



The **Onyx Link** Foundation

CHALLENGING RADICAL IDEOLOGY

SUPPLEMENT TO PRESS RELEASE 1

What does Islam have to do with it? OLF1

Answers from the prime sources of Islam

07/07/2017

For the victims of terror, their families, and loved ones in the UK and beyond...

Opening Statement

Since the terrorist attacks on London in July 2005, the UK has been horrified by serious atrocities committed by British Muslims who betrayed both Britain and Islam by adopting Islamist/Jihadist radical ideologies to justify the taking of innocent lives! The perpetrators of violence and terror in the name of Islam, in their number, are insignificant compared to the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world today. However, such perpetrators and their radical ideologies have dominated the world media for decades. They often

quote verses of the Holy Quran and Prophetic statements¹ to justify their atrocities and messages of hate. Moreover, for their religious practices, politics, and culture they draw from the history of Muslims and their religious traditions². Yet Muslims are peaceful and they disown terrorists and condemn their atrocities. Consequently, the key question that arises is: “What does Islam have to do with the Islamist/Jihadist radical ideologies?” This series of press releases and academic documents tackles this fundamental question.

The subject of this academic document is to clarify the essence and purpose of the religion from its prime sources³ that form the context of its understanding and implementation. In short, the essence of the Message of Islam is mercy and its purpose is morality, fostering love and happiness. This context shall be the criterion that the OLF will use in future press releases and academic documents to investigate the evolution of the Islamist/Jihadist radical ideologies. The OLF hopes that this effort will clarify the essence and purpose of these radical ideologies and challenge the religious texts used to justify them. Such analysis may empower communities and organisations to build resilience against radicalisation, and to develop procedures and scenarios for deradicalizing and rehabilitating extremists.

In order to make our findings as accessible as possible, we decided to directly question the prime sources of Islam via the means of a hypothetical interview.

The following answers from the sources have been presented as close as possible to the wordings of the narratives and their context.

¹ In Arabic: Ahadith

² Interpretations of the Holy Quran and the prophetic texts that Muslim scholars used as evidence for Islamic jurisprudence and creeds

³ These constitute the Holy Quran as clarified by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) while conveying the Message of Islam through his teachings and practical implementation in his life with his own family, and among his companions.

The Interview:

Q1: Why was Prophet Muhammad sent, and to whom?

A1: The Messenger-ship of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is not unprecedented⁴. God, Glory be to Him, Has sent him as Mercy⁵ for all people⁶. In his own words, he (PBUH) was sent “to complete and perfect moral character⁷” that previous messengers of God came with. “All prophets belong to the same Lord – their mothers are different but their religion is one”⁸. He, Glory be to Him, Has sent them with moral character and appointed them role models for people to know and love one another and form virtuous societies that live in peace, and happiness all the way⁹.

Q2: If the aim of his message is morality and good conduct, how can one know the righteous action from the bad?

A2: God Has created the human being to be His deputy on earth¹⁰. This objective requires people to know Him¹¹, and follow the guidance of His messengers: to be righteous in their interaction with one another and with all creation¹². Righteousness is morality and good conduct¹³.

“The righteous act settles and stills the heart, while the bad act causes doubt and perturbs it, and one attempts to hide it from people. Even if one comes across the opinions of others, one should still use these criteria to consult the heart about the action to follow.¹⁴” Therefore, before taking an action one can be heedful of moral responsibility and investigate before trusting what they hear, reflecting before believing in what they see, and be certain before accepting the conclusions they reach ¹⁵ . Actions taken with moral

⁴ Holy Quran: 46:9.

⁵ Holy Quran: 21:107

⁶ Holy Quran: 34:28

⁷ “Verily, I have been sent to perfect moral character”, Musnad Ahmad

⁸ Sahih Muslim

⁹ Holy Quran: 49:13

¹⁰ Holy Quran: 2:30

¹¹ Holy Quran: “I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me (=to know Me and obey My messengers” (51:56)

¹² Holy Quran: 21:105

¹³ Sahih Muslim.

¹⁴ Musnad Ahmad and Musnad Al-Darqutni

¹⁵ Holy Quran: 17:36

*responsibility will be righteous and fulfil the role of human beings as deputy of God on earth*¹⁶.

Q3: Will there not then be different versions of the truth and different standards of morality?

A3: *The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Verily, I have been sent to complete moral character". He (PBUH) is the seal of the prophets of God and His final Messenger*¹⁷. *He was sent to clarify the revelation that God has sent to people*¹⁸

*Since the final message is completion and clarification of the previous messages, it was necessary to illustrate it with a physical example to be known and seen without ambiguity. Therefore, the divine clarification of the message of morality was illustrated by the final messenger so people may see its perfection in the essence of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); as the Truth can be seen only in a physical reality – "...and they witnessed that the Messenger is Truth.."*¹⁹. *Therefore, Muhammad (PBUH) is the Truth, the religion, and the great integrity of morals - praised by God Almighty: "Indeed, you are of a great integrity of morals*²⁰". *He, Glory be to Him, Has instructed his followers to act upon his character and teachings*²¹. *Thus, Has His Lord placed him as the paradigm of practice*²²."

*"Love is essential to Islam: it is the perfection of faith*²³ *in God*²⁴ *and His Messenger*²⁵; *and in social interaction*²⁶. *Love is union with the beloved*²⁷; *and*

¹⁶ Holy Quran: 21:105

¹⁷ Holy Quran: 33:40

¹⁸ Holy Quran: (16:44)

¹⁹ Holy Quran: (3:31)

²⁰ Holy Quran: (68:3-4)

²¹ Holy Quran: "...and whatever the Messenger consigns unto you, take it, and from whatever he forbids you, abstain..."

²² Holy Quran: "Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah." (33:21)

²³ In Arabic: Al-Eimaan

²⁴ Holy Quran: "...those who have attained to faith love God more than all else.." (2:165).

²⁵ The Prophet (PBUH) said: "None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his parents, his children and all the people." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

²⁶ The Prophet (PBUH) said: "No one of you shall have faith until you love for your brother/ sister what you love for yourself" Bukhari and Muslim.

²⁷ The Prophet (PBUH) said: "The person is with the one whom he/she loves" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

through love the Prophet will be with the one who has faith in him. This is sharpness of insight and the light of enlightenment²⁸.”

Q4: If Prophet Muhammad is the “paradigm of practice”, why is the sword of Islam so famous?

A4: “There is no compulsion in religion²⁹. Freedom of faith is well established in the text of the Quran. God Has sent His Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) as: ‘a role model, a giver of glad tidings, a herald, a caller to His Way by His leave, and a luminous light’³⁰. He appointed him as a teacher and informed him that he has no control over anyone³¹. His Lord instructed him to Invite all people towards attaining His blessing with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and to debate with them in ways that are best and most gracious³². Like all Messengers, he has one obligation – to deliver with clarity the message of God³³. He Has directed him not to compel anyone to believe³⁴. Moreover, He Has given people the choice to believe in His Message or to disbelieve³⁵. So, none can limit this God-given choice. This has been the practice of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and whomsoever hurts people or forces them to leave a religion or to embrace another has nothing to do with him – the paradigm of practice (PBUH).

The followers of the Prophet (PBUH) have been commanded to extend kindness and good relations with peaceful people, even if they don’t believe in Islam³⁶ and this is the inclusiveness of the community of the Prophet (PBUH)³⁷. However, God has permitted all people to defend themselves when

²⁸ Holy Quran: “O people of faith, be conscious of Allah and believe in His Messenger, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His Mercy: He will provide for you a Light by which you shall walk...” (57:28)

²⁹ Holy Quran: 2:256

³⁰ Holy Quran: 33: 45-46.

³¹ Holy Quran: “Remind them; indeed, you are a teacher. You have no control over them” (88:21-22). The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Indeed I have been sent a teacher” Sahih Muslim and Sunan Ibn Majah.

³² Holy Quran: 16:125

³³ Holy Quran: 5:99.

³⁴ Holy Quran: “...will you then compel people, against their will, to believe!” (10:99)

³⁵ Holy Quran: 17:107; 18:29.

³⁶ Holy Quran: “As for those [of the unbelievers] who do not fight against you on account of [your] faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for, verily, God loves those who act equitably” (60:8).

³⁷ Holy Quran: “And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all people; but most of them do not know” (34:28).

they are attacked³⁸. In Islam, there is no place for oppression or aggression³⁹. Fight is permitted in two circumstances only: 1-in self-defence against attackers who initiate an assault⁴⁰; and this was the case in all the battles in the time of the Prophet (PBUH) except the conquest of Makkah. But if the attackers surrender and seek peace at any point, Muslims have to end the war even if they were close to victory⁴¹, because the objective is to stop oppression and not to eradicate the enemy. 2-Fighting is also allowed for ridding oppression⁴² from those who are deprived freedom and their God-given rights as it was in the conquest of Makkah⁴³. Therefore, the famous sword in question surely has nothing to do with the religion of Islam.

Q5: If the religion of Prophet Muhammad forbids compulsion and promotes freedom of faith, then why all this killing in the name of Islam?

A5: "Islam is not an ideology or merely a claim, rather a living reality⁴⁴. It is not actualised by performing rituals and acts of worship such as prayer or fasting, nor by dresses and appearances, rather by morality and good conduct⁴⁵. Prayer and fasting are meant to elevate human interaction from immorality and ill conduct⁴⁶. However, many are those who fast yet gain nothing except hunger and thirst⁴⁷. Islam is the religion of compassion and beautiful human interaction, exemplified by the conduct of the Muslim from

³⁸ Holy Quran: "Permission [to fight] is given to those who are being wrongfully attacked and, verily, God is indeed able to champion them" (22:39)

³⁹ Holy Quran: "...verily, God does not love aggressors" 2:190

⁴⁰ Holy Quran: 22:39

⁴¹ Holy Quran: "But if the enemy incline towards peace, you (also) incline towards it.." (8:61)

⁴² Holy Quran: "Hence, fight against them until there is no more oppression and accountability be to God alone;..." (2:193)

⁴³ The Prophet (PBUH) removed the tyrant leaders from power and freed the people of Makkah (including those persecuted him and tortured his followers) saying: *go home, you are free!* He didn't ask them to revert to his religion.

⁴⁴ "Religion is interaction with good conduct"

⁴⁵ The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Allah does not look at your bodies, nor at your clothes but He looks at your hearts and deeds." Sahih Muslim.

⁴⁶ Holy Quran: "...and be constant in prayer: for, behold, prayer restrains [man] from loathsome deeds and from all that runs counter to reason;" (29:45). Holy Quran: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you ward off (evil)" (2:183): The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Fasting is a shield from evil deeds" (Bukhari and Muslim)

⁴⁷ The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Many are the people who fast and gain nothing from their fasting except hunger and thirst" Sunan Tirmithi.

whose tongue and hand people are safe, and the Mu'min (person of faith) whom people trust with their lives and possessions ⁴⁸.

Preservation of animal⁴⁹ and plant⁵⁰ life is an act of benevolence in Islam. However, the sanctity of human life is even greater than that of the Holy Ka'bah in Makkah⁵¹. In Islam, saving the life of a person is as virtuous as saving the lives of all humans and taking the life of one person is as atrocious as taking the lives of all human beings⁵².

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been sent to lead by example in perfecting moral character and virtuous conduct, and treating people with dignity and respect regardless of faith, colour, or race. He (PBUH) has declared to his followers and all humanity: 'There is no virtue for an Arab over a non-Arab, neither for a white over a black, nor for a black over a white except by piety⁵³'. Virtue is through piety⁵⁴, and its place is the heart⁵⁵'. Therefore, knowing the noblest and most virtuous is beyond people's judgement - only God Has such knowledge⁵⁶. 'All creation are the children of God; and the most beloved to Him is the most beneficial to them⁵⁷'. Therefore, whoever abandons the moral conduct of the Prophet (PBUH) is not from his followers. He (PBUH) is innocent from any practice that doesn't fall within compassion, morality, and good conduct - the aim of his message, in fact such acts are in contradiction to it."

⁴⁸ The Prophet (PBUH) said: *"The Muslim (person of peace) is the one people are safe from harm by his hand and from hurt by his tongue; and the Mu'min (person of faith) is the one people trust with their lives and possessions"* Sunan al-Nasā'ī

⁴⁹ The Companions asked the Prophet (PBUH): "O Allah's Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving animals?" He replied: *"There is a reward for serving any living being."* Bukhari.

⁵⁰ The Prophet (PBUH) said: *"If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift for him."* Bukhari.

⁵¹ Hadith: Sunan Ibn Majah

⁵² Holy Quran: 5:32

⁵³ Musnad Ahmad

⁵⁴ Holy Quran: *"O Humankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Surely, Allah is Knower, Aware."* (49:13).

⁵⁵ Hadith: Sahih Muslim

⁵⁶ Holy Quran: 40:19

⁵⁷ Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir, Imam Altabarani

Q6: Who then are the people who the Prophet considers his Ummah (community)?

A6: *He (PBUH) is the Messenger of God and His Mercy for all humanity⁵⁸. After his migration to Medina, he established his community as an example for them. It was established upon a covenant (Dhimmah) of respect, equality, and peaceful co-existence between his followers and all the tribes and ethnicities with whom they lived and interacted with, regardless of faith differences⁵⁹: the first society constituted upon multi-faith and multiculturalism! Thereafter, he (PBUH) declared his allegiance and belonging to such a community saying: 'Whomsoever oppresses, degrades, abuses, or defrauds a Dhimmi (an affiliate to my covenant/a citizen) I shall be his opponent on the Day of Judgement⁶⁰'. Therefore, of all people at all times, those who live in peace with others and people feel safe with, these are his community.*

For further information please contact:

Dr Abdalla Y Mohamed OBEⁱ,

Chair & Director

The Onyx Link Foundation

Tel. 01633 415434 Ext. 1348 (Mon to Fri, 10:00am to 5:00pm)

Email: abdalla.yassin@onyxlinkfoundation.org

ⁱ Dr Abdalla Mohamed, Ph.D. in psychology, is a Muslim scholar who mastered most of the branches of Islamic knowledge in traditional institutions for over 20 years in Sudan. He has been teaching Islamic knowledge and practicing Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic counselling, and religious advice for Muslim communities in England and Wales for 25 years. Between 2004 and 2009 he was a lecturer at the Life-long Learning Centre of Cardiff University teaching modules on the Prime Sources of Islam. From 2005 to 2010 the Department of Religious & Theological Studies at Cardiff University, appointed him member of the Advisory Committee for establishing their Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK. His efforts and contributions to community relations in Wales in collaboration with the Welsh Assembly government, the Muslim Council of Wales, Cytun: Churches Together in Wales, Cardiff University, and many interfaith communities and religious organisations has been acknowledged with an OBE by HM Queen Elisabeth II in 2008. In March 2010, he was awarded the Welsh Assembly Government's Recognising Achievement Award for services to community relations in Wales.

⁵⁸ Holy Quran: 21:107

⁵⁹ Biography of the Prophet (PBUH) by Ibn Ishaq

⁶⁰ Sunan Abi Dawod