

One More Offensive Defense of the Faith

by Hugh Fitzgerald



“Anti-Muslim sentiments in the United States have been on the rise for some time, fueled largely by misunderstandings, fear of the unknown, and, of course, active demagoguery. Yet, it bears keeping in mind that Islam has been part of the U.S. from its beginnings.” So starts [yet one more Defense of Islam](#), flying below the radar in a small-town newspaper.

What has fueled “anti-Muslim sentiments” in the United States has not been “misunderstandings, fear of the unknown...and active demagoguery,” but only one thing: an unending series of attacks by Muslim terrorists, both here and in Europe. What have we “misunderstood” about the observable behavior of those 19 Muslim terrorists on 9/11? Was it really “fear of the unknown” that caused us to be horrified by the expressions of

delight in most of the Muslim world at news of the 9/11 attacks? No "active demagoguery" was necessary for us to be infuriated by the killings of soldiers at Fort Hood, by a Muslim unwilling to fight for his country, though he was happy enough to have the American army pay for his entire medical education. The attacks on one recruiting center in Little Rock, and on two in Chattanooga, further demonstrated hostility toward our armed forces. And there have been so many other attacks by Muslims that cannot be forgotten. Attacks on coworkers celebrating a Christmas party in San Bernardino, on runners and spectators at the Boston Marathon, on nightclub visitors in Orlando, on shoppers at the Mall for America in Minneapolis, on passengers at an airport in Los Angeles.

We have all seen, too, the Muslim terror attacks in Europe: in Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, Nice, Toulouse, Magnanville, Carcassone, Trèbes, London (many times), Manchester, Amsterdam, Brussels, Liege, Berlin, Munich, Hanover, Ansbach, Copenhagen, Oslo, Turku, Helsinki, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Beslan. No wonder that "anti-Muslim sentiments...have been on the rise," despite the campaign to tar islamocritics as "islamophobes." And increasing numbers of Americans, dissatisfied with the endless attempts to exculpate the faith of Islam, especially by interfaith healers, politicians, and the media, have been engaged in their own study of the Qur'an, discovering the 109 commands to Believers to wage violent Jihad, to smite the Infidels, and to strike terror in their hearts. Knowledge, not ignorance, is what helps explain "anti-Muslim sentiments."

Muslims came to these shores in large numbers with the transatlantic slave trade. It's estimated that up to 20 percent of all African slaves may have been Muslim. Their fate was grim. As El-Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz, formerly known as Malcolm X, aptly observed: "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock; the Rock was landed on us." Nevertheless, they helped building America in so many ways. And, as historical evidence

(names on the military muster rolls) suggests, Muslims even participated in the Revolutionary War, fighting alongside colonists for freedom and liberty."

"It's estimated that up to 20 percent of all African slaves may have been Muslim"? Who has made that estimate, based on what evidence? The author is silent on that score. Over the last few years, Muslim propagandists have been offering up exaggerated figures as to the number of Muslim slaves who came to America. But most of the Slave Coast of Africa was pagan; Muslims had not yet crossed the Sahara to West Africa in any significant numbers. Note that the author hedges his bets by saying that "up to 20 percent...may have been Muslim." Then again, they may not have been Muslim at all. Where are the records, the ships' manifests with the names of these slaves? Is there any record of a single tiny mosque, of copies of the Qur'an, of slaves seen prostrated Mecca-wards in prayer? A decade ago, Muslims started to mention that "some slaves were Muslim," then they began to up the ante, claiming that anywhere from 5% to 15%, even 30%, of the slaves brought to America were Muslim.

Many Muslims who were forcefully brought were highly educated. Omar ibn Said, from present-day Senegal, was a slave in the Carolinas. Although he's said to have converted to Christianity, Omar's autobiography evidences his continuing reverence toward the Prophet Muhammad. His handwritten copy of various verses of the Qur'an, which still can be seen at UNC in Chapel Hill, demonstrates that he had memorized major parts of Islam's sacred scripture.

At the PBS website, another "estimate" is supplied. PBS asserts that between 10 and 15 percent of slaves who came to America were Muslim. And where does this figure come from? I asked PBS for an answer. No reply. As with the estimate of 20 percent, there is nothing that anyone seems able or willing to

provide to support their assertions. Have any of the slavers left records of Muslims taken among their slaves? Did plantation records of the slavery period include information about Muslim slaves? Did the slave-owners, or their overseers, or even other slaves, ever testify that there were Muslims on the plantation? No, there are no reports of slaves prostrating themselves in prayer, turned in the direction of Mecca. No reports of Qur'ans being read, or even existing.

Just a few decades ago, no one was discussing what percentage of the slaves brought to America were Muslims. It seemed too fanciful an idea even to speculate. Of course there were a handful – fewer than five – Muslim slaves whose names were known, and the apologists trotted out those names on every conceivable occasion. They were referred to, again and again: Omar ibn Said, Yarrow Matouf, Job ben Solomon, Abdur-Rahman Ibrahim. Then various Muslim and non-Muslim apologists, wanting to promote the backdating of the Islamic presence so that they might assert that “Muslims have always been part of America’s story,” started to provide percentages – out of whole cloth. Ask a Muslim today to justify any of these claimed percentages of Muslim slaves and he will simply tell you, as I have repeatedly been, “that’s what the experts estimate.” And who, you may well ask, are these “experts”? They are Muslims, who have yet to provide a single bit of convincing evidence that there were ever any more than a handful of Muslims brought as slaves to America. This is propaganda, not history.

Nor was he [Omar ibn Said] the only enslaved Muslim gaining some fame. So were others, like Abdul-Rahman Ibrahim from Timbuktu, and Job ben Solomon, a slave in Maryland, or Yarrow Mamout, set free after having been enslaved for 44 years, to name only a few of possibly more than a million Muslims. With the passage of time, the religion brought by enslaved Americans was mostly marginalized, yet traces of Islam can still be discerned in some oral and folk traditions, among

others in the Gullah culture.

“Possibly more than a million Muslims” among the slaves? If there were “more than a million victims,” wouldn’t we have the names and stories of more than the same few – Omar Ibn Said, Abdul-Rahman Ibrahim, Job ben Solomon, Yarrow Mamout – who are always trotted out? It’s a fantastic claim. And could the religion of Islam have been “mostly marginalized” if there had been more than a million Muslims? Or was it practiced only by a very few to begin with?

Famous American Muslims of the 20th century, such as Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X, thus are connected to the earliest Islam in America in multiple ways, and Muslim Americans of the 21st century, such as hip-hop artist Mos Def and Busta Rhymes, or comedian Dave Chappelle and NBA player Rasheed Wallace, are following in their footsteps. And, of course, there are millions of less famous slave descendants in America, many of whom have suffered through centuries of racism, an imposing predicament that continues to this day. “

Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X, Mos Def and Busta Rhymes are all Muslims, and therefore they must be connected to the “earliest Islam in America” – and so they are, linked through Islam itself. This still doesn’t provide any evidence of the existence of that “early Islam,” it merely assumes it and draws a connect-the-dots line from that earliest Islam to Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X and from them to Mos Def and Busta Rhymes, who are “following in their footsteps” – which means exactly nothing.

Not only are many of us unaware of the sheer scale of the slave trade, but also about who the slaves were. Of course, there’s also an insufficient appreciation for their suffering, and a continuing inattention to the predicament of their offspring. There’s also a pronounced disregard for the contributions that Muslim-Americans, many of them descendants

of slaves, continue to make.

This statement is about the Atlantic Slave Trade, which has long been the object of study and, in fact, its “sheer scale” and the “suffering” are well known. But there is another slave trade in Africa, that began centuries earlier, ended later, and claimed millions more victims than did the Atlantic Slave Trade. This was the Arab trade in black Africans, which began in 650 and did not end until the 20th century. It was particularly cruel and deadly, because many of the slaves seized were young boys, aged 8 to 12, castrated with primitive implements in the bush. About 40% survived the operation, and they were then taken by slave coffle and dhow to the Islamic slave markets of Riyadh, Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, and Istanbul. They were, of course, intended to serve as eunuchs guarding the harems. Many who survived the operation itself did not survive the long journey to the live markets. Jan Hogedorn, author of “The Hideous Trade,” a study of the Arab trade in eunuchs, has estimated that between 10-20% of the African boys who were castrated survived to be sold in those markets. Of the 12.5 million slaves taken in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 10.7 million survived the Middle Passage to be sold in the New World.

The number of Africans enslaved by Muslim Arabs between A.D. 650 and 1900 has been estimated as, at a minimum, between 10 to 20 million people. That is not the number seized, but the number who survived castration (for the young boys constituted much of the trade) and the journey to be sold at the Islamic slave markets. But how many were initially seized, if 10-20 million were alive at the journey's end?

In his 2001 study, *The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa*, Dr. John Alembellah Azumah of Ghana estimates that over 80 million black Africans died en route. This figure would jibe with Jan Hogedorn's estimate that 10-20% of those seized by Arab slavers in the bush survived to be sold as slaves, which would

mean that over the course of 1250 years, 100 million black Africans were taken (about 80,000 a year), and 80 million of those died from various causes (chiefly castration and disease) en route, and 20 million survived.

This history suggests that it is the Arab, not the Atlantic, Slave Trade that is largely unknown and deserves our attention.

What is also not well-known is that some of our founding fathers had real interest in Islam. Thomas Jefferson famously owned a copy of the Quran so as to better understand Islam and its followers, and insisted that Muslims be included in his vision of American religious pluralism. Our first president, George Washington, said that he would welcome Muslims to Mount Vernon if they were good workmen. Respect for Islam is also evidenced in the Supreme Court building of the early 20th century: Among 18 lawgivers depicted in a frieze of the courtroom, we find Muhammad, revered as the prophet of Islam, holding the Qur'an as a source of law.

Jefferson owned a Qur'an because he was a curious man, but the attempt to suggest he might have been favorably impressed with Islam is completely wrong. Robert Spencer tells the story: "In 1786, Jefferson, who was serving as the ambassador to France, and John Adams, the Ambassador to Britain, met in London with Ambassador Abdrahaman, the Dey of Tripoli's ambassador to Britain, in an attempt to negotiate a peace treaty based on Congress' vote of funding." Peace would come at a price. If America wanted "temporary peace," a one-year guarantee, it would cost \$66,000, plus a 10% commission. "Everlasting peace" was a bargain at \$160,000 plus the obligatory commission. This only applied to Tripoli. Other Muslim nations would also have to be paid. The amount came to \$1.3 million. But there was no assurance that the treaties would be honored. In vain Jefferson and Adams tried to argue that America was not at war with Tripoli. In what way had the U.S provoked the Muslims,

they asked? Ambassador Abdrahaman went on to explain “the finer points of Islamic jihad” to Jefferson and Adams. In a letter to John Jay, Jefferson wrote the following:

The Ambassador answered us that it was founded on the Laws of their Prophet, that it was written in their Koran, that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found, and to make slaves of all they could take as Prisoners, and that every Musselman [Muslim] who should be slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise.

As for Jefferson’s insistence “that Muslims be included in his vision of American religious pluralism,” he was not advocating for Islam. Everything he learned about Islam, especially in his negotiations with the envoy of the Dey of Tripoli, caused him to both dislike the faith and distrust its faithful. What Jefferson actually did was “advocate” for the principle of religious freedom in general, and famously quoted a line from John Locke’s 1698 *A Letter Concerning Religious Toleration*: “neither Pagan nor Mahamedan [Muslim] nor Jew ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the Commonwealth because of his religion.” This was hardly an endorsement of Islam. When George Washington said that “if they are good workmen, they may be of Asia, Africa, or Europe. They may be Mahometans [Mohammedans/Muslims], Jews, or Christians of any Sect, or they may be Atheists,” that, too, was not meant as an endorsement of any religion, and certainly not of Islam. It is merely an obvious statement about judging a workman on what should count the most – his ability to do well whatever work he is assigned (as a farmer, blacksmith, builder, etc.). This is not even a statement about religious freedom; it’s only about fitness for purpose.

If we don’t know the past, we’ll be hindered in charting a successful course forward. It’s also true that such ignorance

prepares the ground for a populism that takes away ever more from the beauty, the good, and the promise that our country has. Muslim-Americans have helped to build this country, and Muslim-Americans continue to make enormous contributions in the arts, sciences, economy, business, and entertainment.

Note that the writer claims that “Muslim-Americans have helped to build this country.” Can you think of a single Muslim-American of significance before 1950?

And they “continue to make enormous contributions.”

What are those “enormous contributions”?

Name a few Muslim-American painters, composers, writers. No, I couldn’t think of any either. In the sciences, there have been only two Nobels, Sancar and Zuwail. And the economy? One name comes to mind: Mohammed El-Arian, the chief economic adviser at Allianz. And though there must be some, can you think of any other Muslim-Americans who have been founders of high-tech companies, entrepreneurs, builders of businesses, investors? In entertainment, yes, there are a handful, mostly in the hip-hop vein – Snoop Dogg, Ice Cube, Mos Def – whom we have all heard of.

But alas, some politicians, who have thrived on promotion of fear, are questioning Muslim-Americans’ patriotism and sincerity, are besmirching the religion of 1.6 billion people, and have now increasingly closed the door to them. One would hope that our leaders would return to the wisdom of some of our founding fathers, exhibiting a greater respect for religion and an earnest desire to learn more about the traditions of Muslim-Americans.

Politicians are, in fact, along with the major media, mostly dismissing islamocriticism as “islamophobia” and making it a point to express their solidarity with Muslims. If there is

any questioning of the “patriotism” of Muslims, that might be the result of the attacks on servicemen and on recruiting centers by Muslim terrorists (Fort Hood, Little Rock, Chattanooga), the fact that Muslims make up 1.1% of the population but only 0.40% of our active-duty military; that many of those who are counted as Muslims in the military are actually members of the Nation of Islam, which is hardly orthodox Islam. Finally, CAIR conducts a campaign among Muslims persuading them not to collaborate – don’t be a snitch! – with the FBI and the police by reporting on fellow Muslims. None of that smacks of patriotism.

George Bush’s speech at the Islamic Center in Washington less than a week after the 9/11 attacks shows the deep desire not to “besmirch the religion” nor “close the door” to Muslims, but to celebrate, quite inaccurately I’m afraid, both Islam and Muslims.. Here is some of what he said:

Like the good folks standing with me, the American people were appalled and outraged at last Tuesday’s attacks. And so were Muslims all across the world. Both Americans and Muslim friends and citizens, tax-paying citizens, and Muslims in nations were just appalled and could not believe what we saw on our TV screens.

These acts of violence against innocents violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith. And it’s important for my fellow Americans to understand that.

Bush did not know then, and probably does not know now, that the Qur’an is full of verses commanding Muslims to engage in violent Jihad against Infidels, telling them to “fight them” and “smite at their necks” and “strike terror” in their hearts.

The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don’t represent peace. They represent evil and

war.

“Islam is peace”? How did Islam spread, then, throughout the Middle East, across North Africa, and all the way to central Spain? How did it spread across Sassanian Persia? How many attacks were made on the Byzantine Empire before it succumbed to Muslim warriors? And how many attacks by Muslims were made on India, until their rule was established there? The Qur’an is a manual of war, not peace. It commands war, describes the kind of behavior Muslims are expected to show in making war, even tells them how they should divide up the loot, including both valuables and slaves, that they seize in conquering a territory.

When we think of Islam we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. Billions of people find comfort and solace and peace. And that’s made brothers and sisters out of every race—out of every race.

Islam may bring “comfort and solace and peace” to Muslims. But it does the very opposite for non-Muslims. It has meant 1,400 years of Jihad, of war and threats of war, of discrimination and persecution and massacres of non-Muslims. It has meant the mass destruction of churches, synagogues, Hindu and Buddhist temples. It has reduced whole populations of non-Muslims to the miserable condition of dhimmis, and caused millions of them to convert to Islam, not out of conviction, but out of a desire to escape that wretched condition.

Bush thinks Islam has made “brothers and sisters out of every race.” He does not know, apparently, that the Arabs think of themselves as the best of the “best of peoples,” that is, the Muslims. For the Message of Allah was given to a 7th century Arab, and in his language. All Muslims must when they prostrate themselves in prayer turn toward Arabia. The only authoritative version of the Qur’an is that in Arabic. Many of the world’s non-Arab Muslims give themselves Arab names and

false Arab lineages; some even claim descent from the tribe of Muhammad, indicated by the "Sayyid" that they add to their name. The scholar Anwar Shaikh pointed to the superior position among the Believers of the Arabs, claiming with justice that Islam is the vehicle for Arab supremacism.

Islam does not make "brothers and sisters out of every race." The anti-black racism in Islam is pronounced. It goes back as far as descriptions of Muhammad that emphasize his "whiteness." Being black is regarded as a mark of inferiority. For example, what happens on the Day of Resurrection. Allah promises (Qur'an 3:185) that life in this world is an illusion, that every person shall die, and every person will receive his judgment on the resurrection day, and in Qur'an 5:26, that all that is on earth will perish. Allah says that He will reward the doers of good with paradise and much more; their faces will be radiant-stained [i.e. white]. They will never be humiliated. (Qur'an 10:26).

Here is more on "white faces" in the Qur'an, or in the exegeses to the Qur'an of Ibn Kathir, taken from postings by an ex-Muslim, Abul Kasem:

It is clear from the exegesis of these verses that Allah likes white people and dislikes the black people, so much so, in fact, that even when a Black Muslim is entitled to enter Islamic Paradise, he will not enter it until Allah has turned him into a white person. Verse 20:102 says that on the day the trumpet is sounded (resurrection day), the sinners will be gathered together with blue eyes and black faces. A hadith in Mishkat says that on judgment day, Muslims will have white faces, white arms, and white legs (Mishkat al-Masabih, Ibn Abdullah Tabrizi, Sheikh Wali-ud-Din Muahmmad, Tr. Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, Kitab Bhavan, 1784 Kalan Mahal, Daraya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, India.1990, p.1.168).

Allah's preference for light-skinned people and His disdain for dark-skinned people is repeated in verse 7:46. Ibn Abbas

writes that this verse tells the joy of the believers when they know those who enter hell by their darkened faces and blue eyes and those who enter Paradise by their lightened faces: at once handsome and radiant.

Allah says in verse 86:8-9 that He will bring back life for Muhammad to commence judgment. According to ibn Kathir, on resurrection day, a banner will be raised for every deceitful person from his anus; the size of this banner will depend on the size of the perpetrator's calumny. Thus, Muhammad will have no trouble sifting the believers from the non-believers. All Muslims will be of white complexion, and all infidels will be of black complexion, with a banner on his/her anus.

In verse 18:29 Allah says that He does not care whether people believe or disbelieve in Islam. The disbelievers (non-Muslims) and the wrongdoers will be surrounded by the tent of fire; they will be given water (acid) like molten brass to shower and to scald their faces. Ibn Kathir says that this verse means the water of Hell is black, and it itself is black and its people are black.

In verse 3:107 Allah emphatically pronounces that white faces on the judgment day will receive His mercy. Jalalyn writes that, on judgment day, Muslims' faces will be white.

In Mishkat (ibid, p.1.76) we read humans were emitted as white ants from Adam; paradise is for the whites, hell is for the blacks.

Islamic Paradise will offer its white male residents unlimited, unbridled, uninterrupted sex with houris of exquisite beauty. These houris will also be of fair (read white), radiant complexion (44:54, 55:70) quite similar to the Hollywood movie actresses. Even the wine-serving boys will be white, like pearls (52:24, 76:19).

Here is more about "white" and "black" in Islam:

Muhammad was white, according to Sunaan Abu Dawud, 1.486.

In various Hadith Muhammad is asked for and described as "This white man reclining on his arm." Or when asked to describe him, another early Muslim said "he was white." And again: "And a white person who is requested to pray for rain. And yet again, the Prophet raised his hands so high that the "whiteness of his armpits became visible." And one more: "He uncovered his thigh and I saw the whiteness of the thigh of the Prophet."

Here is one hadith from Sahih Bukhari (1.3.63). Narrated Anas bin Malik: "While we were sitting with the Prophet in the mosque, a man came riding on a camel. He made his camel kneel down in the mosque, tied its foreleg and then said: "Who amongst you is Muhammad?" At that time the Prophet was sitting amongst us (his companions) leaning on his arm. We replied, "This white man reclining on his arm." The man then addressed him, "O Son of 'Abdul Muttalib."

Tabari writes that Muhammad was of white complexion (al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir, History of al-Tabari)

In Ash-Shifa, Allah, an apparently shared disdain among Muslims for black people is expressed in this manner:

Ahmad ibn Abi Sulayman, the companion of Sahnun said, "Anyone who says that the Prophet was black should be killed. (Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, Qadi 'Iyad. Ash-Shifa).

Muhammad was white. His arms were white, his thighs were white, even his armpits were white. This was very important to establish. And anyone who said he was black should be killed.

And the comments by Muslim Arabs on black Africans hardly support former President Bush's belief that Islam teaches racial equality.

Already in the ninth century, blacks were imported by the Arabs into southern Iraq and put to work as enslaved agricultural laborers; their harsh treatment by the Arabs led to the Zanj Rebellion in southern Iraq, from 869 to 883 A.D., and its bloody suppression. From then on, all African blacks were commonly referred to by Arabs as the "Zanj." The Arabs always regarded the blacks with contempt, many of them likening those they called "Zanj" to animals. It is startling to read what famous figures in Islamic history had to say about the black Africans.

The celebrated Arab traveler Ibn Battuta, for example, one of the most important figures in Islamic cultural history, wrote that "the Zanj are people of black color, flat noses, kinky hair, and little understanding or intelligence." And he repeats this judgement again and again.

The geographer al-Idrisi ascribes "lack of knowledge and defective minds" to the black peoples. Their ignorance, he says, is notorious; men of learning and distinction are almost unknown among them, and their kings only acquire what they know about government and justice from the instruction of learned visitors from farther north.

The most famous Muslim traveller, Ibn Battuta from Morocco, is just as contemptuous of the blacks:

"Like the crow among mankind are the Zanj for they are the worst of men and the most vicious of creatures in character and temperament."

"We know that the Zanj (blacks) are the least intelligent and the least discerning of mankind, and the least capable of understanding the consequences of actions."

"Their nature is that of wild animals. They are extremely black. [About the Sudan:] Among themselves there are people who steal each other's children and sell them to the merchants when the latter arrive."

“The Zanj are so uncivilized that they have no notion of a natural death. If a man dies a natural death, they think he was poisoned. Every death is suspicious with them, if a man has not been killed by a weapon.”

Both Al-Idrisi and Ibn Battuta are major figures in Islamic history.

Then there are the statements of Ibn Khaldun, that most famous of all Arab (or more exactly, Berber) historiographers and historians. His remarks on black Africans rival those of Ibn Battuta for what we today would have no difficulty in describing as racism. Those below are taken from his celebrated Muqaddimah (or Prolegomena):

“Beyond [known peoples of black West Africa] to the south there is no civilization in the proper sense. There are only humans who are closer to dumb animals than to rational beings. They live in thickets and caves, and eat herbs and unprepared grain. They frequently eat each other. They cannot be considered human beings.

“Therefore, the Negro nation are, as a rule, submissive to slavery, because [Negroes] have little [that is essentially] human and have attributes that are quite similar to those of dumb animals, as we have stated.

If Bush thinks there is racial harmony within the Camp of Islam, perhaps this florilegium of quotes will make him think again.

Bush did not know then, and probably does not know now, that the Qur'an contains 109 verses commanding Muslims to engage in violent Jihad against Infidels, telling them to “fight them” and “smite at their necks” and “strike terror” in their hearts. If he ever decides to read and study the Qur'an, our former president might begin with just these ten verses: 2:190-194, 3:110, 3:151, 4:34, 4:89, 8:12,8:60, 9:5,9:29,

47:4. That should be enough to startle him out of his complacency.

Barack Obama, too, uttered pious sentiments about Islam similar to those of Bush, especially in the speech he delivered in Cairo to a Muslim audience:

"... America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles – principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings.

"It was Islam – at places like Al-Azhar – that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe's Renaissance and Enlightenment It was innovation in Muslim communities – it was innovation in Muslim communities that developed the order of algebra; our magnetic compass and tools of navigation; our mastery of pens and printing; our understanding of how disease spreads and how it can be healed. Islamic culture has given us majestic arches and soaring spires; timeless poetry and cherished music; elegant calligraphy and places of peaceful contemplation. And throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality."

Twice Obama mentions Islam as demonstrating, through words and deeds, the "possibilities of religious tolerance." Could he really not know about the history of Jihad, of how Muslim armies, animated by their faith and the unquenchable need to conquer lands and subjugate peoples to Islam, managed within a century of Muhammad's death to create an empire throughout the Middle East, across North Africa, and in all of Spain, with the Jihadis halted only in 732 by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours? Has he never heard of the merciless killings of Unbelievers, and the three options presented to the survivors by their Muslim masters: death, or conversion to Islam, or the

permanent status of dhimmi, which imposed many onerous conditions, including a prohibition on non-Muslims building new houses of worship or repairing old ones, the requirement that dhimmis step out of the way of Muslims on footpaths, ride donkeys rather than horses, wear marks on their clothing, and sometimes on their dwellings, too, identifying their religion and – most important of all – they were forced to pay the jizyah, a tax on Unbelievers that guaranteed their physical safety, that is, from attacks by Muslims themselves. The Jizyah was a religiously-sanctioned form of extortion.

And as for “racial equality,” we have discussed above how the Arabs viewed blacks, from the follower of Muhammad w