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Spiritual Warfare And Islam

by William P. Wilson, M.D.

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“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms!” In aftermath of the recent events beginning with the 9/11 destruction of the World Trade Center and the other terrorist attacks in Indonesia, Russia, and Israel, I was moved to examine the spiritual nature of the war we are fighting. I am convinced that it is more of a spiritual war than the last few we have fought. It is certainly different from most of those that have occurred in my lifetime.

Wars are always ideological and to some extent religious at their core. Many excuses are used for their beginnings, but behind the motivation of their leaders is fanaticism. Fanaticism is a spiritual disease that is marked by excessive enthusiasm and uncritical devotion. How do I know it is a spiritual disease? The answer to this question is that it always arises out of political or religious beliefs. Usually it is generated among a nation or peoples by a leader or leaders who infect their followers. They have a cause and seek to achieve that cause by any means possible. If we inspect all the wars that have been fought through the centuries, many of them have been instigated and led by a fanatical leader. The American Revolution was somewhat of an exception, but even it had fanatics among the leaders. Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine could be so diagnosed. Fortunately they were not the primary leaders. Napoleon was a fanatic whose life was devoted to war. The Civil War (War Between the States for us Southerners) had its fanatics. General G. T. Beauregard who was the first to fire on Fort Sumter was called a man of “much ardor.” On the Union side were the abolitionists whose fanaticism certainly influenced its onset. World War I was instigated by a Serbian fanatic, but was led by Kaiser Wilhelm II who wanted to expand the national boundaries of Germany and used the excuse of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria by the fanatic as an excuse to start a war. Without question Adolf Hitler was a fanatic. His beliefs that the Germans, who he considered Aryans, were a superior race was translated into the destruction of 5,000,000 Jews and Gypsies and mentally retarded in his country. Because he saw the Slavs as inferior he wiped out huge numbers of Poles and Russians especially Ukrainians. Heinrich Himmler and Joseph Goebbels, his underlings, were also fanatics. Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse Dong, who between them were responsible for the deaths of more millions of their own countrymen than Hitler, are candidates for election to the fanaticism hall of fame. There are many others including Saddam Hussein, Pol Pot, Idi Amin and Fidel Castro who are cast in the same mold.

The main characteristic of movements led by fanatics is that when in power they always find it necessary to dispose of their opposition whether it is active or passive. Anyone

who opposes or might oppose their authority are systematically exterminated. They are destroyers of races, people and ideologies. A second characteristic is their ability to attract followers to carry out their plans. Hitler appealed to the militaristic tendencies of the German people. If one looks at the history of Germany we find that they have always been warlike. Rome was unable to conquer them, so they recruited them into their armies because they loved to fight. Finally the Japanese had their share of fanatics in WWII. The banzai charges of their troops and the self-destruction of the Kamikaze pilots were examples of fanaticism. I could go back to Alexander the Great and trace fanaticism in more detail through the centuries, but space does not permit it. Obviously they have always been around.

What is fanaticism? Fanaticism is defined as an excessive enthusiasm and intense uncritical devotion, usually toward some controversial matter. It is most commonly nationalism, religion, politics or philosophy. Today we must include environmentalism, gay activism and feminism. The fanatic commonly urges his/her beliefs on others zealously and with unreasonable, uncompromising insistence. What are the characteristics that set them apart from others?

1. The cause or ideology they espouse pervasively occupies their thinking.
2. Great emotional energy is attached to their beliefs. They are enthusiastic.
3. Their beliefs are not amenable to argumentation.
4. The rigidity of their thinking alienates others, especially when they try to convince others to believe as they do.
5. Their preoccupation causes them to inject their beliefs into almost every conversation that remotely relates to their position.
6. They justify their position with what evidence they have, but consider it adequate irrespective of its validity.
7. If they have power they will not tolerate opposition to their position. They do it by
 - a. Imprisonment
 - b. Execution
 - c. Or exile

A recent article in the Readers Digest recounts how Saddam Hussein eliminated all of his opponents by execution. The Hamas in Palestine and Al Quaida throughout the Muslim world are without question motivated by fanaticism. They wish to eliminate Jews and Christians. Why is this so? The answer is that we are not followers of the "book" and are, therefore, unbelievers. We do not deserve to live. We will burn in hell even if we survive their sword.

I recently read the Koran for the fifth time. My reason for doing so is that it is difficult to read. Interestingly in the copy that was given to me there is a time line relating to the life of Mohammed. He was born in 610. In 626 AD he led an attack against the Jewish tribe of al-Nadhir and crushed and expelled them. In 627 the Jewish tribe of Quarayza was

raided and 800 men beheaded and their wives and children sold into slavery. In 629 AD the Jews of Khaybar were “put to the sword.” Why? Because they are God’s chosen people. It is not surprising that they are also out to destroy Christians since we are also chosen. Could it be they are against us because they know that God chose to come and live with us and in us?

What about the man who wrote the “book.”? According to most biographers of Mohammed he was illiterate. His wife transcribed the Koran as he dictated it. In the early pages of the Koran he claimed to have the book revealed to him by Gabriel in one night. However, he contradicted that statement since it is obvious that there was continuing revelation. He includes comments on his conquests of idolaters (probably the citizens of Medina and Mecca) that he could not write about since they had not happened. He includes stories of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, and other Old Testament characters, and repeats them several times although not in the same historical format that we read in the Bible. He does not relate them as history, but as commentary.

In the text of the Koran there is the statement that “Those who say the Lord of Mercy has begotten a son, preach a monstrous falsehood, at which the heavens might crack, the earth break asunder and the mountains crumble to dust. That they should ascribe a son to the Merciful, when it does not become Him to beget one.” How did he know that? This statement is unequivocally directed at John 3:16 a foundation scripture of Christianity. On another occasion he said that those who believe in the Trinity were also enemies of Allah. Mohammed further denied the crucifixion story. “They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: ‘We have put to death the Messiah Jesus son of Mary the apostle of Allah.’ They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did.” He then says that Jesus was “lifted up” like Elijah. What are we to say to this? Paul said that if Jesus had not been crucified and resurrected then our entire faith is in vain. It was in his death and resurrection that our sins were forgiven. Clearly he knew that the central theme of Christianity was the crucifixion and by denying it he removed the possibility of the forgiveness of sins. He did not believe that Jews and Christians would enter paradise. We are then classified as unbelievers who are damned.

Mohammed had an interesting view of others. He did not respect women or even families. He made a clear statement to this effect when he said, “Believers you have an enemy in your wives and children: beware of them. But if you overlook their offences and forgive and pardon them, then know that Allah is forgiving and merciful.” He approved of polygamy and made divorce easy. For himself Mohammed said, “Prophet we have made lawful to you the wives to who you have granted dowries and the slave-girls whom Allah has given to you as booty; the daughters of your paternal and maternal uncles, and the daughters of your maternal aunts who fled with you and the other women who gave themselves to you and wished (you) to take in marriage.” A footnote in the Koran says that at this time Mohammed had nine wives, apart from slave girls. Later he said, “You may put off any of your wives you please and take to your bed any that you please. Nor

is it unlawful for you to receive any of those you have temporarily put aside. That is more proper, so that they may be contented and not vexed, and all may be pleased with what you give them.” Islam’s approach to marriage is in contrast to the Bible that makes divorce wrong in God’s eyes and emphasizes monogamy. The Bible always speaks of a wife – not wives. It is not surprising that the fundamentalist Taliban regime in Afghanistan treated women so horribly.

In a rather incongruous way, Mohammed begins every section of the Koran by calling Allah the compassionate and merciful, but at the same time he speaks of his condemnation of those who do not believe what Mohammed says about him. There is no compassion and mercy in the Koran. Instead there is extraordinary and continuous promise of punishment for unbelievers. “Hell lies before them, and will be forced to drink stinking water. Death will assail them from every side, but they will not die.” On another occasion he says that they will be forced to drink boiling water.

Mohammad also was emphatic in his denunciation of the Jewish belief that they are a chosen people. Because they believe this they deserve death. He further stated that Jews and Christians will not enter Paradise. Instead they will burn in the eternal fire of Hell. Mohammed’s religion is a hell fire and damnation religion. From the opening pages of the Koran to its end unbelievers are damned and deserve to suffer torment eternally. He states that if there is anyone who prevents persons from believing in Allah they are cursed.

His militaristic bent is seen in his statement that, “Allah loves those who fight for his cause in ranks as firm as a mighty edifice.” He also said, “Allah revealed His will to the angels saying ‘I will be with you. Give courage to the believers. I shall cast terror into the hearts of the infidels. Strike off their heads maim them in every limb.’” These statements in the latter part of the “book” are evidence of his militaristic nature. It is well known that Mohammed spread his religion by the sword. His first military action was at Medina where he was defeated, but he tried again and succeeded in conquering the city. He later took Mecca and after that continued his military campaigns against other areas of the Middle East. After his death others took up the campaigns until Islamic armies were in central Spain and at the gates of Vienna. These campaigns occupied a period of over 1000 years from 610 until the Muslims were turned back from the gates of Vienna in 1683. During the thousand years they occupied most of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. It was not until the Pole, Jan Sobieski, led an army that defeated them decisively that they were driven from Eastern Europe. In Western Europe the Muslims had been expelled from Spain in 1492, but Christian Europe was not finally freed from the menace of Islam until 1683.

In all fairness it should be noted that the Moors and other Islamics made an enormous contribution to civilization. Their occupation of part of Spain contributed directly to the renaissance. While the rest of Europe was still in the dark ages, the Moors established

great universities and libraries that preserved the works of Greek and Latin writers. They themselves had contributed significantly to architecture, navigation and agriculture. When the Christians captured their libraries they had them translated into Latin by Jews living in their midst. This made it possible for Europe to move beyond their limited Christian worldview and leave their barbarian past.

Is the warlike nature of the Islam unexpected? It isn't if we carefully read God's word. To find out why it should have been expected we go to Genesis 16:8 where we find out that God had said that they would be warlike. It all started when Sarah had Hagar impregnated by Abraham so that he would have descendants. Immediately Sarah became jealous of Hagar and persecuted her. To escape the mistreatment Hagar ran away from Sarah. When she was leaving the Lord spoke to her through an angel. "And he said, 'Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?' 'I'm running away from my mistress Sarai,' she answered. Then the angel of the LORD told her, 'Go back to your mistress and submit to her.' The angel added, 'I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count. You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.'" Since the Arabs claim to be descendants of Ishmael we should not be surprised that God predicted that their entire history is one of warfare and conquest, and that they have become almost too numerous to count. It is also true that their hand has been against their brothers from the beginning. We should not be surprised that they claim that their Allah is the same God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but Jesus is not God's son. To them he is the same God we worshiped until we rejected Mohammed.

Islam is not a religion of love. It encourages the destruction of unbelievers. It has from the very beginning propagated itself by the sword. Once a population is conquered, the people convert to Islam or are slaughtered. Believers who convert to Christianity deserve death. Families will have their sons and daughters killed if they convert. The slaughter of over 1,000,000 Armenians in one campaign of the Ottomans is evidence of their bloodthirsty ways. The Armenians were Christians.

In rebuttal one accusation leveled against Christians is that during the Crusades they also were bloodthirsty. This is not true. In most instances the crusaders were slaughtered by the Muslims. Only Richard the Lionhearted massacred a civilian population. He put 2000 people to the sword in one city. That is the only account I could find of the massacre of civilian populations in any of the crusades. Compare that to the Armenian and other massacres. The crusades were fought against armies not non-combatants.

In the light of what the Koran says, how can we believe a God who is love can be so heartless and so cruel? If their Allah is the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob why is he

so bloodthirsty? Their claim that he is compassionate and merciful is not borne out in the writings of Mohammed. His is a religion of murder and violence, while at the same time it is a religion of works. Pray five times a day and give alms are consistent themes in the Koran. One does not get the impression though that this is to be done in love. Both prayer and alms are a duty.

The contrast between Islam and Christianity is marked. Christianity spread initially by evangelism. Islam from the very beginning spread by the sword. Interestingly Communism, and National Socialism (Nazism) spread by the same methods as Islam.

In the light of their history, we should ask why are so many Muslims fanatical? Part of the answer lies in the nature of their religion and their history. They have not forgotten the success they had during their years of aggression, nor have they forgotten the few defeats they suffered during the crusades. They have also not forgotten the occupation of their lands by western nations after the first World War and the dramatic defeats they suffered in the wars that reestablished the state of Israel. Because all of their defeats came at the hands of unbelievers their hatred has known no bounds. Their faith feeds their hatred and they continue killing. Because of the belief that they will go to paradise they are willing to kill themselves when it meets their purpose.

Earlier we have said that this is without question a spiritual problem. What role do supernatural spirits play in the war that is going on? We can be certain that the Muslim world's activities are not guided and directed by the Holy Spirit nor are the heavenly hosts arrayed against us. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of love and not of murder and lies. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob does not want his children to be tortured and murdered. He has promised us an abundant and eternal life. He has good in store for us and not evil. In contrast there is another force for evil in the world and he is Satan. Jesus accused the Pharisees, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). There is then good reason to believe in the light of the history of Islam that Satan is using them to do his work. He wants to destroy the Jews since they are God's chosen people, and Christians because we worship God's Son.

If this is so, why then does God not protect us? Satan can only do what he is allowed to do. The answer lies in the biblical statements that if we do not obey God's laws he will curse us (Deut. 28:15-68). We are not obeying God's laws. We have a nation that has become morally corrupt. We have not spoken out against the evil that exists in our society. We have worshiped the gods of money, power and status. We have sacrificed our children with abortions, we have tolerated alcohol and drug addiction, and are now promoting homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle. We have believed the lies that Satan has propagated about the Bible. It is no more than a myth. Jesus was not born of a virgin and he was not resurrected from the dead. Satan has used the same appealing

message he used with Adam and Eve. He has appealed to us through the humanists to persuade us that we can be our own god and set moral standards for ourselves. Because we have relativized our moral beliefs we no longer have ethics that govern our for profit and non-profit businesses. We are a sinful nation and we are reaping the harvest of our disobedience.

In an article in Christianity Today one author observed that we need to repent of our disobedience. Unfortunately there is no one calling us to repent. We do not have a Jonah or a John the Baptist to call us to repentance. We do, therefore, need a person who can attract the attention of the nation and stridently proclaim the message. It is an urgent matter! We cannot delay! Please pray that God will raise up a Jonah or a Jeremiah, or a John the Baptist.