



Saving Rifqa

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It's a well-documented reality that Muslims who leave Islam often risk death, but that's a reality that the mainstream media has yet to acknowledge.

Take the case of 17-year-old Rifqa Bary. A Muslim teenager who secretly converted Christianity, Bary recently fled her Ohio home to a Christian community in Orlando, Florida, when she realized that her life was in danger. If she had not escaped, she could have been yet another Muslim murdered for apostasy. Indeed, according to Bary, her own father had threatened her life if she converted. Although her father claims that he is not a danger to his daughter, Bary has been placed in foster care until her claims can be investigated.

Media outlets have approached the case with notable surprise, but in fact it is not so shocking: Islamic law, or Sharia, specifically condemns apostates to death and encourages Muslims to kill apostates -- even if, as in Bary's case, they are family members or children. Consider some commandments on apostasy found in mainstream Islamic texts:

1. Apostates are to be given three days to repent and return to Islam. If the apostate refuses, he or she will be killed immediately. Books on Islamic Sharia agree unanimously on this point. For instance, Muslim scriptures such as the Sahih Hadith by the prophet Mohammad 9:50 states: "No Umma [a member of the Muslim community] should be killed for killing a Kaffir [an infidel]. . . Whoever changes his Islamic religion, kill him."
2. It is obligatory for a Muslim caliph to ask the apostate to repent and return to Islam. If he does, his return to the fold is accepted; but if he refuses, he must be killed.
3. There is no indemnity for killing an apostate, nor is there any expiation required, since killing an apostate is tantamount to killing someone who deserves to die.
4. The testimony of apostates is not admissible in Sharia courts.
5. An apostate cannot claim an inheritance from Muslim parents.
6. The marriage of an apostate is immediately dissolved if the spouse is and remains Muslim.

The above laws have kept Muslim apostates enslaved inside Islamic states under penalty of death for 1400 years and counting. But laws encouraging the killing of non-Muslims, especially those who leave Islam, also extend to non-Muslim nations. According to some interpretations of Sharia, non-Muslim nations are invited to convert to Islam and, if they refuse, a jihad war must begin. This jihad is a sacred duty for every Muslim.

Besides terrorizing apostates, such laws have a destructive effect on devout Muslims. It is astounding how many Muslims feel no sympathy or guilt toward murdered victims of apostasy laws. In Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, for instance, aside from some brave dissidents, there is wide acceptance of the notion that apostates must be killed and that jihad against non-Muslim countries is a badge of honor.

The media's deafening silence on the threat of Sharia law, not least to apostates, risks encouraging a similar desensitization among Muslims living in the West.

There is a role for authorities to play, as well. The U.S. government must protect its citizens not only from the terrorism of jihad, but also from Islamic laws condemning Muslims to death and encouraging vigilante street justice. How can a former Muslim like Rifqa Bary, or like myself, live in peace in America when there are neighborhood mosques reading scriptures to their believers telling them to kill Muslims who have left the religion? Even if only 10 percent of Muslims in America follow Sharia as it is taught, the threat remains real. As Bary's case darkly illustrates, there is no peace for a Muslim apostate -- not even in the West.

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