

# **357 Speakers Series- La Série 357 – The Future of Europe/L'Europe de Demain**

*This is the 1st<sup>d</sup> annual speakers series held in Montreal at Club 357 Ex-Centris Restaurant. This year's theme explores the key issues facing the future of Europe.*

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## **The Challenge of Islam for Europe**

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*This is an edited transcript of a speech given by Ms Ali at Club 357 in Montreal. Ms. Ali is a former Member of Parliament in the Netherlands and outspoken critic of fundamentalist Islam.*

Having grown up as a Muslim woman, and having for the better part of my life been told to lower my gaze, I find it very uncomfortable having these lights shining on me. My tablemate asked me whether it makes me nervous to speak, and while it doesn't make me nervous to speak, it makes me nervous to be in the spotlights and to look at you. The lowering of the gaze has just become something that's ingrained and that I can't get rid of.

I want to talk to you about Islam, and not just Islam, but Islam and the West. I've been following this as a non-Muslim since 2002 and I can detect roughly two schools of thought. The first school of thought defends the position that Islam is a great religion. It's a peaceful religion. It's a religion that is hijacked by a small number of people to justify the commitment of atrocious acts, such as terrorism. The intolerance practiced and promoted by some Muslims towards unbelievers, gays, Jews and women is seen as un-Islamic.

This "Islam is Peace" theory is the predominant view among politicians, policy-makers, journalists and academics, in America and in Europe. George Bush came out after the 11<sup>th</sup> of September and said Islam is a religion of peace and has maintained that. Tony Blair read the Koran, he said it was next to his bed and he came up with the idea that it's actually good for women. Many journalists and academics continue to promote the idea that Islam is a synonym of peace.

But there's a second school of thought that's emerging in the West. I call it the "Islam is the Problem" theory, and it defends the position that Islam is not a religion of peace, but rather, a religion of conquest. It seeks world domination by all means that it can. It is a political theory that if implemented gives birth to a government of totalitarianism. Al Qaeda and its franchises are marginal in their deeds of terror and the plotting of mass murder, but they are not marginal in their beliefs. The arguments al Qaeda makes are firmly embedded in the roots of Islamic jurisprudence and are, therefore, mainstream.

Islamic jurisprudence is derived from four sources: the Koran, considered the word of God. It is unedited, never to be revised and always to be obeyed.

The second source of jurisprudence is the sunnah or hadith – it is the moral example of the Prophet Mohammed in word and in deed. And his example should always be followed.

The third method is called, in Arabic, qiyas. A rough translation of that -- I don't find it satisfactory but you'll find it in books -- is "analogical reasoning." This applies to cases about which the Koran and hadith say nothing. For instance -- are you allowed, as a Muslim, to drive? It's not written in the Koran. Mohammed never said anything about it. So how can you then, reason your way into a car? You puzzle and you say, Well, Mohammed went on horseback from A to B and he did the same on camelback. He did not object to transport so all means of transport are halal, or permitted. Therefore you reason through qiyas that cars are not haraam, or forbidden.

The fourth source of jurisprudence is called the consensus of the ummah, or the people. It is really a consensus of the ulama, or legal scholars, a small group of people who give themselves the privilege of being called the learned ones. Learned meaning in the Koran and in the hadith. The consensus that they come to, and the disputes that they are supposed to settle, are disputes that are not settled in the Koran or in the hadith.

Sharia, or Islamic Law, is founded on these four sources of Islamic jurisprudence. Al Qaeda and its franchises, the extremists, but also the 57 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and almost all Muslims believe in the moral teachings of all four sources of jurisprudence.

The statement made by many Muslims, and non-Muslims, who are convinced that Islam's theology is hijacked by a minority, are therefore wrong in their conclusions. The Islam is Peace theory insists that Islamic values are compatible with liberal Western values, and that the difficulties of assimilation into Western society, mainly by European Muslims, are socio-economic in nature. They argue that most Muslim immigrants to Europe have had very little education. If they were to become educated and wealthy they would shed the customs and habits they ascribe to their religion and become Westernized.

The Islam is the Problem theory, the theory I am convinced by, refutes this position. This theory points to the strong incompatibilities between Western liberal thought and practice, on the one hand, and Islamic religious, cultural and political thought and practice, on the other hand. Submission to the will of a God who dictates that every conceivable act committed in life is judged as being obligatory, recommended, neutral, disliked or forbidden, as made explicit in the Koran and the example of the Prophet, does not mesh with the idea that all men – and women, lately -- are born free.

In Western democracies, laws are not made by God, but by a polity of voters. They have created institutions that aspire to safeguard the freedom of the people to furnish their lives as they please. Instead of all obeying the do's and refraining of the don'ts of a power from above, you do what you like as long as you don't infringe on the freedoms of others. You refrain from what you don't like as long as you don't harm others. That's what democracy is about. And in liberal democracies women and gays are accorded the same rights as everyone else.

The debate in the United States over denying gay people the right to marriage is, I think, going to end with the Obama administration. Even where they are not allowed to marry, gay people in the West enjoy a degree of liberty that is considered a grave sin in any country with a significant Muslim majority, or minority. And the person who discovered this for himself is Bruce Bawer, who left the United States in a huff, in anger, thinking his country was not allowing him to marry, thinking he would live in free Europe where marriage of gays is allowed. Instead, he discovered the presence of a completely different fundamentalist group. Not the Christians, a fundamentalist group who wanted to deny him marriage, but the Muslims, a fundamentalist group who wanted to kill him.

When the Islam is Peace theorists admit to any differences between Islam and the principles that Western liberal democracies are built on, they argue that Islam can be reformed through education or that Islam

can be contained through peaceful interfaith dialogue. Or better still, they argue that Islam can be pacified by accommodating the demands made by Islamists to demonstrate the goodwill of the West. But those who argue that Islam is about expanding its power base say that reforming Islam is very difficult, or even impossible.

For true reformation of Islam to get any chance at all, the roots of Islamic jurisprudence should be critically reviewed and revised by Muslims. And just consider this -- for reform in Islam to occur, Muslims must abandon the idea that the commands in the Koran are applicable to all times, instead of the 7<sup>th</sup> century when they were composed, and Muslims must abandon the conviction that the Prophet Mohammed's moral example is worth following.

Everywhere I speak, I find an individual Muslim who angrily reminds me of my remarks in a Dutch newspaper in 2003, when I said that some of Mohammed's conduct measured by Western standards would lead one to conclude that he was a pervert and a tyrant. Mohammed beheaded his enemies. He ordered his militia to do that for him and to wipe out Jewish villages, or tribes. He married over nine wives, and one of them was six when he married her and nine when he bedded her. Mohammed warned against defending non-Muslims, stating clearly that Muslims who take Jews and Christians as friends are sinners who will be punished on earth and sent to hell in the hereafter. He dictated that homosexuals first be humiliated and then executed, and that women be banished from the public space and only allowed to go out of their house and engage in any transaction with permission from their male guardians. He ordered that disobedient wives be beaten.

Now, measure this by Western standards. You might come up with other words than I did. But if we see Muslims trying to follow one or more of Mohammed's guidelines in the West, the argument of the Islam is Peace theorists falls apart. Pedophilia is a crime in all Western countries. Polygamy is outlawed, even though it is tolerated more than the act of having sex with children. And avoiding friendship with peoples of other religions is seen in the West, in general, as xenophobic and intolerant. This is not my opinion. This is a fact.

Interfaith dialogue has not led to much peace. Between 2001 and 2006 I followed the stories of imams, rabbis, reverends and priests holding talks, summits and symposia of tolerance. It took twelve Danish cartoons, a statement from the Pope where he quoted a Byzantine emperor as wondering aloud what Mohammed achieved except to spread his creed by the sword, and the knighting of Salman Rushdie by the British Queen to

get lots and lots of Muslims to take to the streets, burn flags, cars and effigies of the Queen and the Pope and loot and burn the embassies of the very same people with whose religious representatives they were busy dialoguing.

Finally, accommodation of the demands of Islamists for more public space to be Islamized, as a demonstration of goodwill, has led only to more demands, more appeasement and yet more demands. Accommodation of Islamic demands gives the agents of Islamic expansion a sense of euphoria, and even triumph, a conviction that Allah is on their side, blinding the infidel and weakening him. In fact, if anything, they see every act of appeasement as an invitation to make a fresh set of demands.

Europe is in a demographic crisis and it's in a crisis of civilization. The prediction of Professor Bernard Lewis, that Europe will have a majority of Muslims by the end of this century will probably come true way before the end of the century. There are an official estimated 20 million Muslims in the EU. Nobody really knows the numbers. There are other figures circulating in the pubs and parties where Europeans choose to have their honest debates. These unofficial figures range from a modest addition of 5 million to the official one, bringing the total to 25 million, to wild figures like 60 to 80 million. But how wild those figures are can only be verified if the official census bureaus would do their job well, instead of leaking figures to scholars and journalists.

Even if they did their job of answering the simple question of the number of legal immigrants from Muslim countries, they would have a hard time guessing the number of illegal immigrants from Muslim countries. Last year, 1.7 million people from North Africa, central Asia and the Middle East attempted to slip into the EU. Over 90% of those people who made this attempt were Muslims. No EU bureaucrat or member of the European Parliament will go anywhere near answering the question of how many of these attempts led to actual entry. And this makes it harder to deduce the number of illegal Muslims present in Europe.

Where official agencies are paid to record demographic changes in society, and where they fail, rumor-mongers of all kinds take over. This leads to more anxiety and a greater sense of crisis among Europeans on the most pressing question of our time. Are we being overtaken by an invasion of Muslim immigrants? Are we being colonized? Europeans cannot answer that question. This fear is yet to be addressed by the established politicians. The mavericks, like Holland's Geert Wilders, are becoming more trusted than Ms. Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary of Britain who denied him entry to the UK.

Another factor that feeds the genuine fear felt by Europeans is the decline in the European birthrate. The youthfulness of the Muslim population of Europe, the youthfulness of the populations in Muslim countries, who express, in opinion polls, that they would like to emigrate to Europe, the policies of family reunion that make such immigration a reality, all these aspects taken together make the demographic and identity issue of Europe more acute.

To me, it feels like the debate is unending. Those who see the problem with Islam and those who don't, are becoming more and more stubborn in their views. However, it is worth noting again, that those who believe the Islam is Peace theory or that Islam can be contained, are the ones who hold power. Their populations might disagree, but they have the ability as leaders to make decisions and manipulate the electorate into being patient, or tolerant. That's the more common word.

For instance, some of those on the side of the Islam is the Problem theory will bring up the sensitive subject of the high dependence of Muslims on welfare. The Islam is Peace school of thought will respond that the dependence on welfare of most Muslims is a measure of the racism and Islamophobia of the white native Europeans translated into refusing them jobs. The riots of Paris in 2005 is presented as a collective expression of years of frustration by immigrants due to unemployment, police victimization, racism, discrimination and a general rejection of Muslim immigrants by French society. The remedy, they say, is to cure the white man of bigotry and as soon as he accepts the Muslims in his midst and shares the available jobs and housing the problem of dependence on welfare will cease to exist.

Those who do not agree with that, who feel that Islam is a serious obstacle to assimilation, will then respond with more facts, more arguments and more papers. They will say that no doubt there are people in Europe who are bigoted against peoples and religions that are alien to them. However, there are more Europeans who will go out of their way to offer jobs to Muslim immigrants, than there are bigots. The dependence on welfare is more of a cultural and religious problem in the Muslim community, than can be dismissed as a result of bigotry.

The question of welfare in Europe is very important because the number of people required to pay taxes to make it work has to stay constant. The family structure of the Muslim community is not conducive to a modern democratic society whose economy is based on technology

and services, and where most jobs require a post-high school or post-college diploma.

The Muslim mother in Europe -- and here I come to my preferred subject -- except for a small minority, has no education or very little of it to groom her children for the demands of European society. She's often the victim of an arranged or forced marriage. She doesn't know, or understand, that it takes a great deal of effort and planning to get her children -- especially her male child that she so adores -- through school. The curriculum is too complex for her and the school choices too hard to figure out. She can't read and often doesn't have the time to educate herself.

The white educated mother chose the father of her child. She planned not only how many children, but also their arrival, their schooling and their neighborhood. She knows what she wants of her children. She is the product of an educated home herself, she learns about child development, she gets the latest news. The likelihood of a white child dropping out of school in Europe gets smaller with each generation because of that mother. She expects her mate, whether they are married or not, to share in the financial, emotional, and cognitive upbringing of a child. She has the support of her society for this. She knows it and she takes advantage of it.

The Muslim mother's child finds himself in the class, if at all, because there's an ongoing white flight from the large cities of Europe. The Muslim child finds himself in the class with a white child who speaks the native language, who is pampered and patrolled, played with and read to before he goes to bed, whose life in school is an extension of his life at home. Wake up, eat, clean up, play, show and be shown affection. Improve on your drawings, on your spelling, on your presentation, on saying thank you and please, and toys, toys, toys.

Pretty soon, the teachers, all white Europeans, following an exam curriculum of what to teach and how to teach dictated by the EU, declare that the Muslim child has learning difficulties. And learning difficulties give way to suggestions for remedies that the Muslim mother does not understand, and even if she does understand them, she cannot afford or meet them because her culture is so radically different. Then, accusations start over who bears the responsibilities for the learning difficulties of the Muslim child. A year or two, or maybe three or four later, the Muslim child, especially the boy, grows more quiet and sullen in school. He finds other kids struggling with the same misunderstandings and they form a friendship and then decide to drop out.

In 2004, there were 63,000 children who dropped out of school in the Netherlands. Ninety-five percent of them were Muslim. When those kids reach the age where hormones take over the decision-making, without any preparation from their parents or their puzzled and angry teachers, they decide to join gangs, become Islamists, cause trouble, riots and on and on it goes.

This is a problem that is directly linked to the emancipation of women in Islam. But the European Muslims won't hear of it and the European natives won't offend them. And it is here that radical Islam sees an opportunity. They establish Muslim schools, financed with Saudi money, and proceed to indoctrinate the second or third or fourth generation of European Muslims with intolerance and a hidden agenda of cultural and political Islamic expansion.

Another reason why Muslims don't have jobs, according to those who see Islamic culture as the problem, is because they offer religious grounds as an excuse or reason to refuse work and therefore continue to enjoy welfare. For instance, there is the refusal of some Muslims to work in restaurants, supermarkets or other businesses that sell or serve alcohol because Islam forbids the sale and serving of alcohol. Some Muslim women get jobs in school and nursing homes because they are allowed to be teachers and nurses, but they'll come to work clad in black, from head to toe, and you can't see their faces. When their clients protest this, they - - the Muslim women -- demand tolerance on religious grounds, or quit their jobs and go back to taking welfare provided by people who drink alcohol and eat pork.

Some Muslim men resign or refuse jobs where there is direct contact with women who are uncovered, or even with non-Muslims. Others make demands on their employers for a special prayer room, or an ablution area untainted by infidels. They want an exemption to show up late to work for the month of Ramadan, or to leave early. These are all demands that people of other religions in the same society do not make, and cannot count on.

So it is not a simple matter of white bigotry. It is a more complex matter of Islamic bigotry and radical demands that secular, Christian and Jewish employers accommodate a chosen religious lifestyle. And, as long as Israel exists, most European Muslims will refuse to work for a Jewish employer on political grounds, and yet still take the welfare that he and his Christian countrymen contribute to the taxpayers' purse.

The defenders of the theory that Islam is Peace are indefatigable. Their most important argument is the time factor argument. They say it is merely a matter of time before Muslims become like us. They say that modernity is too exciting, too enticing, too attractive and seductive for anyone living in Europe to resist for long. They point to the participation in soccer of Muslim players and say that it is merely a matter of time before Zidane commands more respect and adoration from the Muslim youth than does Bin Laden, or even the Prophet Mohammed.

In response to concerns about rapid demographic change, they -- the Islam is Peace theory believers -- say that Muslim women are sneaking into abortion rooms, learning to use contraceptives and even debating with their husbands about the number of children they can comfortably bear. Others see the explosion of Muslim women in the shelters for the battered not as a measure of abuse by their husbands, but as a sign of emancipation.

I would like to conclude by responding to this argument. The time factor works more against European culture than it does against Islamic culture. It is Europeans who are aging. It is Muslims in Europe who will come of age. Of those Muslims who have come of age we see a disturbing trend toward the rejection of European values and an embracing of Islamic values. There is a d'awa from the Organization of the Islamic Conference countries and the franchises of al Qaeda. D'awa means that once you convert a non-Muslim to Islam or persuade a non-observant Muslim to become observant or practicing, that he or she then also has the duty to proselytize. D'awa is the Arabic word for proselytization.

In other words, you have an ever-growing pool of Islamic political activists, working against their own societies -- the societies that welcomed their parents -- and tragically, unfairly, working for alien states like Saudi Arabia and other Organization of the Islamic Conference countries that pay to brainwash the Muslim individual in Europe. That Muslim individual and his parents and his family are, in their own countries, denied the right to vote and the right to associate. They are, in their own countries, spied on, stolen from, their businesses are closed, they are jailed, they are killed and they are tortured. As poor people in search of a better life, they go to Europe.

It is a very bitter irony that that Muslim peasant who flees his home country in search of the better life his own despotic government cannot provide, remains a faithful servant to that government by acting as a fifth columnist to his host nation, conspiring for its downfall.

I refused to take part in that conspiracy. I have to live with the accusation of "Infidel." And it's a banner I carry with pride.