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Zuhdi Jasser Blames "Alt-Jihadists" For The Failure Of Aspiring Muslim Reformers

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"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."

I read Dr. Zuhdi Jasser's recent article titled "[There's An Emerging 'Alt-Jihad' Movement in the U.S. – But It's Not Muslims Who Are Pushing It.](#)" The fact that he repeatedly mentioned me as one of the "Alt-Jihadists" was no surprise, as he has done this previously. What I found disappointing was his reliance on vague, sweeping statements such as:

"The insidious, myopic, and extreme nature" of the Alt-Jihad.

"The alt-jihad is simple, simplistic, self-serving and dangerous."

"Alt-jihadists live in a world where truth and intellectual credibility are optional."

"...the alt-jihad are useful idiots for Islamist jihadists..."

These are not useful phrases if one is serious about discussing the viability of his quest for "Muslim reform."

However, they are useful phrases for deflecting folks away from the real reasons aspiring "Muslim reformers" like Jasser are failing. As I wrote in an [article](#) sometime back, there are reasons why "Muslim reformers" are failing that have nothing to do with the "Alt-Jihad":

1. "Reformers" create their own new versions of Islam, relying on their own personal opinions and interpretations, and arbitrarily dismissing aspects of Islamic history and centuries of established Muslim scholarship. An example of this is when Jasser recently [told Glenn Beck](#) that in order to "reform" Islam, they needed to "come up with" modern myths about Muhammad in order to create "an American type of Islam"; here is what Jasser said:

"We have to come up — call it mythology. Call it what you want. We have to come up with narratives of the Prophet Muhammad that are 21st century narratives and call that reform and renew the branding of Islam to an American type of Islam that's compatible with our Constitution."

Jasser is saying that the history of Muhammad, reported over the centuries by authoritative Muslim scholars, is disturbing to 21st Century readers and therefore needs to be recreated.

2. "Reformers" claim to follow the Koran, but actually go against verses of the Koran by arbitrarily dismissing one of the two columns upon which Islam rests: the Sunnah of their Prophet Muhammad (the examples, ways, and teachings of Muhammad that have become rules to be followed by Muslims). Verses in the Koran (e.g. 4:80, 4:115, 33:21 and 59:7) command Muslims to obey and follow the example of Muhammad; Muhammad's commands and examples are found in the Sunnah. Jasser has not talked about dismissing the entire Sunnah, but with his quest to come up with a new "mythology" about Muhammad he will have to dismiss the parts which make folks uncomfortable in

the 21st Century; this means most of the Sunnah will have to go under Jasser's plan. 3. "Reformers" go against the commands of Allah in the Koran and the teachings of Muhammad by picking and choosing among, and actually dismissing verses in the Koran. For example, in his book "A Battle for the Soul of Islam" (2013 Paperback Edition, p. 252) Jasser made the following statement:

"Nowhere in the Qur'an does God tell Muslims that they must repeat and thus emulate the Prophet Muhammad's role and actions as a military or governmental leader."

What Jasser ignored was Chapter 33, Verse 21 of the Koran:

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much."

There are no limitations here on the circumstances in which Muhammad is to be considered a good example. In fact, as authoritative Koran commentaries (tafsirs) have pointed out for centuries, this verse was actually "revealed" as a result of Muhammad's military leadership and the example he set for his Muslim warriors during the Battle of the Trench in 627 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, p. 658; Tafsir Al-Jalalayn, p. 900; Tafsir Ibn 'Abbas, p. 546; and Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan, Vol. 4, p. 374).

4. "Reformers" personally decide which hadiths (reports about the teachings of Muhammad) are authentic, again arbitrarily dismissing centuries of established Muslim scholarship. For example, in a 2010 radio [interview](#) Jasser said he didn't believe that Muhammad had really spoken what was in the hadith about killing a Jew hiding behind every stone (Time: 17:58). Here is that hadith:

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger said, "The Hour will not be established until you fight against the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say, 'O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him.'"

Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 56, No. 2926, p. 113

The collection of hadiths by Bukhari has been considered by Muslim scholars to be the most authoritative collect of hadiths since the 9th Century. Jasser simply had no doctrinal basis for dismissing Bukhari; it was just his personal opinion.

5. As a result, according to Jasser's prophet Muhammad the "reformer's" beliefs are heretical. Here is what Muhammad had to say about this:

Muhammad bin Jarir reported that Ibn 'Abbas said that the Prophet said, 'Whoever explains the Qur'an with his opinion or with what he has no knowledge of, then let him assume his seat in the Fire.'

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 1, pp. 32-33

It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbas that the Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever denies a Verse of the Qur'an, it is permissible to strike his neck (i.e. execute him)..."

Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 3, No. 2539, p. 455

Muhammad said: The most truthful speech is Allah's Speech, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The worst matters are the newly invented (in religion), every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is a heresy, and every heresy is in the Fire.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 2, p. 588

6. Because these "reformers" are heretics, they have little, if any support for their reforms from the greater Muslim community in the United States. 7. Consequently, the "reformers" have to appeal to non-Muslims to help them reform Islam. This would be as if Martin Luther had relied on Muslims for

his main support during the Reformation. 8. So what are the chances of success for a Muslim heretic and his non-Muslim followers to change Islam from that which was taught by Muhammad to that which is advocated by the heretic? Zero.

I am not against the theory of "reforming" Islam. At our debate in Omaha some time back, I even told Jasser that I liked his version of Islam better than the version of Islam taught by his prophet Muhammad. But the reality is that the vast majority of the world's Muslims follow the Islam of Muhammad, not the Islam of Zuhdi Jasser. And I also pointed out that he had no Islamic Doctrinal authority for how he wanted to change Islam and that, in fact, the changes he wanted to make actually violated Islamic Doctrine; Jasser disagreed because he maintained that each Muslim had the right to determine their own Islam. Such is Fantasy Islam, and this is why Zuhdi Jasser and his ilk are failing, all by themselves.

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