

Muslims

By: Mary Saad Assel

To gain a better understanding of Muslims, it is crucial to differentiate between terrorists and Muslims. Those who commit acts of terror in the name of Islam are nothing, but demented savages that hide under the umbrella of Islam. They are not Muslim even though they say or think they are. There is not a single verse in the Quran that directs Muslims to kill innocent people. God told Muslims to leave the Christians and the Jews alone and that only He will judge among mankind. He does not prohibit them from taking Christians and Jews or other faiths as friends as long as they are righteous and of moral character.

“As for such [of the unbelievers] as do not fight against you on account of [your] faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for, verily, God loves those who act equitably.” (Quran 60:8)

“God only forbids you to turn in friendship towards such as fight against you because of [your] faith, and drive you forth from your homelands, or aid [others] in driving you forth: and as for those [from among you] who turn towards them in friendship; it is they, they who are truly wrongdoers!” (Quran 60:9)

The Quran clarifies who should not be taken as friends; *O you who believe! Take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport,- whether among those who received the Scripture before you, or among those who reject Faith; but remain conscious of God, if you are (truly) believers. (Quran 5:57)*

Those who are anti-Muslim will take numerous Quranic verses out of context to make it seem as though Islam is a religion that calls for battle, but it does not. Killing is justified in self-defense only or when people are expelled from their homes because they profess to believe in God.

American Muslims

American Muslims began to immigrate to America from their countries as far back as the 18th century. To them, America was a land of opportunity as it was to the British who left England in search for political, economic, and religious freedom. American Muslims, like everyone else-do not define themselves by their religion or country of origin; they define themselves by their American nationality.

You cannot recognize American Muslims by the color of their hair, skin, or eyes. Many of them blend easily into the fabric of the macro-culture, but others, whose religious garb, prayer, or skin color single them out, should not be feared or equated with terrorism. If we were to fear all those who differ from us by their appearance or from what they wear, then, we should fear all walks of life since no two people dress or act alike. It is **terror** or **hate** that have hijacked religion whether claimed to be Muslim or Christian that we need to fear.

All three monotheistic religions Christianity, Islam, and Judaism condemn the killing of innocent people. Islam need not be singled out as a religion of terror when hate groups in this country have

slayed, [executed](#), [lynched](#), and [beaten](#) those who are non-Christian in the name of White Supremacy or Christianity.

The terrorists who claimed to be Arab-Muslim, hijacked four of our planes and killed [over 3000 people](#), but again, they were acting on demented political ideologies, not Islam. We cannot speak for the citizens in the Arab world who celebrated 9/11 for whatever political reason, but we can testify that there was not a single American Muslim in this country who celebrated 9/11. They were just as devastated as every other non-Muslim American.

It is hard to tell the difference between Muslim terrorists and non-terrorists, just as it is for Muslims to tell the difference between Christian terrorists and non-terrorists. Many American Muslims walk the streets and fear that someone like [Craig Hicks](#) or [Adam W. Purinton](#) will kill them execution style. They are afraid of terrorists as they attend schools, enjoy parks, and live in communities under the protection of their constitution. They fear that they will be victims of a slaughter attack based on their religious beliefs or outer garments. They are being [shot at in their driveways](#) and killed because of the color of their skin and outer dress or appearances. All they want is to live a peaceful life and protect their families from harm. Many of them and their children have joined our military to protect this country from its enemies. There are [5,896 self-identified](#) Muslims currently serving in the military, according to the Department of Defense. This is out of a total of 1,313,940 active-duty and 826,106 guard and reserve members, respectively. In fact, American Muslims served in the U.S. military [under the command of General George Washington](#), who was Commander in Chief of the Continental Army during the American War for Independence. Hence, Muslims have been and will continue to be patriots who are willing to give their lives for our country.

Muslims believe in the importance of covenant: “O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the Messenger, and [those charged with authority among you...](#)” In other words, it is every American Muslim’s obligation to obey established law enforcement agencies. They must obey the law of the land and pledge allegiance to its flag as long as it does not deny the existence of God. Religion and patriotism are not opposing forces. Muslims who said they attend services more frequently were more likely [not to condone violence](#), with 65 percent saying “it is never justified,” compared to 45 percent of similarly devout Jews, 43 percent of Catholics, and 40 percent of Protestants.

Today, there are hundreds of [organizations](#) and thousands of committees in this country that are committed to promote better understanding of Islam. Many are of them are interfaith organizations who have made it their mission to shed light on Islam while holding hands with people of all faiths. They stand together around mosques, churches, and synagogues in solidarity. Thousands of American Muslim clerics and their congregations preach against terrorism and hold 100’s of conferences, town hall meetings, and religious gatherings to deliver peace talks and encourage interfaith. In the end, those who justify acts of war in the name of Islam are clearly in the wrong.

“America is home to one of the [most diverse Muslim](#) populations in the world, including people of almost every ethnicity, country and school of thought. Although they are widely viewed as recent immigrants, the demographics tell a different story. Approximately one third of the community is African-American, one third is of South Asian descent, one quarter is of Arab descent, and the rest are from all over the world, including a growing Latino Muslim population. While exact numbers

are difficult to establish, there are between 3-6 million American Muslims. Like others, most Muslims who choose to migrate to America arrive seeking economic opportunity and democratic freedom. The best studies available characterize American Muslims today as largely middle-class and an integral part of American society. Also, many American Muslim children are the product of interethnic, interracial, and interreligious marriages. Some may be Muslim; some may not be regardless of their outer appearance. American Muslims are present in all walks of life, as doctors and taxi drivers; lawyers and newspaper vendors; accountants, homemakers, academics, media personalities, athletes and entertainers.”

This country is every American’s “homeland.” September 11, was not just an attack on Christians, it was an attack on all Americans – Muslim, Christian or otherwise. [Arab Muslims](#) were also among those who were assassinated on 9/11. September 11 victims were the fellow citizens of every American regardless of religion. It is very difficult to understand the grievances and hate of our enemies, but they are clearly, troubled non-Muslim terrorists. American Muslims were among the first responders during the 911 attack [to assist war victims](#) in the United States and around the world. They don’t wait for someone to tell them to act, they act on their own. American Muslim activists are not hiding, they are reaching out to thousands of non-Muslims to help them understand the true meaning of Islam with the word ‘Islam’ meaning ‘Peace,’ but when someone terrifies an eighty eight year old man with dogs and guns or drags their [78 year old mother](#) across the lawn in her nightgown for discriminatory reasons, they will revert to Human Rights organizations to protect themselves from criminals and acts of hate. American Muslims are not asking for apologies, they are asking for peace. Those who hide their faces or take up arms against this country are doing so for demented political reasons which have nothing to do with Islam.

It is the right of every citizen white, black, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hispanic, Asian or otherwise to know if their neighbor is willing to embrace them or plot against them. It is sad that the citizens of our country are now living in fear with both sides questioning each other’s motives. Also, unless we have an administration that is willing to help in closing the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims, there may never be a genuine understanding among all walks of faith. Until then, we should all be worried.