

Whose Fault Are the French Jihadi Murders?  
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After a horror such as the French-born Muslim assassinations of the editors and cartoonists of a national humor magazine who "insulted" Islam, everyone asks: whose fault was this? Were the French intelligence sources inadequate? Did the sarcastic humor of the French journal provoke sensitive Muslims? Were the killers not sufficiently loved by their mothers? The only question not overtly asked was: "Is there something about Islam that promotes murderous rage?" Even without asking this, Muslim spokesmen rushed in to announce that these murderers were not "Muslims." They were criminals. Exactly where do these assignments of blame fall?

\225 The Political Left. It has been a long tradition of the university educated to believe that behind every misery in the world lurks the shadow of America, and preferably, American imperialist capitalism. Muslims are angry because Western colonialism (particularly European) has made these once powerful people so inadequate that they must emigrate to Europe to find a better life. Of course they resent the West for this outrage, but they come nonetheless, gritting their teeth and vowing vengeance.

\225 The Usual Muslim Spokesmen. How quickly western Muslim leaders deny that Islam mandates death for apostates and for those who insult the Prophet Mohammad or Islam. "We might sue you for something we find objectionable, but do not kill you." Ah, would that this were only so. In mosques and eagerly recruiting prisons around the world, the word is out that death for apostates and insulters is still very much alive in Islam. The French murderers illustrated this very well.

Blasphemy is the law, punishable most often by death in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and when the law hesitates, citizens step in. Thursday, Pakistani police released a 52-year-old mentally unbalanced man who had been jailed for "blasphemy" since 2011. Angered, a posse murdered him on the jailhouse steps. In Saudi Arabia, 50 lashes of a sentence of 1,000 lashes was administered to a blogger for "insulting Islam." He will get 50 lashes every week until either 1,000 are administered, or he dies. So much for freedom of speech being a part of Islam.

\225 Round Up the Usual Suspects. One well-known Muslim analyst (whom I will not promote by naming) announced on a TV panel that the Paris murders had nothing to do with Islam at all. That a Jewish market was attacked, he said, proved the entire fault was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These North African thugs don't care a fig for Palestinians; but they do hate Jews for giving them a well-deserved inferiority complex. When the annual Nobel prizes are announced, there is no prize for killing unarmed civilians.

\225 Can Islam Modernize? Egypt's president opened the new year with a plea for a revolution in Islam. He said it is time to retire many of the old interpretations no longer relevant to the modern world. It is nice to hear him say so, but religious revolutions have not come from heads of state since Henry VIII.

So much good comes from American religion: community, kindness, generosity to the needy, good works, and the rituals marking our lives. We forget the other side of religion: compulsion, intolerance, and violence. Europeans have had more experience with state-run faiths that persecuted, imprisoned, punished, and tortured to death those deemed "enemies of God." For centuries, Catholics and Protestants murdered each other and Jews and dissidents---in huge numbers. Religious bigotry became such a bad memory in Europe that post World War II Europeans bent over backward to avoid seeming prejudiced against a new religion in their midst, Islam.

Herein lies the problem. Islam has not yet joined the ranks of ecumenical modern religions, not even in the United States. Mosques around the world are still preaching the values of the past 1300 years: separation and inequality of men and women, family law that has not modernized since 1200, and the intrusion of a modern amalgam of fascism and Islam that has revived the original Muslim dream of world conversion or conquest under a world dictator (Caliph).

But the young are stirring. Maybe modern Islam is also being born.

679 words

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