

# **The Agenda of Islam**

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This newsletter is bound to surprise most of our subscribers for three reasons: (1) It follows the previous one (No. 83) within less than a week ; (2) It is not written by an Adventist, and (3) it is more of a comparative analysis of the eschatology (vision of the End) of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, than a strict Biblical perspective on current issues.

What made me decide to post this lecture by Professor Moshe Sharon, is simply the fact he helps us understand what ultimately is at stake in the current conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. We are daily bombarded by news about the unfolding conflict in the Middle East. Unfortunately reporters offers no insight on what are the religious ideological driving forces behind this conflict. They simply reports the destruction of human lives and property, not the driving forces behind such senseless destructive activities.

This lecture by Prof. Moshe Sharon, which was emailed to me by one of our subscribers, caught my attention because it challenges us to understand a fundamental tenet of the Moslem faith, namely, that "Islam divides the world into two parts: one part that is already under the rule of Islam, the other part which must come under the rule of Islam in the future. And this can happen either if the rest of the world, which is non-Islamic, succumbs to Islam or is conquered by Islam." This division of the world was reflected in bin Laden's recent statement. He said, "These events have divided the whole world into two sides. The side of believers and the side of infidels."

During my recent visit to London I was made forcefully made aware of the fact that while Christianity is declining, the Moslem faith is growing, not only in England, but throughout most of Europe and the USA. The stark and sad reality is that while Moslems are infiltrating, penetrating, and successfully propagating their faith in the Western world, no Christian proselytism is allowed in strict Moslem countries. In fact the Moslems have succeeded in wiping out the Christian presence in countries like Lybia, Marocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, etc. At one time these countries had flourishing Christian communities. Some of the greatest Christian thinkers like Augustine and Tertullian, lived and worked in North African countries which were predominantly Christians. Today the number of Christians in these countries can be counted with the fingers of our hands.

Personally I believe that if the Moslems want to be allowed to promote their faith in Western Christian countries, then their Moslem countries must also grant Christians the same freedom to propagate their faith. But this will never happen. Why? Because of the exclusivistic nature of the Moslem faith which believes in bringing the world under the rule of Islam. I would urge you to read carefully this article. It is written by a knowledgeable scholar who will help you understand what reporters and politicians are not telling you. The reason is that few people understand the theological underpinning of the Moslem religion.

### **A WORD ABOUT PROFESSOR MOSHE SHARON**

Professor Moshe Sharon received his Doctorate in Medieval Islamic History from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He has served as an Advisor on Arab Affairs to former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin as well as the Ministry of Defense. He currently lectures as professor of Islamic History at the Hebrew University.

**END TIME ISSUES No 84:  
THE AGENDA OF ISLAM: A WAR BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS  
by PROFESSOR MOSHE SHARON,  
Professor of Islamic History at the Hebrew University, in Jerusalem**

The war has started a long time ago between two civilizations— between the civilization based on the Bible and the civilization based on the Koran. And this must be clear.

There is no fundamental Islam. "Fundamentalism" is a word that came from the heart of the Christian religion. It means faith that goes by the word of the Bible. Fundamental Christianity, or going with the Bible, does not mean going around and killing people. There is no fundamental Islam. There is only Islam full stop. The question is how the Koran is interpreted.

All of a sudden we see that the greatest interpreters of Islam are politicians in the western world. They know better than all the speakers in the mosques, all those who deliver terrible sermons against anything that is either Christian or Jewish. These western politicians know that there is good Islam and bad Islam. They know even how to differentiate between the two, except that none of them know how to read a word of Arabic.

### **THE LANGUAGE OF ISLAM**

You see, so much is covered by politically correct language that, in fact, the truth has been lost. For example, when we speak about Islam in the west, we try to use our own language and terminology. We speak about Islam in terms of democracy and fundamentalism, in terms of parliamentarism and all kinds of terms, which we take from our own dictionary. One of my professors and one of the greatest orientalists in the world says that using western culture to explain Islam is like describing a cricket game by a reporter in baseball terms. We cannot use for one culture or civilization the language of another. For Islam, you've got to use the language of Islam.

### **DRIVING PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM**

Let me explain the principles that are driving the religion of Islam. Of course, every Moslem has to acknowledge the fact that there is only one God. But it's not enough to say that there is only one God. A Moslem has to acknowledge the fact that there is one God and Mohamed is his prophet. These are the fundamentals of the religion that without them, one cannot be a Moslem.

But beyond that, Islam is a civilization. It is a religion that gave first and foremost a wide and unique legal system that engulfs the individual, society and nations with rules of behavior. If you are Moslem, you have to behave according to the rules of Islam which are set down in the Koran and which are very different than the teachings of the Bible.

### **THE BIBLE**

Let me explain the difference. The Bible is the creation of the spirit of a nation over a very, very long period, if we talk from the point of view of the scholar, and let me remain scholarly. But there is one thing that is important in the Bible. It leads to salvation. It leads to salvation in two ways.

In Judaism, it leads to national salvation — not just a nation that wants to have a state, but a nation that wants to serve God. That's the idea behind the Hebrew text of the Bible.

The New Testament that took the Hebrew Bible moves us toward personal salvation. So we have got these two kinds of salvation which, from time to time, meet each other. But the key word is salvation. Personal salvation means that each individual

is looked after by God, Himself, who leads a person through His word to salvation. This is the idea in the Bible, whether we are talking about the Old or the New Testament. All of the laws in the Bible, even to the minutest ones, are, in fact directed toward this fact of salvation.

Secondly, there is another point in the Bible, which is highly important. This is the idea that man was created in the image of God. Therefore, you don't just walk around and obliterate the image of God. Many people, of course, used Biblical rules and turned them upside down. History has seen a lot of massacres in the name of God and in the name of Jesus. But as religions, both Judaism and Christianity in their fundamentals speak about honoring the image of God and the hope of salvation. These are the two basic fundamentals.

## **THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM**

Now let's move to the essence of Islam. Islam was born with the idea that it should rule the world. Let's look, then, at the difference between these three religions. Judaism speaks about national salvation — namely that at the end of the story, when the world becomes a better place, Israel will be in its own land, ruled by its own king and serving God. Christianity speaks about the idea that every single person in the world can be saved from his sins, while Islam speaks about ruling the world. I can quote here in Arabic, but there is no point in quoting Arabic, so let me quote a verse in English. "Allah sent Mohammed with the true religion so that it should rule over all the religions."

The idea, then, is not that the whole world will become a Moslem world at this time, but that the whole world will be subdued under the rule of Islam. When the Islamic empire was established in 634 AD, within seven years (640) the core of the empire was created. The rules that were taken from the Koran and from the tradition that was ascribed to the prophet Mohammed, were translated into a real legal system. Jews and Christians could live under Islam provided they paid poll tax and accepted Islamic superiority. Of course, they had to be humiliated. And Jews and Christians living under Islam are humiliated to this very day.

Mohammed held that all the Biblical prophets were Moslems. Mohammed did accept the existence of all the Biblical prophets before him. However he also said that all these prophets were Moslems. Abraham was a Moslem. In fact, Adam himself was the first Moslem. Isaac and Jacob and David and Solomon and Moses and Jesus were all Moslems, and all of them had writings similar to the Koran. Therefore, world history is Islamic history because all the heroes of history were Moslems.

Furthermore, Moslems accept the fact that each of these prophets brought with him some kind of a revelation. Moses, brought the Taurat, which is the Torah, and Jesus brought the Ingeel, which is the Evangelion or Gospel - namely the New Testament.

## **THE BIBLE VERSUS THE KORAN**

Why then is the Bible not similar to the Koran? Mohamed explains that the Jews and Christians forged their books. Had they not been changed and forged, they would have been identical to the Koran. But because Christians and Jews do have some truth, Islam concedes that they cannot be completely destroyed by war [for now].

Nevertheless, the laws are very clear — Jews and Christians have no rights whatsoever to independent existence. They can live under Islamic rule provided they keep to the rules that Islam promulgates for them.

## **ISLAMIC RULE AND THE JIHAD**

What happens if Jews and Christians don't want to live under the rules of Islam? Then Islam has to fight them and this fighting is called Jihad. Jihad means war against those people who don't want to accept the Islamic superior rule. That's jihad. They may be Jews; they may be Christians; they may be Polytheists. But since we don't have too many Polytheists left, at least not in the Middle East - their war is against the Jews and Christians.

A few days ago, I received a pamphlet that was distributed in the world by bin Laden. He calls for jihad against America as the leader of the Christian world, not because America is the supporter of Israel, but because Americans are desecrating Arabia with their filthy feet. There are Americans in Arabia where no Christians should be. In this pamphlet there is not a single word about Israel. Only that Americans are desecrating the home of the prophet.

## **TWO HOUSES**

The Koran sees the world as divided into two - one part which has come under Islamic rule and one part which is supposed to come under Islamic rule in the future. There is a division of the world which is very clear. Every single person who starts studying Islam knows it.

The world is described as Dar al-Islam (the house of Islam) - that's the place where Islam rules - and the other part which is called Dar al-Harb - the house of war. Not the "house of non-Muslims," but the "house of war." It is this house of war which as to be, at the end of time, conquered. The world will continue to be in the house of war until it comes under Islamic rule.

This is the norm. Why? Because Allah says it's so in the Koran. God has sent Mohammed with the true religion in order that the truth will overcome all other religions.

## **ISLAMIC LAW**

Within the Islamic vision of this world, there are rules that govern the lives of the Moslems themselves, and these rules are very strict. In fundamentals, there are no differences between schools of law. However, there are four streams of factions within Islam with differences between them concerning the minutiae of the laws. All over the Islamic world, countries have favored one or another of these schools of laws.

The strictest school of law is called Hanbali, mainly coming out of Saudi Arabia. There are no games there, no playing around with the meanings of words. If the Koran speaks about war, then it's war.

There are various perspectives in Islam with different interpretations over the centuries. There were good people that were very enlightened in Islam that tried to understand things differently. They even brought traditions from the mouth of the prophet that women and children should not be killed in war.

These more liberal streams do exist, but there is one thing that is very important for us to remember. The Hanbali school of law is extremely strict, and today this is the school that is behind most of the terrorist powers. Even if we talk about the existence of other schools of Islamic law, when we're talking about fighting against the Jews, or fighting against the Christian world led by America, it is the Hanbali school of law that is being followed.

## **ISLAM AND TERRITORY**

This civilization created one very important, fundamental rule about territory. Any territory that comes under Islamic rule cannot be de-Islamized. Even if at one time or another, the [non-Moslem] enemy takes over the territory that was under Islamic rule, it is considered to be perpetually Islamic. This is why whenever you hear about the Arab/Israeli conflict, you hear: territory, territory, territory. There are other aspects to the conflict, but territory is highly important.

The Christian civilization has not only been seen as a religious opponent, but as a dam stopping Islam from achieving its final goal for which it was created.

Islam was created to be the army of God, the army of Allah. Every single Moslem is a soldier in this army. Every single Moslem that dies in fighting for the spread of Islam is a shaheed (martyr) no matter how he dies, because - and this is very important — this is an eternal word between the two civilizations. It's not a war that stops. This war is there because it was created by Allah. Islam must be the ruler. This is a war that will not end.

## **ISLAM AND PEACE**

Peace in Islam can exist only within the Islamic world; peace can only be between Moslem and Moslem. With the non-Moslem world or non-Moslem opponents, there can be only one solution — a cease fire until Moslems can gain more power. It is an eternal war until the end of days. Peace can only come when the Islamic side wins.

The two civilizations can only have periods of cease-fires. And this idea of cease-fire is based on a very important historical precedent, which, incidentally, Yasser Arafat referred to when he spoke in Johannesburg after he signed the Oslo agreement with Israel. Let me remind you that the document speaks of peace —you wouldn't believe what you are reading! You would think that you were reading some science-fiction piece. I mean when you read it, you can't believe that this was signed by Israelis who are actually acquainted with Islamic policies and civilization.

A few weeks after the Oslo agreement was signed, Arafat went to Johannesburg, and in a mosque there he made a speech in which he apologized, saying, "Do you think I signed something with the Jews which is contrary to the rules of Islam?" (I have obtained a copy of Arafat's recorded speech so I heard it from his own mouth.) Arafat continued, "That's not so. I'm doing exactly what the prophet Mohammed did."

Whatever the prophet is supposed to have done becomes a precedent. What Arafat was saying was, "Remember the story of Hodaybiya." The prophet had made an agreement there with the tribe of Kuraish for 10 years. But then he trained 10,000 soldiers and within two years marched on their city of Mecca. He, of course, found some kind of pretext.

Thus, in Islamic jurisdiction, it became a legal precedent which states that you are only allowed to make peace for a maximum of 10 years. Secondly, at the first instance that you are able, you must renew the jihad [thus breaking the "peace" agreement].

In Israel, it has taken over 50 years in this country for our people to understand that they cannot speak about [permanent] peace with Moslems. It will take another 50 years for the western world to understand that they have got a state of war with the Islamic civilization that is virile and strong. This should be understood: When we talk about war and peace, we are not talking in Belgium, French, English, or German terms. We are talking about war and peace in Islamic terms.

## **CEASE-FIRE AS A TACTICAL CHOICE**

What makes Islam accept cease-fire? Only one thing: when the enemy is too strong. It is a tactical choice. Sometimes, he may have to agree to a cease-fire in the most humiliating conditions. It's allowed because Mohammed accepted a cease-fire under humiliating conditions. That's what Arafat said to them in Johannesburg.

When western policy makers hear these things, they answer, "What are you talking about? You are in the Middle Ages. You don't understand the mechanisms of politics." Which mechanisms of politics? There are no mechanisms of politics where power is. And I want to tell you one thing: we haven't seen the end of it, because the minute a radical Moslem power has atomic, chemical or biological weapons, they will use it. I have no doubt about that.

Now, since we face war and we know that we cannot get more than a temporary cease-fire, one has to ask himself what is the major component of an Israeli/Arab cease-fire. It is that the Islamic side is weak and the Israeli's side is strong. The relations between Israel and the Arab world in the last 50 years since the establishment of our State have been based only on this idea, the deterrent power.

## **WHEREVER YOU HAVE ISLAM, YOU WILL HAVE WAR**

The reason that we have what we have in Yugoslavia and other places is because Islam succeeded into entering these countries. Wherever you have Islam, you will have war. It grows out of the attitude of Islamic civilization. What are the poor people in the Philippines being killed for? What's happening between Pakistan and India?

## **ISLAMIC WAR BY INFILTRATION**

Furthermore, there is another fact that must be remembered. The Islamic world has not only the attitude of open war, but also the method of war by infiltration. One of the things which the western world is not paying enough attention to is the tremendous growth of Islamic power in the western world. What happened in America and the Twin Towers is not something that came from the outside. And if America doesn't wake up, one day the Americans will find themselves in a chemical war and most likely in an atomic war— inside the U.S.

## **END OF DAYS**

It is highly important to understand how a civilization sees the end of days. In Christianity and in Judaism, we know exactly what is the vision of the end of days.

In Judaism, it is going to be as in Isaiah — peace between nations, not just one nation, but between all nations. People will not have any more need for weapons and nature will be changed — a beautiful end of days and the kingdom of God on earth.

Christianity goes as far as Revelation to see a day that Satan himself is obliterated. There are no more powers of evil. That's the vision.

I'm speaking now as a historian. I try to understand how Islam sees the end of days. In the end of days, Islam sees a world that is totally Moslem, completely Moslem under the rule of Islam. Complete and final victory. Christians will not exist, because according to many Islamic traditions, the Moslems who are in hell will have to be replaced by somebody and they'll be replaced by the Christians.

The Jews will no longer exist, because before the coming of the end of days, there is going to be a war against the Jews where all Jews should be killed. I'm quoting now from the heart of Islamic tradition, from the books that are read by every child in school. The Jews will all be killed. They'll be running away and they'll be hiding behind trees and rocks, and on that day Allah will give mouths to the rocks and trees and they will say, "Oh Moslem come here, there is a Jew behind me, kill him." Without this, the end of days cannot come. This is a fundamental of Islam.

## **IS THERE A POSSIBILITY TO END THIS DANCE OF WAR?**

The question which we in Israel are asking ourselves is what will happen to our country? Is there a possibility to end this dance of war. The answer is, "No. Not in the foreseeable future." What we can do is reach a situation where for a few years we may have relative quiet.

But for Islam, the establishment of the state of Israel was a reverse of Islamic history. First, Islamic territory was taken away from Islam by Jews. You know by now that this can never be accepted, not even one meter. So everyone who thinks Tel Aviv is safe is making a grave mistake. Territory, which at one time was dominated by Islamic rule, now has become non-Moslem. Non-Moslems are independent of Islamic rule; Jews have created their own independent state. It is anathema.

And (this is the worse) Israel, a non-Moslem state, is ruling over Moslems. It is unthinkable that non-Moslems should rule over Moslems.

I believe that Western civilization should hold together and support each other. Whether this will happen or not, I don't know. Israel finds itself on the front lines of this war. It needs the help of its sister civilization. It needs the help of America and Europe. It needs the help of the Christian world. One thing I am sure about, this help can be given by individual Christians who see this as the road to salvation.

## **BACCHIOCCHI'S FINAL COMMENT**

Prof. Moshe Sharon's lecture reveals his Jewish concerns, especially over the perennial threat posed by the Moslem's vision of the End to the survival of Israel. What I found helpful in his lecture is the simple and clear way in which Sharon explains the difference between the Moslem vision of the End, and that of Judaism and Christianity.

While both Judaism and Christianity envision the End as a new world where peace prevails among the nations and evil is eradicated, Islam sees the End as a world totally dominated and ruled by Moslems. The latter believe that eventually they will succeed in eradicating the presence of Christian, Jews, and all other kinds of "infidels" from the face of the earth.

Frankly, I find this exclusivistic, intolerant, and arrogant eschatological Moslem vision of the End, frightening, to say the least. Such a vision can drive Moslem nations that are developing biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons, like Libya or Iraq, to use them in order to advance the cause of Islam and hasten the establishment of the Moslem Kingdom upon this earth. What all of this means is that what the Moslems are ultimately fighting for, is not merely for more territory for the Palestinians in the Middle East, but for a total control of the territory of this planet.

It is imperative for political leaders and Christians to understand that the agenda of Islam extends beyond Palestine, to embrace the whole world. The Christian response to the Moslem agenda is to find creative ways to reach the Moslems with the Good News of the Gospel. We need to help our Moslem friends understand and experience the Power of the Gospel, which is personal peace with God in this present life, and global eternal peace in the world to come. The latter peace is achieved, not by the domination of any particular nation, but by the establishment of the Kingdom of God after the eradication of all forms of evil.

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