

Christianity Under Islam

quotes by Raymond Ibrahim (promo)

Raymond Ibrahim has written a disturbing book “Crucified Again” which deals with a subject that has been ignored by the American media, the academy, and the government: the persecution of Christian minorities in Muslim-majority countries. I highly recommend that the reader get a hold of this well researched book. Raymond Ibrahim is an American of Egyptian Coptic (Christian) heritage who is fluent in both American English and Egyptian Arabic. The following is an excerpt from his book:

From its very beginnings, Islam’s appeal was tied to its ability to offer its followers worldly success and prosperity. From Muslim prophet Muhammad’s first successful caravan raid at Badr to the centuries of jihad conquests that followed, Islam was synonymous with power and success. From the seventh century to the nineteenth, Muslims were accustomed to being the victors. Up until that time, they saw in Christian Europe just another part of the world that in due time would also be conquered and annexed to Islam.

In just the first few decades of its existence, Islam had already conquered half of the Christian world’s lands - including regions that were the backbone of early Christianity, such as Syria (*the intellectual center of the Christian world-ed.*) and Egypt (*the breadbasket of the Christian world-ed.*) - while Europe was continually besieged (*the main reason for the Crusades-ed.*). In fact, Europe as we know it was forged in large measure by the Islamic conquests, which severed the Latin West from the Greek East, turning the once highly trafficked Mediterranean into a “Muslim Lake” - so that, in the words of medieval Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun, “the Christians could no longer float a plank upon the sea.” Thus, “the classic tradition (*Greek and Roman-ed.*) was shattered,” writes historian Henri Pirenne, “because Islam had destroyed the ancient unity of the Mediterranean.”

For centuries European Christians lived perpetually under threat of the Islamic conquest that had already forever changed the Mediterranean. Middle East historian Bernard Lewis writes,

“For more than a thousand years, Europe, that is to say, Christendom, was under constant threat of Islamic attack and conquest.” If the Muslims were repelled in one region, they appeared in greater strength in another. As far away as Iceland, Christians still prayed in their churches for God to save them from the “terror of the Turk.” These fears were not unfounded, since in 1627 Muslim corsairs (*pirates-ed.*) from North Africa raided their coasts and carried off four hundred captives, for sale in the slave market of Algiers.

Then the unthinkable happened. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte, an infidel from Christendom, invaded and subjugated Egypt, the heart of the Islamic world, with barely a struggle. This crushing defeat was followed by any number of European powers conquering and colonizing much of the Muslim world. As a result, for the first time in history, Muslims questioned the superior strength of Islam and its power to fulfill their desires; for the first time in history Muslims looked with awe and respect on the West. As a historian of the period put it, “Napoleon’s invasion introduced educated Egyptians to the ideas of the French Revolution,” which “generated a gnawing and uncomfortable feeling among them that the umma (*the Islamic community-ed.*) was not as perfect or as strong as they had imagined. Such uncertainty was the basis of new ideas and conceptions.”

It was one thing to hold unhesitatingly to Islam and Sharia when Islam was conquering and subjugating non-Muslims, as it had done for well over a millennium. It was quite another thing for Muslims to remain confident in the Islamic way when the despised Christian infidels were conquering and subjugating the lands of Islam with great ease - displaying their superior weapons and technology, not to mention all the other perks of Western civilization. In the oft-quoted words of Osama bin Laden, “When people see a strong horse and a weak horse, by nature, they will like the strong horse.”

For the first time Muslims, who for over a millennium had operated under the belief that might makes right and that Islam was the embodiment of might, began to emulate the West in everything from politics and government to everyday dress and etiquette. The Islamic way, the Sharia, was the old, failed way. To be successful and prosperous, one had to follow the West and its victorious way. Thus during the colonial era and into the mid-twentieth century, all things distinctly Islamic - from Islam's clerics to the woman's "hijab," or headscarf - were increasingly seen by Muslims as relics of a backward age, to be shunned. Most Muslims were Muslim in name only. One need only turn to the history of Turkey to demonstrate the intensity of the wholesale emulation of the West. In the early twentieth century, Turkey abolished the Ottoman Empire, the final caliphate of the Islamic world and disavowed its Islamic identity and heritage - even discarding the sacrosanct Arabic script for the Latin alphabet (*making it much easier for a Turk to learn to read and write his own language-ed.*) in order to be more European. Turkey went from being the standard-bearer of Islam and the epitome of Islamic supremacy and jihad for some five hundred years to being possibly the most Westernized Muslim nation in the world.

Turkey is known for modernization and Westernization under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. But the same trends that are at work in Turkey were also at work throughout much of the Muslim world. All of the popular Arab national movements that appeared in the twentieth century were distinctly secular and Westernized, certainly in comparison with the religious rhetoric that prevailed in earlier times. As late as 1953, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser poked fun at the hijab (*headscarf-ed.*) and the Muslim Brotherhood on Egyptian national television in front of a packed live audience - to wild applause and laughter. In the 1950s, few Egyptian women wore the hijab. Today the majority of women in Egypt veil themselves. Those who do not wear the hijab - mostly Christians - are often harassed and even sexually assaulted in the streets.

One natural byproduct of Muslims Westernizing was that, for the first time in history, the Christians of the Islamic world were by and large no longer oppressed - certainly not by the standards of their previous history under Islam. Two causes account for this Christian Golden Age in the Muslim world. In the first place the European powers, which in the nineteenth century still largely identified with Christianity, directly intervened in the Muslim world to liberate and protect Christians. Second and even more important was the fact that many Muslims emulated Western ways, naturally sloughing off their Islamic identity and mentality and the contempt for “infidels” that, as we shall see, is an integral part of that mentality. As a missionary to the Muslim world wrote in the early twentieth century, “tolerance toward converts from Islam seems often to be in direct proportion to the proximity of foreign government (*French and British-ed.*) and their influence, and the impact of Western civilization in breaking down fanaticism.” Indeed, because Muslims identified Christianity with Western civilization, which was widely acknowledged for its superiority, Christians were sometimes respected precisely because they were Christian.

It is this historical fact - that the colonial and post-colonial era, roughly 1850-1950, was the Golden Age for Christians in the Muslim world - that has created chronological confusions and intellectual pitfalls for Westerners who see events closer to their time as more representative of reality. Thus many Westerners see the contemporary persecution of Christians by Muslims as the historical aberration, and they seek vainly to explain that violence away without recourse to Islam, remembering the relatively non-violent Islam of just a few decades ago. They fail to understand that the Golden Age was the historical aberration - an exception to the rule, not the rule.

To put it in slightly different terms, the era when Christians lived in relative safety in the Muslim world is so much closer to us in time than the “storybook” centuries of persecution that many in the West cannot help but filter current events through this Golden Age

paradigm - though this paradigm fits the facts less and less with each passing day. After all, in the collective consciousness of recent generations, Christians under Islam had it pretty good. How can what we are hearing now - that they are being subjected to horrific and bloody persecution simply for being Christian - be real? Do not such stories belong in the distant and unenlightened past? There must be some reason - maybe poverty, or resentment of the “occupation” of Palestine or of Iraq or against the hegemony of the West in general - that explains why previously peaceful Muslims are now violently persecuting Christians. Surely it is a matter of economics or politics, an aberration that is destined to rectify itself.

But the facts speak for themselves. In 1900, at the height of the Golden Age, 20 percent of the Middle East was still Christian, whereas today less than 2 percent is, and the Christian population is rapidly dwindling. Indeed, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, “the flight of Christians out of the Middle East is unprecedented and it is increasing year by year.” In our lifetime “Christians might disappear altogether from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Egypt.”

What happened? If in the “Golden Age” leading up to the middle of the twentieth century Muslims were increasingly emulating the West exactly when and why did this stop? What caused the trend to reverse and start speeding in the opposite direction?

That Muslims have turned away from the West and back toward Islam is no secret. Of course there were always Muslims who still clung to the Islamic way, the Sharia, but in the early twentieth century it seemed obvious that they were on the wrong side of history. The future clearly seemed to belong to Westernization and secularization. And yet by the 1970s, there was no denying that Islam had returned in a very big way. By the 1970s, “Islam is the solution” became the clarion call of the Muslim world.

And where did Muslims, especially beginning in the 1960s and

1970s, learn to despise the West? The same place they had originally learned to respect the West - that is, from the West itself. It is no coincidence that the return of "Islamic fundamentalism," as it was called in the 1970s, followed close on the heels of the cultural revolution that took the West by storm beginning in the 1960s. Muslims learned contempt for the West from the new culture of sexual licentiousness, moral relativism, godlessness and even Western self-hatred that flooded Western societies in the 1960s, though they had roots going back decades earlier. These things were all tolerated or even celebrated in the mainstream of Western society. Yet such licentiousness and moral relativism proved intolerable to Muslim societies that had admired and emulated the West when it was still characterized by moral restraint. Muslims definitively rejected the 1960s Sexual Revolution. But they picked up another aspect of the West and its values by leftist Western intellectuals. Muslim opinion about the West soured and eventually turned hostile.

The west had earned Muslim respect in the era of Western might and confidence. But by the 1970s, Western intellectuals were pushing once-Westward-looking Muslims back to Islam. Consider the realm of historical studies alone: Christian Western civilization is now portrayed as the root cause of all the world's woes. Islamic civilization is now portrayed as just another noble victim of Christian depredation. The objective history of the relationship between Islam and the West has been turned on its head: Christian Crusaders have become greedy imperialists invading peaceful Muslim lands - without any mention of the fact that those "Muslim lands" were Christian lands centuries before Islam seized them by the sword and slowly decimated their indigenous Christian populations - Western academics and intellectuals make it a point to praise Muslim achievements, even where there are none - like President Obama, who ordered NASA to make Muslims **"feel good about their historic contributions to science."** *(There has been no Islamic contribution to science since 1300 A.D.; the zero, the number system based on ten, and algebra were invented by the Hindus of northern India*

centuries before Muhammad was born and before Islam was founded.-ed.)

Far from appeasing angry Muslims, such self-loathing and sycophantic behavior has prompted even more revulsion to Western culture in the Islamic world. Long gone are the days when the West, confident and proud of its own ways, attracted Muslims to its civilizational achievements. Now, apologizing for its “sins” and demonizing its own Christian heritage while whitewashing the cultures and histories of others, the West only pushes Muslims back to reclaiming their Islamic heritage.

Consider what a difference this turn in Western culture has made in the Islamic world. In the nineteenth century, when the West was unapologetically hegemonic, Muslims not only respected the West, but they also tried to emulate it. The reason for this admiration is simple: Islam, the quintessential religion of might makes right, teaches respect for power. When the West did not equivocate over its principles, Muslims saw power and confidence in those principles and found them worthy of copying. Such emulation went on until roughly the mid-twentieth century; it explains why much of the Muslim world Westernized and secularized, leading to a Golden Age of tolerance for Christian minorities. When the West, or at least popular culture in the West, became spiritually bankrupt and began apologizing for itself, Muslims, disgusted, turned back to Islam and its way, the Sharia - all, of course, to Western approval and encouragement. And now the myopic West cannot comprehend that Muslims have gone back to treating Christians in the exact same ways Muslims treated Christians before Muslims began to emulate the West. That history is all but lost. In fact, the cognitive dissonance between what the multiculturalists in the West believe about the benign and even superior culture of Islam, and what is reported as actually taking place in the Muslim world, is so great that many Westerners simply cannot take in the facts. *(The West overcame and surpassed the achievements of Islamic civilization at the time of Columbus. Today, to say that Western civilization is superior to Islamic civilization is comparable to saying that calculus is a more advanced form of mathematics*

than second-grade arithmetic.-ed.)

But the reality - whether we are ready to recognize it or not - is that as the Muslim world reclaims its identity, distinctly Islamic practices from centuries past are returning, including Muslim persecution of Christians. Tawfik Hamid, a former member of Egypt's terrorist organization the Islamic Group, correctly observes that "the proliferation of the hijab (*headscarf-ed.*) is strongly correlated with increased terrorism..." Terrorism became much more frequent in such societies as Indonesia, Egypt, Algeria, and the U.K. after the hijab became prevalent among Muslim women living in those communities. The reason for this correlation is simple: Islam's Sharia, its way, teaches intolerance and violence against non-Moslems, no less than it teaches that Muslim women should wear the hijab. Where one returns the other will natural follow.

The persecution of Christian minorities in Muslim nations is among the most visible aspects of resurgent Islam. Nowhere does Islam behave like Islam as it does at home - where it is in power and not in need of pretense. Today, as the Islamic world reclaims its identity, Christians are further demonized as the "main transmitters of Western and modern attitudes." And the work of eradicating them, which was began some 1,400 years ago (*the birth of Islam-ed.*), is now on its way to fulfillment.

To better understand the Christian persecution in Islamic lands, please read:

"Crucified Again. Exposing Islam's New War on Christians"

by Raymond Ibrahim.

exerpts, above, from
CRUCIFIED AGAIN

Exposing Islam's New War on Christians

by Raymond Ibrahim ~ Regnery Publishing, Inc.

to help warn everyone regarding this important information!