

Title:

Islamic Intolerance

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646

Summary:

Islamic apologists keep telling us that the religion of Islam is a kind, tolerant and peaceful religion. Every time a woman is stoned or someone is beheaded or a homicide bomber blows up a bus or restaurant filled with innocent people, we are told that it is the work of Islamic fanatics and that true followers of Islam do not agree with these things.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Islamic apologists keep telling us that the religion of Islam is a kind, tolerant and peaceful religion. Every time a woman is stoned or someone is beheaded or a homicide bomber blows up a bus or restaurant filled with innocent people, we are told that it is the work of Islamic fanatics and that true followers of Islam do not agree with these things.

Now we find out that in Afghanistan, a country that is 99% Muslim, a man is being tried under Sharia (Islamic law) for apostasy, and if convicted, will face the death penalty.

What did this man do that was so horrible, so against the Islamic faith? He converted to Christianity, that's the terrible thing that he did. This is apparently one of the worst things a Muslim can do. He chose to give up the Islamic faith and therefore is so evil that he deserves to be put to death. He can be spared, however, if he agrees to become a Muslim again.

The Hadith (which is said to be the body of quotes attributed to Muhammad), Sahih Bukhari Vol. 9, book 84, number 57, has been interpreted as saying "Kill whoever changes his religion", so the Sharia court judge is proposing to do just that.

The Torah in Deuteronomy 13:6-10 has been interpreted as saying about apostastics "But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt

stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." yet I don't believe that any Israeli judge would ever even consider attempting to hand down any type of criminal sentence for apostasy.

If the Islamic religion is so kind, tolerant and peaceful, why are it's laws interpreted in such a barbaric and intolerant way by so many followers. I realize that not all Muslim countries follow Sharia law and that of those that do, not all are so fanatical. However, many Muslim countries do still practice amputation of one/both hand(s) for theft, stoning for adultery, and execution for apostasy. Other countries, including Iraq, that did not, in the past, follow Sharia law are now talking about setting up Sharia courts.

I also realize that not all Muslims interpret Islamic law the same way. Islamic law like any other body of laws is subject to interpretation and therefore can be interpreted liberally, moderately or fundamentally. The problem is that while some Muslims interpret Islamic law liberally or moderately, it seems that a large majority of the Muslims in the Arabic world interpret the law fundamentally (at least as it pertains to women and non believers).

Afganistan's constitution guarentees freedom of religion, however, in an interview, Afganistan's Foreign Minister stated that the government had "nothing to do" with the court case. He further stated that he hoped there would be a "satisfactory result" to the case. To me, this seems that he was saying that the Sharia court is not bound by Afgani law and can do as it pleases, thereby making the Afgani constitution worthless. It further leads to the belief that Afganistan is a democracy on paper only and is actually ruled by Islamic fundamentalists. These fundamentalists may not be as bad as the Taliban but, so far, they do not seem to be much better.

There are many religious groups that believe that apostasy is wrong and that their religion is the only true religion. However, I know of no country, in this day and age, other than certain Muslim countries, that would sentence a person to death for changing his or her religious beliefs. Such things did happen in the past, look at the Spanish inquisition, but are now considered repugnant.