filtering evidence to the contrary.

It is no coincidence, however, that the purists of the faith – those most prone to abandoning themselves to Islam without moral preconception – are always the more dangerous and supremacist-minded. They may be called 'extremists' or 'fundamentalists,' but, at the end of the day, they are also the more literal and dedicated to the Qur'an and following the path of Jihad as [mandated](#) by Muhammad.

“Other religions kill, too.”

The Muslim Game:

Bringing other religions down to the level of Islam is one of the most popular strategies of

Muslim apologists when confronted with the spectacle of Islamic violence. Remember Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber? Why pick on Islam if other religions have the same problems?

The Truth:

Because they don't.

Regardless of what his birth certificate may or may not have said, Timothy McVeigh was not a religious man (in fact, he stated explicitly that he was [agnostic](#)). At no time did he credit his deeds to religion, quote Bible verses, or claim that he killed for Jesus. His motives are very well [documented](#) through interviews and research. God is never mentioned.

The so-called "members of other faiths" alluded to by Muslims are nearly always just nominal members who have no active involvement. They are neither inspired by, nor do they credit religion as Muslim terrorists do - and this is what makes it a very different matter.

Islam is associated with Islamic terrorism because that is the association that the terrorists themselves choose to make.

Muslims who compare crime committed by people who happen to be nominal members of other religions to religious terror committed explicitly in the name of Islam are comparing apples to oranges.

Yes, some of the abortion clinic bombers were religious (as Muslims enjoy pointing out), but consider the scope of the problem. There have been six deadly attacks over a 36 year period in the U.S. Eight people died. This is an average of one death every 4.5 years.

By contrast, Islamic terrorists staged nearly **ten thousand** deadly attacks in just the six years following September 11th, 2001. If one goes back to 1971, when Muslim armies in Bangladesh began the mass slaughter of Hindus, through the years of Jihad in the Sudan, Kashmir and Algeria, and the present-day Sunni-Shia violence in Iraq, the number of innocents killed in the name of Islam probably exceeds **five million** over this same period.

In the last six years, there have been perhaps a dozen or so religiously-inspired killings by people of all other faiths combined. No other religion produces the killing sprees that Islam does nearly every day of the year. Neither do they have [verses](#) in their holy texts that arguably support it. Nor do they have large groups across the globe [dedicated](#) to the mass murder of people who worship a different god, as the broader community of believers struggles with ambivalence and tolerance for a radical clergy that supports the terror.

Muslims may like to pretend that other religions are just as subject to "misinterpretation" as is their "perfect" one, but the reality speaks of something far worse.

**Muhammad preached "No compulsion in religion."
(Qur'an, Verse 2:256)**

The Muslim Game:

Muslims quote verse 2:256 from the Qur'an to prove what a tolerant religion Islam is. The verse reads

in part, "Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clearly from error..."

The Truth:

The Muslim who offers this verse may or may not understand that it is from one of the earliest Suras (or chapters) from the Medinan period. It was "revealed" at a time when the Muslims had just arrived in Medina after being chased out of Mecca. They needed to stay in the good graces of the stronger tribes around them, many of which were Jewish. It was around this time, for example, that Muhammad decided to have his followers change the direction of their prayer from Mecca to Jerusalem.

But Muslims today pray toward Mecca. The reason for this is that Muhammad issued a later command that abrogated (or nullified) the first. In fact, abrogation is a very important principle to keep in mind when interpreting the Qur'an – and verse 2:256 in particular – because later verses (in chronological terms) are said to abrogate any earlier ones that may be in contradiction (Qur'an 2:106, 16:101).

Muhammad's message was far closer to peace and tolerance during his early years at Mecca, when he didn't have an army and was trying to pattern his new religion after Christianity. This changed dramatically [after he attained the power to conquer](#), which he eventually used with impunity to bring other tribes into the Muslim fold. Contrast verse 2:256 with Suras 9 and 5, which were the last "revealed," and it is easy to see why Islam has been anything but a religion of peace from the time of Muhammad to the present day.

There is some evidence that verse 2:256 may not have been intended for Muslims at all, but is instead meant to be a warning to other religions concerning their treatment of Muslims. Verse 193 of the same Sura instructs Muslims to "**fight with them (non-Muslims) until there is no more persecution and religion is only for Allah.**" This reinforces the narcissistic nature of Islam, which places Muslims above non-Muslims, and applies a very different value and standard of treatment to both groups.

Though most Muslims today reject the practice of outright forcing others into changing their religion, [forced conversion](#) has been a part of Islamic history since Muhammad first picked up a sword. As he is recorded in many places as saying, "*I have been commanded to fight against people till they testify that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah...*" (See [Bukhari 2:24](#))

Muhammad put his words into practice. When he marched into Mecca with an army, one of his very first tasks was to destroy idols at the Kaaba, which had been devoutly worshipped by the Arabs for centuries. By eliminating these objects of worship, he destroyed the religion of the people and supplanted it with his own. Later, he ordered that Jews and Christians who would not convert to Islam be [expelled](#) from Arabia. Does forcing others to choose between their homes or their faith sound like "no compulsion in religion?"

According to Muslim historians, Muhammad eventually ordered people to attend prayers at the mosque to the point of [burning alive](#) those who didn't comply. He also ordered that children who reached a certain age be [beaten](#) if they refused to pray.

Interestingly, even the same Muslims of today who quote 2:256 usually believe in Islamic teachings that sound **very much like religious compulsion**. These would be the laws punishing apostasy by death (or [imprisonment](#), for females), and the institutionalized discrimination against religious minorities under Islamic rule that is sometimes referred to as "dhimmiitude."

Islamic law explicitly prohibits non-Muslims from sharing their faith and even includes the extortion of money from them in the form of a tax called the *jizya*. Those who refuse to pay this arbitrary amount are put to death. If this isn't compulsion, then what is?

The Crusades

The Muslim Game:

Muslims love talking about the Crusades... and Christians love apologizing for them. To hear both parties tell the story, one would believe that Muslims were just peacefully minding their own business in lands that were legitimately Muslim when Christian armies decided to wage holy war and "kill millions."

The Truth:

Every part of this myth is a lie. By the rules that Muslims claim for themselves, the Crusades were perfectly justified, and the excesses (though beneath Christian standards) pale in comparison with the historical treatment of conquered populations at the hands of Muslims.

Here are some quick facts...

The first Crusade began in 1095... 460 years **after** the first Christian city was overrun by Muslim armies, 457 years **after** Jerusalem was conquered by Muslim armies, 453 years **after** Egypt was taken by Muslim armies, 443 **after** Muslims first plundered Italy, 427 years **after** Muslim armies first laid siege to the Christian capital of Constantinople, 380 years **after** Spain was conquered by Muslim armies, 363 years **after** France was first attacked by Muslim armies, 249 years **after** the capital of the Christian world, Rome itself, was sacked by a Muslim army, and only after centuries of church burnings, killings, enslavement and forced conversions of Christians.

By the time the Crusades finally began, Muslim armies had conquered **two-thirds** of the Christian world.

Europe had been harassed by Muslims since the first few years following Muhammad's death. As early as 652, Muhammad's followers launched raids on the island of Sicily, waging a full-scale occupation 200 years later that lasted almost a century and was punctuated by massacres, such as that at the town of Castrogiovanni, in which 8,000 Christians were put to death. In 1084, ten years *before* the first crusade, Muslims staged another devastating Sicilian raid, burning churches in Reggio, enslaving monks and raping an abbey of nuns before carrying them into captivity.

In 1095, Byzantine Emperor, Alexius I Comnenus began begging the pope in Rome for help in turning back the Muslim armies which were overrunning what is now Turkey, grabbing property as they went and turning churches into mosques. Several hundred thousand Christians had been killed in Anatolia alone in the decades following 1050 by Seljuk invaders interested in 'converting' the survivors to Islam.

Not only were Christians losing their lives in their own lands to the Muslim advance but pilgrims to the Holy Land from other parts of Europe were being harassed, kidnapped, molested, forcibly converted to Islam and occasionally murdered. (Compare this to Islam's justification for slaughter on the basis of Muslims being denied access to the Meccan pilgrimage in Muhammad's time).

The Crusaders only invaded lands that were Christian. They did not attack Saudi Arabia (other than a half-hearted expedition by a minor figure) or sack Mecca as the Muslims had done (and continued doing) to Italy and Constantinople. Their primary goal was the recapture of Jerusalem and the security of safe passage for pilgrims. The toppling of the Muslim empire was not on the agenda.

The period of Crusader "occupation" (of its own former land) was stretched tenuously over about 170 years, which is less than the Muslim occupation of Sicily and southern Italy alone - to say nothing of Spain and other lands that had never been Islamic before falling victim to Jihad. In fact, the Arab occupation of North Africa and Middle Eastern lands outside of Arabia is almost 1400 years old.

Despite popular depiction, the Crusades were *not* a titanic battle between Christianity and Islam. Although originally dispatched by papal decree, the "occupiers" quickly became part of the political

and economic fabric of the Middle East without much regard for religious differences. Their arrival was largely accepted by the local population as simply another change in authority. Muslim radicals even lamented the fact that many of their co-religionists preferred to live under Frankish (Christian) rule than migrate to Muslim lands.

The Islamic world was split into warring factions, many of which allied themselves with the Frankish princes against each other at one time or another. This even included Saladin, the Kurdish warrior who is credited with eventually ousting the "Crusaders." Contrary to recent propaganda, however, Saladin had little interest in holy war until a rogue Frankish prince began disrupting his trade routes. Both before and after the taking of Jerusalem, his armies spent far more time and resources battling fellow Muslims.

For its part, the Byzantine (Eastern Christian) Empire preferred to have little to do with the Crusader kingdoms and went so far as to sign treaties with their Muslim rivals on occasion.

Another misconception is that the Crusader era was a time of constant war. In fact, very little of this overall period included significant hostilities. In response to Muslim expansion or aggression, there were only about 20 years of actual military campaigning, much of which was spent on organization and travel. (They were from 1098-1099, 1146-1148, 1188-1192, 1201-1204, 1218-1221, 1228-1229, and 1248-1250). By comparison, the Muslim Jihad against the island of Sicily alone lasted 75 grinding years.

Ironically, the Crusades are justified by the Quran itself, which encourages Holy War in order to *"drive them out of the places from whence they drove you out"* (2:191), even though the aim wasn't to expel Muslims from the Middle East, but more to bring an end to the molestation of pilgrims. Holy war is not justified by New Testament teachings, which is why the Crusades are an anomaly, the brief interruption of centuries of relentless Jihad against Christianity that began long before and continued well after.

The greatest crime of the Crusaders was the sacking of Jerusalem, in which at least 3,000 people were said to have been massacred. This number is dwarfed by the number of Jihad victims, from India to Constantinople, Africa and Narbonne, but Muslims have never apologized for their crimes and never will.

What is called 'sin and excess' by other religions, is what Islam refers to as duty willed by Allah.

"Muhammad never killed anyone."

The Muslim Game:

In order to give others the impression that Muhammad was a man of peace, Muslims sometimes claim that he never killed anyone. By this, they mean that he never slew anyone with his own hand (except in battle... which they may or may not remember to mention).

The Truth:

By this logic, Hitler never killed anyone either.

Obviously, if you order the execution of prisoners or the murder of critics by those who are under your command, then you are at least as guilty as those who carry out your orders. In Muhammad's case, the number of people that he had murdered were literally too many for historians to fully know.

There were the men taken prisoner at Badr (including one who cried out for his children at the point of execution), a mother of five (stabbed to death for questioning Muhammad's claim to be a prophet),

dozens of Jewish citizens, including [poets and merchants](#) who were accused of mocking Islam, numerous adulterers, at least one slave girl, [800 Qurayza men and boys](#) taken captive and beheaded on Muhammad's order, a Qurayza woman made delirious by the execution of her family, and an unfortunate individual who was tortured to death so that the prophet of Islam could discover his hidden treasure and then "marry" his freshly-widowed wife.

Indirectly, Muhammad is also responsible for the millions upon millions of people who have been slaughtered down through the centuries by those carrying on his legacy of Jihad. Not only did he kill, he is truly one of the bloodiest figures in history.

“The Qur’an Teaches that all Life is Sacred” (Qur’an, Verse 5:32)

The Muslim Game:

Many Westerners prefer to believe that all religion is either equally bad or equally good, and eagerly devour anything that seems to support this preconception. The myth usually works to Islam's advantage as well, since it either raises it to the level of others, or brings the others down to it. To compete with Western religion, Muslims vigorously employ verse 5:32, which is the closest thing they have to the Old Testament command of "Thou shalt not kill."

It reads, in part:

"...if any one slew a person... it would be as if he slew a whole people; and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of a whole people..."

(As quoted by the Fiqh Council of North America in their ultimately meaningless "Fatwa against Terrorism")

The Truth:

This fragment of verse 5:32 is what Muslim apologists want non-Muslims to believe is in the Qur'an, rather than the dozens of other open-ended passages that command warfare, beheadings and torture. But even what they usually quote from 5:32 isn't quite how it appears. Remember all those ellipses? There's something being left out.

Here's the [full text](#) of the verse:

*"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.**"*

First, notice the gaping loophole. Killing *is* allowed in cases of murder or "for spreading mischief in the land." Murder is pretty straightforward, but "spreading mischief?" If anything begged for a careful and precise explanation, this phrase certainly would. But generations of Muslims are left to apply their own interpretation of what "mischief" means - with varying standards.

Secondly, note the broader context of this verse. It turns out that this isn't a command to Muslims after all. It's a recounting of a rule that was handed down to the Jews. It isn't an admonition against killing. It's an indictment against the Jews for violating the law given to them. "Any one" doesn't mean "anyone," but rather "any one" of the Jews.

Rather than encouraging tolerance, Sura 5 as a whole is actually an *incitement* of hatred with a hint of

violence. Jews and Christians are explicitly cursed as ‘*wicked*’ people with ‘*diseased hearts*’ and as hateful ‘*blasphemers*’ respectively. Muhammad goes on to coyly remind his people that Allah loves those who “fight” in his service - and it’s fairly obvious who the enemy is.

Muslims also conveniently leave out the fact that the gruesome verse which follows 5:32 actually **mandates killing** in the case of the aforementioned “mischief”. It even suggests crucifixion and “*the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides.*”

Together, verses 5:32-33 actually provide the basis for blasphemy laws, in which people are executed for insulting or questioning Islam. Ironically then, the very part of the Quran that apologists use to portray Islam as a non-violent religion has long been used as a justification for putting people to death for verbal crimes.

With this being the best that Islam has to offer, it’s not hard to guess why the religion contributes over a thousand deadly terrorist attacks to the world each and every year.

“Muslims only kill in self-defense.”

The Muslim Game:

Muslims often claim that their religion only orders them to kill in self-defense (ie. when their own lives are in danger).

The Truth:

In fact, self-defense is just one of several conditions under which Muslims are permitted to take the lives of others. The myth of killing only in self-defense is easily disproved from the accounts of Muhammad’s own life as recorded in Islam’s sacred texts (with which Muslim terrorists are only too familiar).

Muhammad’s career of killing began with [raids on merchant caravans](#) traveling between Syria and Mecca. His men would usually sneak up on unsuspecting drivers and kill those who defended their goods. There was no self-defense involved here at all (on the part of the Muslims, at least). This was old-fashioned armed robbery and murder – sanctioned by Allah (according to Muhammad, who also demanded a fifth of the loot for himself).

The very first battle that Muhammad fought was at [Badr](#), when a Meccan army of 300 was sent out to protect the caravans from Muslim raids. The Meccans did not threaten Muhammad, and (turning this Muslim myth on its ear) only fought in self-defense after *they* were attacked by the Muslims. Following the battle, Muhammad established the practice of executing surrendered captives – something that would be repeated on many other occasions.

The significance of this episode can hardly be overstated, because it lies at the very beginning of the long chain of Muslim violence that eventually passed right through the heart of America on September 11th. The early Muslims were [not being threatened](#) by those whom they attacked, and certainly not by those whom they had captured. They staged aggressive raids to eventually provoke war, just as al-Qaeda attempts to do in our time.

Muslims try to justify Muhammad’s violence by claiming that he and his followers “suffered persecution” at the hands of the Meccans in an earlier episode, in which Muhammad was [evicted](#) from the city of Mecca and had to seek refuge at Medina. But even the worst of this persecution [did not rise to the level of killing](#). Nor were Muhammad and his Muslims in any danger at all in their new home of Medina. They were free to get on with their lives.

Even Muhammad's own men evidently questioned whether they should be pursuing and killing people who did not pose a threat to them, since it seemed to contradict earlier, more passive teachings. To convince them, Muhammad passed along a timely revelation from Allah stating that "*the persecution of Muslims is worse than slaughter* [of non-Muslims]" (Sura 2:191). This verse established the tacit principle that the authority of Muslims is of higher value even than the very lives of others. There is no larger context of morality against which acts are judged. All that matters is how an event impacts or benefits Muslims.

Under Muhammad, slaves and poets were [executed](#), captives were [beheaded](#), and adulterers were put into the ground and [stoned](#). None of these were done during the heat of battle or necessitated by self-defense. To this day, Islamic law mandates death for certain crimes such as blasphemy and apostasy.

Following his death, Muhammad's companions stormed the Christian world - taking the Middle East, North Africa and parts of Europe. They attacked and conquered to the East as well, including Persia, Central Asia, and well into the Indian sub-continent. Few, if any, of these campaigns involved the pretense of self-defense. They were about Jihad.

"The words, 'Holy War', aren't in the Qur'an."

The Muslim Game:

In early 2005, a well-known Muslim apologist named, Jamal Badawi, offered \$1 million to anyone who could prove that the Qur'an contained the words, "Holy War." Whether he actually had the money to put up is somewhat in question, but his intention was to make people believe that Jihad is not advocated in the Qur'an and that the terrorists are somehow tragically mistaken when they wage their campaigns of holy war in the cause of Islam.

So successful is this myth, that it has been repeated on popular television shows, such as "Criminal Minds." Many now believe that not only is holy warfare not advocated by the Qur'an, but that the word, "Jihad" must not appear in it either, since Jihad has come to mean "Holy War" (most especially by those who kill in the name of Allah).

The Truth:

In fact, not only is the word "Jihad" mentioned in several places within the Qur'an, such as the infamous Sura 9 (which includes the "Verse of the Sword"), there are over 150 calls to holy war scattered throughout the entire text.

So what's the catch?

Well, when knowledgeable infidels such as Robert Spencer immediately [responded](#) to the challenge and went to collect their prize, Mr. Badawi was forced to reveal the [fine print](#) on his offer. You see, he wasn't talking about the *concept* of holy war. He only meant the *exact Arabic phrase*, "Holy War."

And what about "Jihad?" Well, this doesn't count, according to Mr. Badawi, because technically it can be used in a context that doesn't mean 'holy war' (even if that is not how it was interpreted in Muhammad's time, nor in ours). "Jihad" is like the word "fight," which can be used in a benign sense (as in, "*I am fighting a craving to call Mr. Badawi a disingenuous hack*").

If "Jihad" is holy without war, then "*Qital*" must be war without the holy. It is an Arabic term that literally means to wage military combat. But, like Jihad, it is most certainly used within the context of holy war, such as in Sura 2: "*Fight against them until idolatry is no more and religion is only for Allah.*" Mr. Badawi is even on record as admitting that *Qital* can be a form of Jihad... but even this doesn't qualify

according to the niceties of his offer.

So, although the Qur'an tells believers to "*slay the infidels wherever ye find them,*" and "*smite their necks and fingertips,*" showing "*ruthlessness to unbelievers,*" and 150 other violent admonitions to fight **explicitly** in the cause of Allah... the Arabic words "holy" and "war" don't literally appear side-by-side. (Neither do the German words, "concentration" and "camp," appear consecutively in Nazi documents, by the way).

My, what a hollow victory this is! One has to wonder whether Mr. Badawi sincerely believes that he has a point or if he recognizes this for the shameful word game that it is.

At the very least, people should know that "Jihad" is used within the context of religious warfare time and time again throughout the Qur'an and Hadith, and that, regardless of the exact terminology, Islam's most sacred texts clearly advocate the sort of holy war that propels modern-day terrorism.

"Verses of violence are taken out of context."

The Muslim Game:

Verses like, "*Slay the infidels wherever ye find them,*" were issued during times of war, according to the apologists. They accuse critics who use Qur'anic verses to discredit Islam of engaging in "cherry-picking" (pulling verses out of context to support a position, and ignoring others that may mitigate it).

The Muslims who rely on this argument often leave the impression that the Qur'an is full of verses of peace, tolerance and universal brotherhood, with only a small handful that say otherwise. Their gullible audience may also assume that the context of each violent verse is surrounded by obvious constraints in the surrounding text which bind it to a particular place and time (as is the case with violent Old Testament passages).

The Truth:

The truth, unfortunately, is just the opposite. This is why new Muslims and non-Muslims alike, who begin studying the Qur'an and Hadith, are often confronted with an array of disclaimers and warnings by well-meaning Muslims who caution that it takes "years of study" to fully understand the meaning of certain passages. Neophytes are encouraged to seek the "counseling" of a Muslim scholar or cleric to "help them" interpret what they read.

It is not the verses of violence that are rare, unfortunately, it is the ones of peace and tolerance (which were narrated earlier in Muhammad's life and superseded by later ones). Neither is the "historical context" of these verses of violence at all obvious from the surrounding text (in most cases).

In the Qur'an, constructs and topics often come from out of nowhere and merge randomly in a jumbled mess that bears no consistent or coherent stream of thought. But, with external references to the Hadith and early biographies of Muhammad's life, it is usually possible to determine when a Qur'anic verse was "handed down from Allah," and what it may have meant to the Muslims at the time. This is what apologists opportunistically refer to as "historical context." They contend that such verses are merely a part of history and not intended as imperatives to present-day Muslims.

But "historical context" cuts both ways. If any verse is a product of history, then they all are. Indeed, there is not a verse in the Qur'an that was not given at a particular time to address a particular situation in Muhammad's life, whether he wanted to conquer the tribe next door and needed a "revelation" from Allah spurring his people to war, or if he needed the same type of "revelation" to satisfy a [lust](#) for more women (free of complaint from his other wives).

Here is the irony of the “cherry-picking” argument: **Those who use “historical context” against their detractors nearly always engage in cherry-picking of their own by choosing which verses they apply “historical context” to and which they prefer to hold above such tactics of mitigation.**

This game of context is, in fact, one of the most popular and disingenuous in which Muslims are likely to engage. Simply put, the apologists appeal to context *only when they want it to be there* - such as when the bellicose 9th Sura of the Qur'an, which calls for the subjugation and death of unbelievers, is at issue. They ignore context when it proves inconvenient. An example of the latter would be the many times in which verse [2:256](#) is isolated and offered up as proof of religious tolerance (in contradiction to Muhammad's later imposition of the jizya and the sword).

Islamic purists do not engage in such games. Not only do they know that the verses of Jihad are more numerous and authoritative (abrogating the earlier ones), they also hold the entire Qur'an to be the eternal and literal word of Allah... and this is what often makes them so dangerous.

"Islam is the world's fastest growing religion"

The Muslim Game:

How can Islam be a bad religion if it is growing so fast? Doesn't this mean that it is actually a truthful religion, since so many are accepting it?

The Truth:

In the first place, the truth of an idea or doctrine is never established by mere belief. Up until the last hundred years or so, the vast majority of people on our planet did not even believe that they were on a planet. Nor did they believe that the earth was spinning at a thousand miles an hour or hurtling around the sun at 67,000 miles an hour. Does this mean that the earth wasn't doing these things up until people believed that it was?

Secondly, Islam is not "growing faster" than other religions because “people are accepting it,” but rather because the birthrate among Muslims is significantly higher than it is among Christians and others, particularly in the West. Kids can be raised to believe in just about anything, so this hardly constitutes any sort of accomplishment.

Of the so-called “converts” from other religions, only a miniscule number were active believers. Nearly all are really just people who had no faith to convert from – regardless of their nominal designation. In the West and other parts of the non-Muslim world in which all religions are allowed to compete equally such people experiencing a spiritual awakening are far more likely to turn to Christianity than to Islam.

There are also some women who "marry into Islam" (a nominal change in official designation), but in terms of raw conversions, there is almost no comparison between Islam and Christianity. It is [estimated](#) that thousands of Muslims convert to Christianity each day, while only a handful of non-Muslims actually adopt Islam.

This leads to our final and most important point, which is that decent Muslims should feel a sense of embarrassment, rather than pride over the rules that they have to enforce in order to maintain Islam's status as the "fastest growing religion." In truth, it speaks more to the insecurity that Muslims have in their own religion, and the banal immaturity that Islam has compared with other faiths.

Let's say that you are playing chess with a 6-year-old boy. Instead of following the same set of rules, however, the child is allowed to make up rules that are preferential to him. One of the rules he decides on is that you aren't allowed to make any moves on his half of the board, but he is allowed to

make moves on yours. Another might be that it is impossible for any of his pieces to be taken.

Now, if the child is winning the game – which is assured by the conditions that he has imposed - is it really something in which he can truly take pride?

The rules that Muslims impose on the “conversion game” are almost exactly like this chess analogy. Other religions are not allowed to operate in Islam’s own territory (ie. preaching their faith and evangelizing) as Muslims are in others. Neither is conversion away from Islam allowed – on penalty of death.

Watching Muslims gloat over conversions to Islam or in being the “fastest growing religion” is no different than watching a child delude themselves into thinking that they are smarter and better for “beating” a much wiser adult in a game played under manufactured conditions that render the artificial “victory” entirely meaningless.

Islam has been playing by its own rules since its inception. It is unlikely that Muslims will soon develop the confidence in their own religion (or the required social maturity) to lift the shameful restrictions to which it owes its success and risk competition with other faiths on a level playing field.

As was first mentioned, the truth of a belief or creed is never established by how many followers it has. But when a religion has to be supported by double standards and death threats, there is all the more reason to doubt its veracity.

(Note: Our article does not take issue with the claim that Islam is the fastest growing religion, not because we necessarily believe it, but because others have done a better job of refuting it. See [Islam is not the Fastest Growing Religion in the World](#) for an example.)

"The Qur'an Can Only be Understood in Arabic"

The Muslim Game:

The Qur’an can only be fully understood in Arabic. One cannot criticize Islam without knowing Arabic.

The Truth:

Although Muslims often tell critics of Islam to "read the Qur’an," they are usually unprepared for what happens when their advice is heeded. An honest translation of Islam’s holiest book generally reinforces negative opinion. The fallback is to then claim that the Qur’an can only be understood in Arabic.

Of all the efforts to artificially insulate Islam from intellectual critique, this is probably the most transparent. Unfortunately, for those Muslims craving reassurance from the more embarrassing passages of the Qur’an and Sunnah, this cheap tactic of arbitrarily dismissing anything they disagree with still comes at a heavy price, since Islam cannot be protected in this way without sacrificing its claim to being a universal religion.

In the first place, it is fundamentally impossible for anyone to learn a language that cannot be translated into the only one they do know, which means the apologists who insist that “one must learn Arabic” in order to understand the Qur’an are committing a logical fallacy. Either the Arabic of the Qur’an is translatable (in which case there is no need to learn Arabic) or it is not (in which case it can never be learned by the non-native speaker).

Enter the skeptic. While every language has its nuances, how is that Arabic is the only one with words and phrases that are literally untranslatable? More importantly, why in the world would Allah choose

to communicate his one true religion for all men in the only language that cannot be understood by all men – including all Muslims, since most do not speak Arabic?

Even more suspicious is that this amazing linguistic “discovery” was only recently made – and that it corresponds quite remarkably with the contemporary rejection of Islamic practices that were considered acceptable up until the religion’s recent collision with Western liberalism. In fact, there is an astonishing correlation between the argument that hidden and alternate meanings exist to unflattering Qur’anic passages (justifying slavery, the inferior status of women, sexual gluttony, holy warfare, wife-beating, and religious discrimination) and the level of embarrassment that modern scholars have about the presence of such verses in the Qur’an!

No other world religion makes this claim about itself or its holy texts. While the Bible is distributed pretty much as is by various Christian groups, for example, it is rare to find a Qur’an that does not include voluminous and highly subjective footnoted commentary deemed necessary to explain away the straightforward interpretation of politically-incorrect passages.

An additional problem for the apologists is that they want to have it both ways. On the one hand they declare that (for some strange reason) the "perfect book" can't be translated and that Allah's perfect religion thus cannot be understood by most of humanity without a battery of intercessors and interpreters. Then they turn around and blame the reality of Islamic terrorism on this same "necessary" chain of intermediaries by claiming that the Osama bin Ladens of the world have simply gotten bad clerical advice, causing them to “misunderstand” the true meaning of the Religion of Peace (in the most catastrophic and tragic way imaginable).

Of course, another irony here is that, as a Saudi, the Qur’an-toting Osama bin Laden *is* a native Arabic speaker – as are most of the leaders and foot soldiers in his al-Qaeda brotherhood of devout Muslims. In fact, many critics of Islam are Arabic speakers as well.

At this point there is only one avenue of escape open to the beleaguered apologist, which is the weak claim that the Qur’an can only be understood in *Classical Arabic*, an obscure Quraish dialect which has not been commonly used in over a thousand years and is only known by a few hundred people alive today (generally Wahabbi scholars, who are - ironically enough - accused of taking the Qur’an 'too literally').

Although it is hardly plausible that the differences between classical and modern Arabic are such that peace and tolerance can be confused with terrorism, even if this were true, it merely begs the question all the more. Why would such a “perfect book” be virtually impossible for the rest of us to learn - and susceptible to such horrible "misinterpretation" on an on-going basis?

Really, it isn't hard to see through this childish game, particularly since the rules are applied only to detractors and not to advocates. Apologists never claim that Arabic is a barrier to understanding Islam when it comes to lauding the religion, no matter how less knowledgeable those offering praise are than the critics.

Obviously, the real reason for this illogical myth is that, for the first time, the information age is making the full history and texts of the Islamic religion available to a broader audience, and it is highly embarrassing to both Muslim scholars and their faithful flock. Pretending that different meanings exist in Arabic is a way of finding solace and saving face.

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