



CLASHING CIVILIZATIONS

America & Islam

By: Darrell Sutton

PART ①

The word 'culture' is a term that historians often struggle to define. In whatever way one works toward a definition it is understood that within its meaning lay a variety of ideologies, which have, in some way or another, affected the arts, customs, and ideas of a particular social group. When one attempts to put any group of persons under a microscope there are many uncommon traits present but there is always some common thread that binds together the parts as a whole. This should be kept in mind when the reader considers the composite nature of the United States. From the earlier experimental settlements of the puritan pilgrims to the catholic settlements in Maryland (Mary's land), the immigrants of days gone by came to this land with differing dialects, lifestyles & objectives but later became one nation under God. America is a nation consisting of more than 150 nationalities and ethnic groups. Though different, historically, an attempt had always been made to cause each citizen to have respect for and appreciation of our heritage and history. Rooted in principles embodied in Greco-Roman ways of old it is possible to discover many of the virtues and disciplines that have come to shape our thinking in Western Civilization; In particular, the Greek's way of 'critiquing' themselves, thoroughly examining their beliefs, actions and sayings with a view toward the betterment of its people. By discarding ideas that were a

nation that less than 100 years ago would still technically (more or less) be called a Christian nation. Even unto this day Christianity can still be seen as a civic religion in our society. Though denounced by many today as all but forgotten, the inscriptions on capstones, gravestones, and cornerstones all over the public arena prove the vitality of a Christendom that impacted our country historically, and unto now. Both publicly and privately, the remnants of Christianity are there to remind us of the faith of our fathers.

If we now turn the eye to the regions of Islam our discussion moves into a wholly different arena. For the Middle East, where much of Islam presently reigns, the foundations are vastly different from the Christian soil in which American culture arose. 1400 years ago Muhammad established the Arabian continent's first theocracy, constitution and all, in the city of Medina. A small cadre of men forcefully reshaped the landscape of their world. In a span of two decades the religion of Islam spread across the area through warfare and political subterfuge. Meanwhile, all, other than Islamic ideas and beliefs were put down and/or annihilated. No other culture was thought to be able to rival the genius of Islam as outlined in the 'Holy Quran.' Believed to have descended from God above, *1 each nation (and each sub group) was required to live in conformity to the teachings of the prophet Muhammad.

The Muslim historiographers of classical Islam normally viewed the events of their past in light of the narratives revolving around Muhammad's ministry within Arabia. In the West, the dating of events was already demarcated by the birth of Christ. Muslims, on the other hand, viewed their beginnings with Muhammad's flight (hegira) from Mecca to the city of Medina. Thus, the Muslim calendar divides its history with the symbols A.H. (after hegira). All history prior to this era came to be known universally as the age of ignorance. Muhammad's ascent to Medina finally led to the consolidation of Muhammad's power as both cleric & king. With turban & crown on his head, his long arm reached forth to strike all of those who practiced other faiths. Two groups of people, (Jews and Christians), were allowed a special status as 'people of the book.' However, In accordance with Islamic law their non-Muslim status demands that they pay a special tax.

One notable feature of Islamic culture (which needs further discussion) in the Middle East is the inability to look at itself critically. This is a world where it is against Islamic law to speak negatively about the majority religion, its prophet, or of the Quran. Let's remember that here in America there are those who castigate Jesus as a person and blaspheme Jesus' name daily in film and in print. And until now, no one has blown up print shops or newspaper stands. However,

across Europe, the world stared at the TV in disbelief as moderate Muslims attacked embassies and rioted around the world when some derogatory cartoons appeared in a Denmark paper. The one weakness of Islam (that I see) is its tendency to war against independent thinking. You can see this in the imprisonment of journalists and in the shutting down of newspapers in various Islamic dominated societies. There are vocal opponents of radical Islam who claim that the bin Ladens and Ahmadinijads of the world do not represent Islam proper. But if you study these men out carefully you will find behind them a network of billions of dollars and millions of supporters. The former, a Sunni Wahabi and the latter a Twelver Shia, *2 exert massive influence upon the minds of many. Diametrically opposed doctrinally, nevertheless, they are unified idealistically; desiring to see Islam rule supreme over the earth. {See surah 9:5 and any commentary :}

Narrated by: Abu Hurairah

Allah’s messenger said “I have been ordered to fight the people till they say: {Iaa ilaha illallah} there is no god but god (who alone is to be worshipped) and whoever said there is no god but god Allah will save his property and his life from me.”

From the traditions of the Prophet Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 6924, 6925 commentary.

At the time of Muhammad’s move to Medina he was under the impression that the Jews and Christians of that region would gladly accept him as their messiah and leader. Believing, as he did, that Islam was the fulfillment of these two peoples who had received revelation he anticipated unity. At this point there was a degree of peace among them. But shortly after his arrival the Jews rejected his claims and the Christians saw him as false. These events (read: betrayals) led to the reception of Surah 9:29, which gives Muhammad and his clan the right to subjugate any and all unbelievers; even if it meant using arms to bring them to a place of submission, ensuring that Islam would thrive without the problems posed by the peoples of the book. Suffice it to say that this plan is still in effect unto the present. ■ *to be concluded APRIL 2008*

Footnotes

1. The Quran is described as having been ‘sent down’ from heaven. The underlying Arabic word is used no less than 200 times in the text of the Quran.
2. The Wahabi form of Islam is the dominant form present now in Saudi Arabia with its roots beginning in the 18th century with Muhammad abdul Wahab, an Islamic jurist. The Shia sect of Islam originated just after the death of Muhammad. They consider themselves to be partisans of the prophet’s cousin Ali. Who they believe to be the true successor to Muhammad.

Questions regarding the material in this article will be reviewed and answered in future publications. Questions should be directed to ron@hilton-sutton.org or may be mailed to the Hilton Sutton World Ministries office.



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