

MISQUOTING QUR'AN TO MISINTERPRET ISLAM: HOW MUSLIMS UNDERSTAND THE VERSES WHICH ISLAMOPHOBES TAKE OUT OF CONTEXT

"If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels

Geert Wilders in his 15-minute yet tedious "Fitna: the Movie" has used a number of Quranic verses with the aim of attempting to convince uninformed people about the supposedly violent nature of Quranic teachings.

Like the medieval Islamophobes of the European Dark Ages, it is Wilders himself who does violence to the texts by taking them deliberately out of context. He fails to establish even a fictional relationship between the Quranic verses he cuts and the terror news stories he pastes them to.

The following is an abridged guide to the correct meaning of these Qur'anic verses which Islamophobes love to hate and which they have been misquoting and taking out of context to incite hatred of Islam.

On broken treaties (8:56-61):

"Those of them (disbelievers) with whom you made a treaty, then at every opportunity they break their treaty without fear: if you meet them in battle, deal with them so as to strike fear in those who are behind them, so that they may remember it. And if you fear treachery from any people, then cast their treaty back at them in an equitable manner. Lo! God loves not the treacherous. And let not the disbelievers ever think they have won. They cannot frustrate Me. *Against them let all of you ready whatever force and cavalry you can muster, so that you might deter thereby the enemies of God and your enemies*, and others besides them of whom you are unaware, but of whom God is aware. Whatever you expend in the cause of God shall be repaid in full and you shall not be wronged. And if they incline to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon God. He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

The deliberate misinterpretation of the above passage is to change "deter" to "terrorize": "Let all Muslims terrorize all non-Muslims to their utmost". Thereafter, Wilders showed film clips of 9/11 where 3,000 people were killed - among them about 350 Muslims (over 10 per cent). The Madrid train bombing is also shown. In reality, there is no relationship between such killings and the verses quoted from the Qur'an.

On punishment and reward in the hereafter (4:55-58):

"Among them (non-Muslims) are those who believe in him (Prophet Muhammad, upon him peace) while others bar people from him; and Hellfire is sufficient for a burning punishment. Verily, *those who are bent on denying Our revelations We shall, in time, expose to fire: and every time their skins are burnt off, We shall replace them with new skins, so that they may taste suffering in full*. Verily, God is almighty, wise. And as for those who believe and do good works, We shall make them enter Gardens underneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever, with pure spouses, and We shall give them abounding shade. God commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners; and when you judge between the people, that you judge with justice. Good is the admonition God gives you; God is All-hearing, All-seeing."

The deliberate misinterpretation of the above passage is "Let Muslims burn all non-Muslims". However, these verses are about life after death after the day of Judgment where, according to Islam, people will be either be rewarded with Paradise (as in verse 57) or Hell (as in verse 56). These verses describing life after death and the hereafter have no bearing on terror in this world.

Resisting godless persecution against greater odds (47:1-4):

"Those who disbelieve and bar others from God's way, God will cause their works to miscarry. But those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what is sent down to Muhammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will acquit them of their evil deeds, and improve their conditions. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. In this way does God set forth unto man the parables of their true state. *So when you meet the disbelievers, smite their necks; when you have made wide slaughter among them, make prisoners; then set them free, either graciously or by ransom, so that the war terminates. So it shall be; and if God had willed, He could have punished them Himself; but He wants to test you through each other. And those who are slain in the way of God, He will never let their deeds be lost.*"

The deliberate misinterpretation of the above passage is "kill first, far and wide". In reality, the key concept of the above passage is the restoration of peace and termination of war, which only exists because of the reality of evil in the first place. The verses concern the conduct of warfare after peace has been breached, where there is known enmity and a mutual condition of war against a more numerous aggressor. Both the emphasis on restraint and the goal of peace are clear. Such verses can never apply to the butchering of innocent people a la 9-11, Madrid, London, Van Gogh, genital mutilation, etc.

Measures of defence against former allies (4:87-90):

"God - save whom there is no deity - will surely gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection, the coming of which is beyond all doubt: and whose word could be truer than God's? How then could you be of two minds about the hypocrites, seeing that God has disowned them because of their own guilt? Can you guide anyone whom God leads astray? You can never find a way for those whom God leads astray. *They long that you should disbelieve just as they disbelieve, and then you would be equal; therefore take not to yourselves friends among them, until they emigrate in the way of God; then, if they turn renegades, take them and slay them wherever you find them; take not to yourselves any one of them as friend or helper, except those who attach themselves to your allies or come to you with no desire to fight you or their own people. Had God willed, He would have given them authority over you, and then certainly they would have fought you. If they withdraw from you, and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then God grants you no permission to fight them.*"

The deliberate misinterpretation of the above passage is "kill all apostates whenever, wherever". But the verses only command defensive action - and only against bellicose former allies, not peaceful ones.

Self-defence against persecution (8:38-40):

"Tell the disbelievers that if they cease (hostilities), all the past will be forgiven. But if they persist, they will meet the example of the nations of old. And *fight them until all persecution (fitnah) ceases and so that the religion be God's entirely*; then, if they cease, surely God sees all that they do. But if they turn away, know that God is your Protector - an excellent Protector, an excellent Helper!"

The deliberate misinterpretation of the above passage is "wage total and permanent war until dissent is eliminated and everybody becomes Muslim". However, once again, the verses spell out defensive measures against persistent aggression. Islam views peace, not war, as the default in human relations. Secondly, the verses command restraint in case persecution ceases but Islam is not adopted. Islam never advocated forced conversion.

The Qur'an emphasizes the duty to preserve every life: "We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew all people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all people" (5:32).

The Qur'an also explicitly prohibits suicide: "Do not kill yourselves. Indeed, God is to you ever Merciful" (4:29).

Wilders ends his film with the message, "it is not up to me, but to Muslims themselves to tear out the hateful verses from the Qur'an". However, not only are his selective citations obvious proofs of intellectual dishonesty, but the very Qur'anic verses he misquotes actually condemn aggression and preach restraint and fairness in the conduct of war against tyrants. These, without doubt, remain the values of every human being endowed with conscience.

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