

## [Are the Minnesota School Authorities that Ignorant?](#)

Author : Jacob Thomas on Jun 22, 2008 - 12:51 AM

By Jacob Thomas

I despair of the cultural situation in the West! Would we ever learn about the true nature of Islam? Are we that naïve that we consider Islam simply a religion, a "religion of peace" that has been high-jacked by some of its extremists?

I write these words after reading an op-ed article in the Saturday/Sunday edition of the Wall Street Journal (14/15 June, 2008,) about a "Charter School" in the State of Minnesota, that is promoting Islam. Here are excerpts from the article, followed by my analysis and comments.

Ms. Katherine Kersten, a columnist for the Minneapolis Star Tribune, began her article, by asking:

"At what point does a publicly funded charter school with strong Islamic ties cross the line and inappropriately promote religion? That's a question now facing us in Minnesota. For the past five years, the *Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy*, in Inver Grove Heights, Minn., has operated in close connection with the Muslim American Society of Minnesota. The school accepts public funds, and thus the broader constitutional requirements placed on all public schools. Nonetheless, in many ways it behaves like a religious school.

"The school is named for the Muslim general who conquered Spain in the eighth century. It shares a building with a mosque and the headquarters of the Muslim American Society of Minnesota. The cafeteria serves Halal food. Arabic is a required subject. There is a break for midday prayers. On Fridays, many students join with Muslim teachers and attend religious services in the school's gym. There are voluntary Islamic Studies classes held "after" school, but before the buses leave to take the school's 400 students home. Most of the students are the children of low-income Muslim immigrants.

"The Muslim American Society, as reported by the Chicago Tribune, is the American branch of the international Muslim Brotherhood, 'the world's most influential Islamic fundamentalist group.'

"The Minnesota Department of Education's report, released last month, concluded that the school is breaking the law by holding Friday religious services on school grounds. Minnesota education officials need both the backbone and the oversight tools necessary to prevent the blurring of lines between Islam and the public schools. If they continue their tepid response, a separate system of taxpayer-financed education for Muslims may take root here. Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy could be the first of many."

The URL for the full text of this article is:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121339952713673705.html>

## Analysis

The above information should make every American very disturbed, not only about the infiltration of Islam into publicly-funded schools, but by the shocking ignorance displayed by the Minnesota authorities, vis-à-vis the true nature of Islam. While Ms. Kersten was alarmed by the fact that Islam (as religion,) was being taught at a charter school, she seemed to be oblivious of the fact that **Islam is far more complex than to be classified as just a religion. Islam has always enshrined a political agenda that is totally opposed to Western democratic principles. Herein lies its ultimate and ever-present danger.**

## Comments

To educate the Western public about the unique nature of Islam seems to be an unending job. First, I would like to quote from my article, "*Losing the War against Jihadism*," that appeared on the FFI website of Sunday, 31 May, 2008:

"The directives of the DHS [Department of Homeland Security] manifest an abysmal ignorance of Islam, its history, and its religious-political ideology. Islam is unique among the major world religions. It's unlike Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Judaism. **Islam combines religion with politics in one indivisible entity.** This a fact firmly embedded in Islamic history."

In order to underline the peculiar nature of Islam, I would like to quote from a classic, "*Islam: A Way of Life*." The book was written by the late Professor Philip K. Hitti. He was born in Lebanon in 1886, and educated at the American University of Beirut. He immigrated to the United States in 1913, pursued his studies at Columbia University, where he received his PhD in 1915. He became Professor of Arabic Literature at Princeton University, and wrote several books, the most widely known is, *History of the Arabs* (1937)

Professor Hitti, who died in 1978, was a pioneer in the field of *Middle East Studies*. In 1967, he lectured at the University of Minnesota on the subject of Islam. These lectures were considerably expanded and published by Henry Regnery Company in 1971, under the title of "*Islam: A Way of Life*" The book is divided into three parts: *Islam the Religion, Islam the State, and Islam the Culture*.

Describing the changes that took place after Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D., Hitti wrote:

***"In Medina Muhammad's writings centered more on social and political matters than on spiritual considerations. The short, crisp, spiritually oriented revelations that he made in Mecca were followed by prosaic, verbose surahs revealed in Medina and dealing with such subjects as war and booty, gambling and taxes, food and drink,***

*marriage and divorce. The community of Medina served as the nucleus of the rising Arab nation; its government developed into a prototype of the Moslem empire, and the Islam of Medina was the germ from which the Islam of the world grew." P. 15*

In Part II, Philip Hitti dealt with the political and imperialistic aspects of Islam. Not content with Muhammad's conquest and Islamization of the Arabian Peninsula, his successors known as the Caliphs, began their famous Islamic *Futuh* (Conquests.)

*"At the beginning of the rise of Islam the two world powers were the Byzantine or East Roman Empire and the Persian Empire. One was Christian and the other Zoroastrian. It was truly startling that a new power, preaching a strange religion, emerged from little-known Arabia, stripped one of the two empires of its richest provinces in Asia and Africa, and destroyed the other to its very foundation. By 642, ten years after the death of the Prophet, the Persian Empire had been erased from the register of existence, and the Byzantine Empire had lost greater Syria (from the Taurus to Sinai) and Egypt." P. 72*

Describing the blood-letting that took place quite often within the Islamic Umma, Professor Hitti, recounts the horrific end of the *Umayyad Dynasty* that ruled the Muslim Empire from Damascus (661-750,) and the rise of the Abbasids who moved the center of the Muslim world to Baghdad:

Caliph Marwan II (744-50) and his army of 12,000 *"were utterly destroyed. The fugitive commander was pursued to Egypt, caught hiding in a church, and decapitated. His head was sent to abu-al-'Abbas in Kufah. The Syrian capital opened its gates to the invaders after a brief siege. Its caliphal tombs were desecrated and their contents exhumed; even the dead were punished. As for the living the punishment was extermination --- by covert if not by overt means." P. 86*

I still remember, the placid manner of our Levantine professor of the *History of Arab-Islamic Civilization* who described the violent upheavals that took place in that history, beginning with the assassination of Ali in 661; the near-extermination of the Umayyads as described above; all the way to the early 19th century when Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt, murdered hundreds of Mamelukes, after having invited them for a banquet in Cairo! Those events were described without emotions or regrets, as if they were to be expected!

Another piece of news that was reported in the WSJ article requires a special comment. The readers were informed that the school's name was *Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy*, and that it was *"named for the Muslim general who conquered Spain in the eighth century."* Wow, what a brazen insult to the West! *Tariq ibn Ziyad* led the Arabs and the newly-converted North African Berbers, to cross the Mediterranean from Tangiers, Morocco, and land a few miles to the north, on the Spanish side. Arab history teachers revel in telling this story about *Tariq*. Having brought his victorious men into Europe, he burned their ships, and said: *"The sea is behind you, and the enemy is in front of you. You have only one choice: fight and conquer."* The huge rock near the point of their

landing came to be known as *Jebel Tariq*, (*Mount of Tariq*.) In Western languages, it is spelled *Gibraltar!*

The founders of the Charter School at Inver Grove Heights, Minneapolis, were not ignorant of their Islamic history. They wanted their students to reflect on the "*glorious days of the Islamic futuhat*." Their very success in founding the academy in an important part of the United States was in itself *a conquest*. The academy's worldview being Islamic, its students' ultimate loyalty would not be to America, that had welcomed their parents, but to the Islamic Umma, with its cultural and political baggage.

Am I reading too much into the story of "*Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy?*" I don't think so. On 16 June, 2008, the liberal Kuwaiti website, [www.kwtanweer.com](http://www.kwtanweer.com) published an article with the title, *On Religion & Politics*. The author lamented the fact that in post-Saddam Iraq, "*religion and politics are visible everywhere, and seem to be having a harmonious relationship*." He pointed to the Iraqi flag that carries the Islamic slogan, "*Allahu Akbar*." "*Religious militias, both Sunni and Shi'ite, are everywhere; and in the parliament both clergy and laity intermingle*." By the way, it was during the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988) that Saddam Hussein, the secular Baathist, added "*Allahu Akbar*," to the center of the flag. That was done to rally all Iraqis behind him in his fight against the Islamic Republic of Iran!

Going back a little to the recent history of the Middle East, President Sadat who succeeded the nationalist President Nasser in 1970, was known as the "*al-Rai's al-Mou'men*," (the believing president.) Unfortunately for him, his fidelity to his Islamic faith did not keep the Islamist elements within the army from assassinating him on 6 October, 1981, on the very day he was commemorating his successful crossing of the Suez Canal on 6 October, 1973!

One final thought that I would like to leave with the readers. During this crucial election year in America, I would like to suggest that each candidate for the presidency should be asked "*What is your understanding of Islam?*" If the answer is: "*Islam is just another religion among world religions*," then the candidate is not equipped to lead America in our turbulent times. Fourteen hundred years of world history witness to the fact that Islam has been a politicized and imperialistic worldview. There can be no co-existence between Islam (as based on the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the Sunna) and democracy, as understood and practiced in the free world.