

Compromise In Iraq Among Sunnis And Shi'a

An Iraqi [hope](#).

If Islam encouraged rational and logical thought, if Islam did not punish skeptical questioning, if the texts of Islam, and the example of Muhammad, spoke endlessly about love and charity, instead of about killing one's enemies –and those enemies are defined as those who refuse to submit to Allah and to Muhammad, and to the “best of peoples” the Muslims –if in Islam words such as “love” and “charity” and what they represent were used instead of words about war and killing and being victorious over one's enemies, then perhaps a compromise in Iraq might be possible. But in Islam, Qur'an and Sunnah do not speak about compromise or encourage it. They give the adherents – the slavish adherents – of Islam the idea that every conflict in the end leaves the Victor and the Vanguished. In any conflict, what is required above all for Muslims is patience, for at the time of Muhammad and his Companions the Muslims were so few, their enemies so many. In Islam, it is understood that it requires relentlessness and cunning to overcome the enemy, and overcoming them may take a long time. And in that time, smiles and wiles may be necessary, and what non-Muslim man unwarily takes to mean a willingness to compromise. Agreements may be made, and treaties signed, but these agreements and these treaties are only temporary in nature, “hudnas,” truces to be broken whenever the Right Side, the side of the Muslims (or, in intra-Muslim warfare, the sect of Muslims that considers itself the True Islam) gains the necessary strength. The model for this kind of conduct, the pretend willingness to live and let live, is the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, named after the place outside Mecca where, in 628 A.D., Muhammad agreed to make a “hudna” or truce, to last ten years, with the

Meccans, because he was then in a position of weakness. But after only 18 months, when he had gained more followers and felt strong enough to attack the Meccans, he found a flimsy pretense to do so and that was the end of the "hudna." Westerners who do not know the significance of Hudaibiyya, nor understand the Muslim law of war and peace, assume that "of course" Muslims will obey the treaties they sign, "of course" they must have the same rules governing international agreements as we in the West do, and that means the most important rule of all: *Pacta Sunt Servanda*, the solemn undertakings made in treaties are to be obeyed.

Do you see the spirit of compromise in Yemen, between Al-Qaeda (Sunnis) and the Houthis (Shi'a)? In Libya, between the fanatical Muslims (identified, a bit too easily I'm afraid, with the militia of Misrata) and the less fanatical Muslims, or between this tribe and that tribe (it was Qaddafi's cleverest son who predicted that Libya would descend into war between "the tribes"). What about in Pakistan, or Afghanistan, with their respective Talibans, and their respective governments? Where have Muslims stopped fighting, permanently? Does anyone think, at this point, that the Slow Jihadists of Fatah (the Palestinian Authority or, in essence, the PLO) would ever stop its Jihad to remove the Infidel nation-state of Israel, and replace it with the only rightful owners of any land anywhere, the Muslims?

If the exceptions – Mithal al-Alusi, for example – were the rule, perhaps the Iraqi state would not dissolve, likely *divisa in partes tres*, not precisely into the three former Ottoman vilayets of Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra but, rather, of Irbil (Kurdistan), Mosul (Sunni), and Baghdad (to be emptied of its remaining Sunni population), which would be a Shi'astan extending from Baghdad down to Basra and the port of Umm Al-Qasr. Landlocked, largely oil-less, the Sunnis would for the first time in Iraqi history be left with little, but that is not why they will keep fighting against the Shi'a and the

Kurds. They will keep fighting, with aid from rich Sunnis abroad, and Sunni volunteers, because they will never accept their diminished status, and the Shi'a, their main enemy, will never again agree to relinquish the power that they acquired when the American soldiers got rid, and very quickly, of Saddam Hussein's regime.

Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria are not to be put back together. As for the other Muslim states, their only hope is that despots – enlightened despots backed by an enlightened military caste – can ruthlessly hold Islam in check, the way Ataturk did, and Bourguiba.