

thering its cause.

People in the West are increasingly becoming aware that jihad is regarded as fighting against non-Muslim governments and nations, etc. although Christians are often too easily persuaded that jihad is the equivalent activity to evangelism. However they fail to understand that Islam is a political movement that embraces all aspects of life and is striving for the creation of an Islamic state. Consequently, when dealing with non-Muslims, Islam is understood by many Muslims as encouraging them to use an aggressive warfare mentality that features deception.

Indeed until non-Muslims come to realise the degree to which *taqiyya* and *jihad* focus the minds of many Muslims, they will find themselves easily deluded. They are dealing with people who, in the name of their religion, can be purposefully deceptive. Unless they become more sceptical and resistant, they will wake up one day to find that the democratic, tolerant, secular society they knew has been altered irretrievably and they have been brought into subjection to Islam.

Questions for Consideration

1. What problems are created in your mind by the act of lying on the part of those you love, colleagues or those with whom you socialise?
2. Is lying ever acceptable?
3. Is there a jihad or struggle for the Christian? If so, in what way? Where does it differ from the Islamic jihad?
4. How can Christians, or for that matter, Australians in general, resist the tide of an Islam that is prepared to use deception and even violence to achieve its purposes?
5. To what extent is there a risk that we will have to sacrifice some of our precious liberties in order to resist the advance of Islam?

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Islam and Christianity *Series*

No. 6 Taqiyya and Jihad



Taqiyya is a word which literally means *to fear* or *to guard against* and it refers to a controversial dispensation in some areas of Muslim thought that allows believers to conceal their faith, and the ideas, feelings and convictions that go with it, when under threat, persecution or compulsion.

The term originated among Shi'a and other minority Muslims as a means of protecting themselves from persecution by the dominant Sunni Muslims. However in situations where Muslims, in general, are in a minority, its meaning has been expanded, not always comfortably in the eyes of Sunni Muslims, to embrace the idea of lying and engaging in deception in order to fulfil certain specific purposes.

These comprise

- avoiding persecution e.g. when it is believed that one is under threat, particularly to one's life,
- enabling a reconciliation with non-Muslims or to soften their hearts towards the teachings of Islam.

In the words of Shafi'i theologian al-Ghazali,

“Speaking is a means to achieve objectives. If a praiseworthy aim is attainable through both telling the truth and lying, it is unlawful to accomplish it through lying because there is no need for it. When it is possible to achieve such an aim by lying but not by telling the truth, it is permissible to lie if attaining the goal is permissible..., and obligatory to lie if the goal is obligatory. ...One should compare the bad consequences entailed by lying to those entailed by telling the truth, and if the consequences of telling the truth are more damaging, one is entitled to lie...”

(Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, *The Reliance of the Traveler*, translated by Nuh Ha Mim Keller, amanat publications, 1997, section 18.2, page 745)

Most Sunnis generally assert that the Shi'a doctrine of taqiyya isn't in accordance with its acceptable use which should be confined to saving one's life.

Among its practitioners Taqiyya embraces the notion that Muslims should never allow unbelievers to be numbered among their friends.

“Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah: except by way of precaution, that ye may guard yourselves from them. But Allah cautions you (to remember) Himself; for the final goal is to Allah.”

Qur'an 3.28

Believers are permitted to show outward friendship but never allow that friendship to develop into anything deeper.

To the Christian mind all this is almost inconceivable. Jesus told his followers never to hide their religious beliefs.

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give the glory to your Father who is in heaven”

Matthew 5.16

When a Christian wishes to teach others about Christianity, it is simply understood that honesty will be an essential aspect of that relationship.

Morally the Christian and probably the Western mind would consider that the practice of lying is rarely justified, even when it is common practice, as it creates such confusion that people don't know when the truth is actually being told.

However to fully understand the perceived need for taqiyya the reader needs to understand the concept of jihad.

Jihad literally means *to strive* or *to struggle* in Arabic and it is regarded as a duty for Muslims. It appears frequently in the Quran and in common usage as the idiomatic expression "striving in the way of God".

Jihad is essentially viewed as a struggle to bring all things into submission to Allah and Islam.

Muslim scholars argue that there are five aspects of Ji-

had.

- **Jihad of the heart/soul** is an inner struggle of good over evil in the individual's mind.
- **Jihad by the tongue** is a struggle of good against evil waged through communication such as writing and speaking in order to win converts or teach others.
- **Jihad by the pen and knowledge** is a struggle for good against evil through scholarship in Islam by legal reasoning, and through the sciences.
- **Jihad by the hand** refers to a struggle of good against evil waged by personal action or by application of one's wealth, such as going on the Hajj pilgrimage, taking care of elderly parents, or engaging in political activity for furthering the cause of Islam
- **Jihad by the sword** refers to armed fighting in holy war, which is the most common usage that most of those in the West would associate with the word.

Some contemporary Islamists, particularly those the West would regard as extremist, have succeeded in replacing the greater jihad, the fight against desires, with the lesser jihad, the holy war to establish, defend and extend the Islamic state. For many, there is the command for Islam to take over local and eventually national governments. This is often the point where the violent face of Islam makes itself known and where extremism emerges.

In the Muslim mind the struggle to convert non-Muslims to Islam is part of jihad. Proselytisation in Islam is more than just sharing Islam's "good news", it is an imperative to make people submissive to Allah and his teachings by whatever means are available. With this in mind, it is vital to note Muhammad's famous saying that, *“War is deception.”*

This helps us to understand how a religion can rationalise and justify taqiyya or lying as a means of fur-