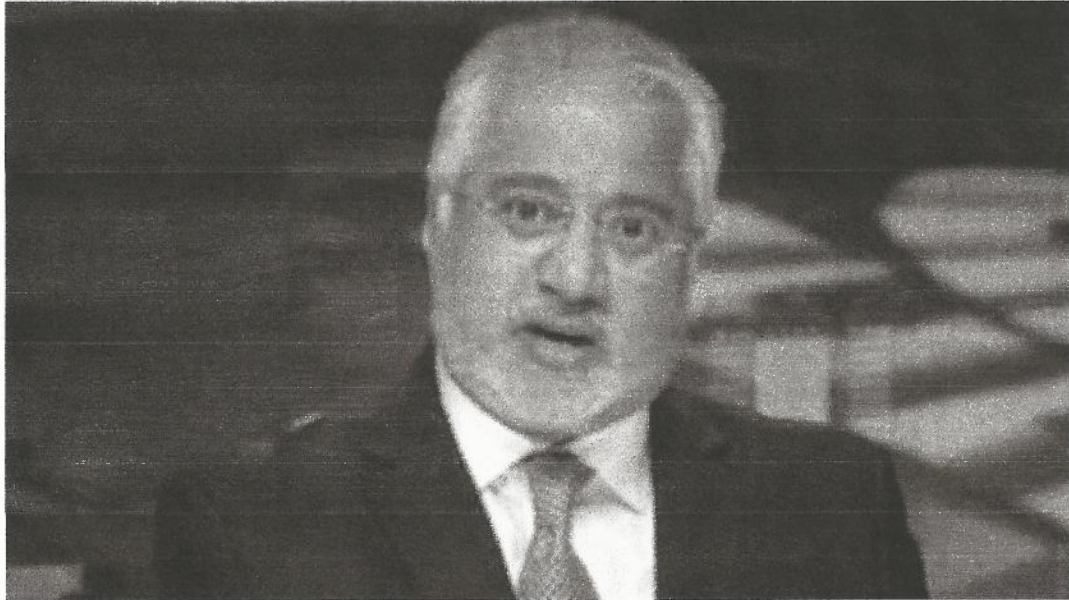


THE FANTASY ISLAM OF MIKE MOHAMED GHOUSE

A moderate Muslim's personal version of Islam -- and its curious non-relationship with Islamic doctrine.

September 3, 2015 Dr. Stephen M. Kirby



Fantasy Islam: A game in which an audience of non-Muslims wish with all their hearts that Islam was a "Religion of Peace," and a Muslim strives to fulfill that wish by presenting a personal version of Islam that has little foundation in Islamic doctrine.

As I pointed out in an earlier article (<http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/259380/lure-fantasy-islam-dr-stephen-m-kirby>), "Fantasy Islam" is a popular game among many non-Muslims and so-called "moderate" or "reformist" Muslims. Mike Mohamed Ghouse appears to be such a Muslim.

Ghouse was born Mohamed Ghouse in India (He adopted the name "Mike" later). He was raised as a Muslim until he became an atheist in the late 1960s; he returned to Islam in the late 1990s and lives in the United States. Ghouse is a frequent guest commentator on Fox News and syndicated talk radio programs, and he writes for major newspapers. Ghouse also plays Fantasy Islam.

Apostasy

In an article titled "Qur'aan on Apostasy (<http://quraan-today.blogspot.com/2009/08/quraan-on-apostasy.html>)," Ghouse makes the following claim about the punishment for apostasy:

Unfortunately, it is a common belief that 'death' should be the punishment for apostasy. However, the Qur'aan mentions nothing of such punishment, so why should we impose such a cruel and inhumane form of punishment? Are we so insecure about our own religion that if anyone is to leave it we kill them?

But Ghouse is wrong: In 4:89 of the Koran Allah commands Muslims to take hold of those apostates who have left Islam and "kill them wherever you find them."

And, for the sake of argument, even if it wasn't in the Koran, death for apostasy is still a part of Islam because that is what Muhammad commanded. Muhammad said that death was the penalty for a Muslim who left Islam (e.g. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Nos. 6878 and 6923; and *Sahih Muslim*, No. 1676). Muhammad even specified the nature of that death:

If someone changes his religion - then strike off his head!

Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik ibn Anas, 36.18.15, in a section titled "Judgement on Abandonment of Islam."

So we see that this "cruel and inhumane form of punishment" for apostasy is well-grounded in Islamic doctrine.

Muslim-Americans 'Uphold' the U.S. Constitution

In an article titled "Muslims are an integral part of American Heritage (<http://theghousediary.blogspot.com/2015/07/happy-4th-muslims-are-integral-part-of.html>)," Ghouse made the following statement:

As American Muslims we uphold, protect, defend and celebrate the values enshrined in the U.S. constitution.

Islamic doctrine, found in the verses of the Koran and the teachings of Muhammad (the *Sunnah*), is diametrically opposed to the U.S. Constitution. Consider just these three amendments to our Constitution:

1st Amendment – Freedom of Religion and Speech: The penalty for a Muslim who wants to leave Islam is death (4:89 and *Sunnah*). Non-Muslims are given the option of fighting to the death, converting to Islam, or paying the jizyah (9:5, 9:29, and *Sunnah*). Once Allah and Muhammad have decided on a matter, Muslims are not allowed to disagree (33:36, 4:115), and criticism of Muhammad is cursed by Allah and punishable by death (33:57, and *Sunnah*).

8th Amendment – Cruel and Unusual Punishment Is Prohibited: Islam commands the following punishments: Flogging (24:2), Stoning (*Sunnah*), Amputation for Theft (5:38 and *Sunnah*), Beheading (8:12, 47:4, and *Sunnah*), Crucifixion (5:33), and Cutting-off of Hands and Feet from Opposite Sides for waging war against Islam (5:33).

13th Amendment – Prohibition of Slavery: Slavery, and using captured non-Muslim women as sex slaves ("those whom your right hands possess") is allowed in Islam (e.g. 2:221, 4:3, 4:24, 4:92, 23:6, 24:58, 33:50, and *Sunnah*).

So just by considering these three amendments, we can see that if Muslim-Americans believe in Islamic doctrine, they cannot "uphold, protect, defend and celebrate the values enshrined" in the Constitution.

The 'Best Way to Understand' the Koran

What is the "best way" to understand the Koran? Ghouse wrote (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-ghouse/quran-is-not-for-muslims_b_6174940.html#es_share_ended) this simple explanation:

The best way to understand Quran [sic] is to remember, "If it is not about justice, mercy and creating harmony", then the translation is wrong.

The immediate response to Ghouse's statement is to look at the preceding section involving the three Amendments to our Constitution. There is little justice, mercy and harmony there.

But Ghouse also said that Marmaduke Pickthall's translation of the Koran, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, was one of three translations he recommends (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-ghouse/quran-is-not-for-muslims_b_6174940.html). So let's look for the justice, mercy and harmony in some of the verses from Pickthall's translation:

- "Warfare is ordained for you, though it is hateful unto you; but it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knoweth, ye know not." (2:216)
- "In truth the disbelievers [non-Muslims] are an open enemy to you." (4:101)
- "O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is (one) of them. Lo! Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk." (5:51)
- "Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the

- poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (9:5)
- "O Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers [non-Muslims] and the hypocrites! Be harsh with them. Their ultimate abode is hell, a hapless journey's-end." (9:73)
 - "Lo! those who disbelieve [in Islam], among the People of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] and the idolaters, will abide in fire [sic] of hell. They are the worst of created beings." (98:6)

There is not a lot of justice, mercy and harmony in these verses from Pickthall's translation, so according to Ghouse's standard, he appears to be recommending a translation of the Koran that is "wrong."

Allah Loves Everybody

In an article titled "Quran is not for Muslims (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-ghouse/quran-is-not-for-muslims_b_6174940.html#es_share_ended)," Ghouse wrote that

God [Allah] is not the God of Muslims and no where he claims that in Quran [sic] ...God loves us all, and no one is deprived of his love...

In reality we find that in the Koran Allah states that the only religion acceptable to him is Islam (e.g. 3:19 and 3:85). And Allah states that Islam is to be made superior over all other religions, even if the non-Muslims don't like it (e.g. 9:33, 48:28, and 61:9). Allah curses the Jews and Christians (9:30). He states that non-Muslims are among the worst of creatures who "will abide in the fire of Hell" (98:6), while Muslims are the best of creatures (3:110 and 98:7). Non-Muslims are "open enemies" to Muslims (4:101) and Jews are among the worst of those enemies (5:82). And Allah commands Muslims to be harsh toward non-Muslims (e.g., 8:57, 9:73, 9:123, and 48:29) and to kill those non-Muslims (9:5).

In spite of Ghouse's claim, and as I noted in more detail in a previous article (<http://www.frontpagemag.com/2014/dr-stephen-m-kirby/do-we-all-believe-in-the-same-god>), Allah is only the god of Islam and the Muslims, and Allah has no love for non-Muslims.

The Ubiquitous 2:62

Chapter 2, verse 62 of the Koran is commonly quoted by Muslim-Americans to indicate that Judaism and Christianity are respected in Islam and the adherents of those two faiths will be rewarded by Allah. Ghouse continues with this theme in the article "Quran is not for Muslims (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-ghouse/quran-is-not-for-muslims_b_6174940.html#es_share_ended):

[I]f you take care of his creation (neighbor), you need not worry; your rewards are

with him. Just to make sure we understand this precisely, he says, whether you are a Jew or a Christian and by corollary other, if you take care of your neighbor, I will take care of you (2:62).

Here is Chapter 2, verse 62

Verily, those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

In spite of what Ghouse and other Muslim-Americans claim, this verse only means that Jews and Christians would be rewarded for the good deeds they did *before* the advent of Islam. After the advent of Islam, *righteous good deeds* would be accepted by Allah only if they are done by Muslims. And this verse was actually abrogated by 3:85 which stated that Islam is the only acceptable religion to Allah, and non-Muslims will be "losers" in the Hereafter (e.g. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi Vol. 1*, and *Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan*).

Conclusion

As is common in Fantasy Islam, Ghouse's personal version of Islam has little, if any, support from Islamic doctrine, and actually often runs counter to that doctrine. This appears to be of little concern for many in his non-Muslim audience because such personal versions relieve their concerns about Islam and allow them to continue to consider the jihadists as just a fringe group of "radicals" who have "hijacked" and "perverted" the Religion of Peace. Ignorance, whether willful or not, can be a great anesthesia. But anesthesia is only temporary and will not alter the world going on around you, and to which you will eventually reawaken.

◆ **Tags:** Islam, koran, moderate islam, Radical Islam, reform

ABOUT DR. STEPHEN M. KIRBY

Dr. Stephen M. Kirby is the author of three books about Islam. His latest is "Islam According to Muhammad, Not Your Neighbor."