

## Love and Islam

One friendly neo-conservative keeps asking me if there is love in Islam, and what the Quran says about forgiveness and reconciliation. Another question I get is - what does the Koran say about loving your enemies?

They are legitimate questions, especially in the present climate of the war on terrorism.

The more and more I think about this, I am reminded that the Quran gives broad guidelines for establishing a peaceful and progressive society within your family, your community, your country, and the rest of the world.

Love is not mentioned as many times in the Koran as it is in the Gospels, because Jesus never lived to see the fulfillment of his Kingdom, whereas in the case of Prophet Muhammad, he lived, regulated, controlled and interpreted the laws when he established an Islamic state.

In the case of Jesus, love, forgiveness and reconciliation became central to his teachings, because he did not want his followers to become vengeful for cutting his life short and causing suffering.

With Prophet Muhammad, his initial life of suffering and pain were replaced with successful fulfillment of his dream, which led to the establishment of the Islamic state in one succession after another.

Reconciliation came in the form of establishing a law-abiding Islamic state through the interpretation of the Quranic laws that guaranteed successful continuation of Islamic states for more than a thousand years. Hence, forgiveness and reconciliation came more from the point of view of victors or the vanquished.

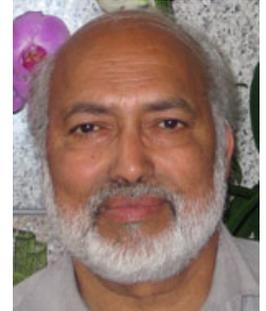
Thus, love, in Islam, plays a dominant role in raising a child from birth to 10 years, and discipline plays a major role during the formative years from 11 to 20.

During adulthood, love takes on a lesser role, when education, hard work and labor are key factors in arming a person with tools for living a better life. The goal for the well-disciplined citizen would be to take on the world and build communities with strong foundations based on sound family values.

In the case of loving your enemies, the Koran takes on a more practical approach of reforming and shepherding them to righteous ways before they get entitled to forgiveness.

Under the global war on terror, terrorists are not entitled to love and forgiveness if they do not change and reconcile first from within their hearts and minds.

Finally, Muslims should never consider non-Muslims as enemies, because the Koran acknowledges pluralism. Salvation is for all, as long as they believe in God and do righteous deeds.



The global war on terrorism is not a war on everyone of Islamic faith. It is focused on radicalized terrorists who take a narrow-minded view and who deny others their basic human rights.

The concept of unconditional love is reserved more for the immature or mentally unstable person — not for terrorists. The war against terrorism will ultimately lead to victory for freedom, liberty and justice that are so essential for establishing a society of love where justice can rein.

**Iftekhar Hai**, president of United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance (<http://umaia.net>), lives in South San Francisco and is active in numerous inter-religious organizations.

Next week: Anthony McGuire

### Comments

1) Iftekhar, we are proud of you, keep writing and keep building bridges, that is the most productive susatainable good will. I urge Muslims to write to the editor, at least in 50 words, however you feel about the article. But please do write. The news papers prefer local address for publication. You can write this much, it is 60 words.

Your column has appeared in 7 News papers, and that is really good news. The more the better.

Mike Ghouse

[www.worldMuslimCongress.com](http://www.worldMuslimCongress.com)

[Www.FoundationforPluralism.com](http://Www.FoundationforPluralism.com)

[www.MikeGhouse.sulekha.com](http://www.MikeGhouse.sulekha.com)

2) "Finally, Muslims should never consider non-Muslims as enemies, because the Koran acknowledges pluralism. Salvation is for all, as long as they believe in God and do righteous deeds."

3) Dear Br Hai,  
Thanks for an excellent article.

Yes, Quran acknowledges pluralism by saying, "There is no compulsion in religion; for you is your religion and for me is my religion". Also Quran describes that before the advent of Islam there existed other religions that Allah sent to earth through other prophets, and asks Muslims to treat them as the prophets of Islam.

That has been interpreted by most Islamic scholars that, Islam forbids the use of force and duress to ask non-Muslims to convert to Islam. And Quran tells Muslims to respect the faiths of others.

But I do not think Islam says that other religions are as good as Islam or that non-Muslims who believe in other religions will reach salvation through those other faiths and will be in paradise in the hereafter. And Islam forbids Shirk (associating partners with Allah in the Godhead).

This is my understanding. Could you please enlighten me. Thanks.

Kaleem Kawaja

**4)What's your definition of "terrorist", Iftekhar? And what's your definition of the term "War on Terror"?**

Ardeshir

**Response:** Iftekhar: I did not know I was a "neo-conservative"--you know how to hurt a guy...Your article raises more questions than it answers, but it is a start...hope it stimulates others in the Islamic world too...samnigro

**5) Dear Iftekhar,**

I'm delighted that your dialogue with Sam has led to your writing such a positive article. You clearly differentiate between Muslims who follow universal religious and moral principles on how to live a loving, humane and socially responsible life, and those who have hidden behind Islam while preaching organized hate and tolerance of terrorism against Muslims and non-Muslims who reject their perverted interpretations of Islam. More moderate Muslims should have your courage and universal respect for the diversity within humankind by joining you at the leading edge of the war of ideas that has reinforced global terrorism. Religious bullies should be rejected and shunned openly by moderate Muslim leaders in order to re-educate those now being recruited, sometimes openly and often clandestinely, to the Culture of Death advocated by hate-mongering perverters of Islam.

In global Peace, only through the Just Third Way to compassionate global Justice,

Norm

<http://www.cesj.org/thirdway/paradigmpapers/csid-040528.htm>

**6) Congratulations, Iftekhar, for your frequent publications in the Bay Area papers, and for your outreach for interfaith and peace.**

Margaret Jones, New Vision United Methodist Church.

**7) Absolutely wonderful explanation of the principle of Love comparing the interpersonal love and individual growth to inter-religious and inter-cultural love society's growth through the same stages of childhood, youth, adulthood, maturity and death.**

Thank you, Brother Hai for giving us another beautiful analogy. May God give you the best of rewards for this work?

Farrukh Shah Khan

**8) Assalamu alaikum dear brother, (from Tajikistan)**

I read your article. What you are doing is really great job. We wish to know more about inter-religious activities which are happening in USA.

In my country its almost the same people who understand Islam in a wrong way and they avoid religious conversation. In fact what a great religion Islam is. Daily recitation of Quran always give, new energy, lots of advises as to be honest and kind to your relatives neighbours, friends, love and respect to people and so much useful things . Iftekhar we hope soon to hear from you with your new article.

Wishing you all the best, with kind regards

Gulandom H.

Manager CC(Jalalidin Rumi , Central Asia )

**Ziyodullo Shahidi Musical and Cultural Museum (Tajikistan )**

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Sent: Friday, February 23, 2007 4:08 PM

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