



# The Myth of Islamic Tolerance: How Islamic Law Treats Non-Muslims

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This collection of essays by some of the world's leading authorities on Islamic social history focuses on the juridical and cultural oppression of non-Muslims in Islamic societies. The authors of these in-depth but accessible articles explode the widely diffused myth, promulgated by Muslim advocacy groups, of a largely tolerant, pluralistic Islam. In fact, the contributors lay bare the oppressive legal superstructure that has treated non-Muslims in Muslim societies as oppressed and humiliated tributaries, and they show the devastating effects of these discriminatory attitudes and practices in both past and contemporary global conflicts.

Besides original articles, primary source documents here presented also elucidate how the legally mandated subjugation of non-Muslims under Islamic law stems from the Muslim concept of jihad — the spread of Islam through conquest. Historically, the Arab-Muslim conquerors overran vast territories containing diverse non-Muslim populations. Many of these conquered people surrendered to Muslim domination under a special treaty called dhimma in Arabic. As such these non-Muslim indigenous populations, mainly Christians and Jews, were then classified under Islamic law as dhimmis (meaning "protected"). Although protected status may sound benign, this classification in fact referred to "protection" from the resumption of the jihad against non-Muslims, pending their adherence to a system of legal and financial oppression, as well as social isolation. The authors maintain that underlying this religious caste system is a culturally ingrained contempt for outsiders that still characterizes much of the Islamic world today and is a primary impetus for jihad terrorism.

Also discussed is the poll tax (Arabic jizya) levied on non-Muslims; the Islamic critique of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the use of jihad ideology by twentieth-century radical Muslim theorists; and other provocative topics usually ignored by Muslim apologists.

This hard-hitting and absorbing critique of Islamic teachings and practices regarding non-Muslim minorities exposes a significant human rights scandal that rarely receives any mention either in academic circles or in the mainstream press.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Spencer, author of *Islam Unveiled*, edits this collection that sets out to debunk the theory that Muslims are tolerant of non-Muslims. Although the theme merits exploration, this book does not clarify it. The essays' authors frequently cite *jihad* and *dhimmi* as intolerant principles within Islam, but do not define them. Vague references to these ideas do not explain why Islam is inherently intolerant. Several authors also quote the Qur'an out of context and describe Muslims with large generalizations. Yasser Arafat, of the PLO, is presented as representing Muslim attitudes—a characterization most Muslims would probably disagree with. Comments describing alleged troublesome behavior by Muslims lack sources and citations. Some authors ignore basic Islamic concepts; Bat Ye'or, for example, says that the *dhimmi* treatment was considered "justified by the superiority of the master-race," although the Qur'an strictly states though that all races are equal in Islam. The collection includes multiple essays by the same author, including 17 by Ye'or. The resulting repetition and monotone provide little insight and a disconnected feel. This book would have been more persuasive and less alarmist if it had excluded half the essays.

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From the Inside Flap

This enlightening collection of essays by some of the world's leading authorities on Islamic social history focuses on the pervasive legal and cultural oppression of non-Muslims in Islamic societies. The authors of these in-depth but accessible articles explode the widely advocacy groups, of a largely tolerant, pluralistic Islam. In fact, the contributors lay bare the tyrannical legal superstructure that has treated non-Muslims in Muslim societies as oppressed and humiliated tributaries, and they show the devastating effects of these discriminatory attitudes and practices in both past and contemporary global conflicts.

The insightful chapters presented in THE MYTH OF ISLAMIC TOLERANCE explain how the legally mandated subjugation of non-Muslims under Islamic law stems from the Muslim concept of jihad--the spread of Islam through conquest. Historically, the Arab Muslim conquerors overran vast territories containing diverse non-Muslim populations. Many of these conquered people surrendered to Muslim domination under a special treaty called dhimma in Arabic. As such, these non-Muslim indigenous populations, mainly Christians and Jews, were then classified under Islamic law as dhimmis (meaning "protected"). Although protected status may sound benign, this classification in fact referred, most importantly, to "protection" from the resumption of the jihad against non-Muslims. The authors maintain that underlying this religious caste system is a culturally ingrained contempt for outsiders that still characterizes much of the Islamic world today and is a primary catalyst for jihad terrorism, jihadist-martyrdom bombers, and a Nazi-like racist antisemitism taught in school systems and propagated via the media.

Included are Ibn Warraq writing about Edward Said and the "intellectual turbans" he has placed on today's academic establishment, forestalling honest discussion about Islamic tolerance; Bat Ye'or on the devastating effects of the dhimma, the system that actually defines the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Islamic states; Walid Phares on the little-noted oppression of Middle Eastern Christians; and much more--including a devastating series of articles by UN expert David G. Littman on the advancement of Islamic intolerance at the United Nations and other provocative topics usually ignored by Muslim apologists.

This hard-hitting and absorbing assessment of Islamic teachings and practices regarding non-Muslim minorities uncovers a significant human rights scandal that rarely receives any mention either in academic

circles or in the mainstream press.

#### About the Author

Robert Spencer is a freelance writer, the director of Jihad Watch, and an adjunct fellow of the Free Congress Foundation. His previous books include *Onward Muslim Soldiers*, *Islam Unveiled*, and *Islam: A Guide for Catholics*.

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