So, What Is A Radical Muslim, Anyway?

By Jay Hargett

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Introduction

I began research into this subject matter after reading Robert Spencer's book, "A Politically Incorrect Guide To Islam" and trying to decide if he was the "Ann Coulter" of anti-Islamic rhetoric or not. While the work is well written and well documented, it is equally harsh in its condemnation of the current "mainstream" position that Islam, as a religion, is more peaceful and tolerant that its "radicalized" elements. But, as I began to write, I ran into a problem with coming to grips with the question that titles this paper.

As this paper will attempt to put forward a definition of a "radical Muslim", you will come to see what I have seen in my research that this is a bit more difficult that you might imagine. The problems with coming to a definition have been two-fold: 1) The fact that Islam itself is much more diverse than you might imagine; and 2) Those who would characterize Islam as being fundamentally radical are often times willing to paint others with the same wide brush stroke.

So, I want to begin the paper with this quote from Ibn Warraq, a Christian convert, apostate, under a death sentence by believers of his former faith, and author of the book, "Why I Am Not a Muslim";

"There are moderate Muslims, but Islam itself is not moderate."

So many times, radicalism can, and often is, equated with a more fundamental belief in a given religion. From polygamist beliefs within Mormanism to abortion doctor killings in evangelical Christian beliefs, sects like the Shi'ite, Wahhab and Berber within Islam are also tolerated but not embraced by the overwhelming majority of mainstream believers. When a liberal or "progressive" in this country refers to the "radical right", they are referring to those who have evangelical beliefs in Christianity. Those same fundamentalist Christians refer to the "radical left" as being believers in an exclusively secular existence, with the requisite moral relativism. The characterization of people using the term "radical" has become a handy tool to criticize those whose beliefs do not match our own. The difference in this discussion of "What is a radical Muslim anyway?" will be the fact that an act of war has been declared on the very 'radicalism' that brought about the attacks on 9-11.

That being said, in order to get to this "radical Muslim" definition, we have to know some things about the belief system of Islam, and some concepts that are almost universally accepted within its belief structure.

As Shmuel Bar of the Hudson Institute's Center on Islam, Democracy, and the Future of the Muslim World writes,

> *"Islam is a nomocracy; it offers government by immutable law and provides not only a revelation of divine law, but also a highly detailed legal code which regulates all aspects of human behavior on both the private and collective level."*

These beliefs were formulated by free inquiries into the Qur'an (the messages from Allah), Sunna (how God's Messenger, Muhammad ibnu Abdillah, lived his life) and Hadith (narrations on the life of the Prophet Muhammad), as well as research into the trustworthiness of the source documentation, called the

"gates of *ijtihad*", that took place early on after the death of Muhammad. These inquiries have been subsequently closed for centuries, but are now being looked at again, in light of post-9-11 events.

"The Religion of Peace"

This description of Islam as "The Religion of Peace" has endured for as long as there have been open criticisms of its tenets. Indeed, during the Catholic Church's Spanish Inquisition, both the Jew and Gentile sought refuge from this religious purge from Muslim leaders in Spain and elsewhere. However, criticisms of Islam have come not just from within, but from without.

Criticism of the religion, based on the belief that Muhammad was not the last true 'messenger of God' is punishable by death in all countries where *shari'ah* law is enforced. Believers, who make such criticisms with or without the pre-requisite of being a *mufti*, run the risk of the same punishment. This has resulted in the Wahabi creation of the concept of *takfir*, or the excommunication from Islam of any Muslim found to be at odds with the more fundamentalist view of Islam itself. A mufti can declare a Muslim to be non-Muslim, based on the precept that he has turned his or her back on the *ummah*, or the 'Islamic collective'. This, in turn, allows a Muslim to be under the same death sentence as any apostate.

Islam places all non-believers living under *shari'ah* into *dhimitude* status, or under a second-class citizen status. Under these two tenets of Islam, the 'religion of peace' means peaceful co-existence under *shari'ah* law exclusively. Any existence outside *shari'ah* law is considered *kuffaar*, and is subject to the waging of *jihad*. "Rules of engagement" for *jihad* are defined by *fatwa,* and the duty to wage *jihad* is commanded of all able-bodied men of the faith.

We will begin with analysis of these concepts with the source material itself.

The Qur'an, Sunna and Hadith

Qur'anic "messages" were revealed by Allah to Muhammad by way of the Angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years, beginning when Muhammad was 40 years old, in 610 CE. As source text, the Qur'an's written style was difficult to understand and somewhat lacking in context. So, a biography (*sunna*) and narratives (*hadith*) were created to correct these issues of understanding and context. Created years after the death of Muhammad in 632 CE, the credibility and authenticity has been the subject of much study and debate, even within Islam itself. But they represent as authoritative a source as there can be outside of the Qur'an itself. Practitioners of Islam teach that a believer cannot study and understand the Qur'an without the benefit of the *sunna* and *hadith*. However, just as there are various sects of Judaism, Catholicism and Christianity, so too are there sects within Islam. Most notable of these are Sunnite (at around 80% of the total Islamic faith), Shi'ite (around 12%), and Muwahhidun (or Wahhabism, less that 2%). There are others, but these three represent the largest population of believers out of them all.

Even with differing concepts of various tenants of their respective sects, there are many commonalities between them all. One is the concept of abrogation.

> "*None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: Knowest thou not that Allah Hath power over all things?*" (Qur'an 2:106).

While there is debate among the faithful about verses that are abrogated and those which are not (some believers deny the existence of abrogation in the Qur'an altogether), they are united in their belief that Muhammad was the "last prophet of Allah", supplanting all previous incarnations, including Jesus Christ and later beliefs in "cult" figures like Joseph Smith and Sun Yung Moon. An example of this concept of abrogation is the verse in the Qur'an that sanctions the stoning of adulterers. Here is an excerpt from a discussion on this subject from a website called, www.answeringislam.org.

"One of the most well-known passages said in *hadith* records to be missing from the Qur'an relates to the so-called "stoning verses" wherein Muhammad is said to have been commanded to stone to death married people who commit adultery. The records all state that the second Caliph of Islam, Umar, once brought the existence of these missing verses to the attention of the Muslim public during one of his sermons from the *minbar* (the pulpit) of the mosque in Medina. Umar is reported as narrating the matter as follows:

Allah sent Muhammad with the Truth and revealed the Holy Book to him, and among what Allah revealed, was the Verse of the Rajam (the stoning of married persons, male and female, who commit adultery) and we did recite this Verse and understood and memorized it. Allah's Apostle did carry out the punishment of stoning and so did we after him. I am afraid that after a long time has passed, somebody will say, 'By Allah, we do not find the Verse of the Rajam in Allah's Book', and thus they will go astray by leaving an obligation which Allah has revealed. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, p.539)."

This has since been abrogated from recitation (it is now one hundred stripes according to Surah 24:4, and does not differentiate between married and unmarried individuals) but is still existent in Islamic Jurisprudence (*shari'ah*). This has created, since the existence of the Qur'an itself, considerable problems within all believers and students of Islam, because it suggests that the Qur'an was created, and cannot therefore be the uncreated Word of God, or if it is the true Word of God, it cannot have a verse that is superior to another.

While all the Islamic sects maintain the originality of the Qur'an, it is from these differences within the sects, their acceptance of some of the supporting materials over others, and outright disagreements over the religion's legitimate early leadership, that various divergent interpretations of tenants within the faith of Islam have immerged.

Shi'ite belief, as example, stemmed from a belief that the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, Ali, was the rightful leader of the Islamic state after Muhammad's death via an alleged designation of Ali as his successor. Ali's son and successor, Imam Husayn, was then martyred in battle in 680, at Karbala in Iraq. This is the home of the now infamous Al-Askari Mosque bombed and subsequently destroyed by sectarian Sunni bombers in February of 2006. Thus, the divergence of Shi'a from Sunni belief resides in the acceptance of the first three ruling caliphs of Islam as historical occurrence and not something attached to faith.

Wahhab belief originated in the home country of Muhammad, Saudi Arabia, in the 1700's, and puts forward the belief that all accretions after the year 950 were spurious and must be expurgated. This was the act of purifying the Sunni sect of such beliefs as the veneration of saints, the ostentation of worship and luxurious living. This "puritanical" belief (read 'fundamentalist') has since ruled the Kingdom of Saud via *shari'ha* law, and has been on Amnesty International's top 10 human rights violators since the organization's founding.

Offshoots like Hezbollah and Taliban represent the more literal brands of fundamental beliefs in Islam, and diverge even further from the core of Islamic belief in its literal interpretation of the Islamic texts. While they share the beliefs of basic Islam, anti-Zionism and the literal waging of *jihad*, they also diverge from "mainstream" Islam in their interpretation and application of *shari'ah* law.

But there is no greater divergence of ideals within Islam than the various concepts and subsequent applications of the concept of *jihad*.

The definition and concept of *Jihad*

More than any other tenant of Islamic faith, *jihad* ("struggle") seems to be the "catch-all" tenant to the labeling of some believers of Islam as being "radical". The truth is that there are two facets to the concept of *jihad*; 1) the greater struggle against spiritual or moral challenges; and 2) the lesser struggle over the oppression of Islam itself. This is based on the precept that any hindrance to the spread of Islam is justification for *jihad*, or "struggle" against evil, wherever it may be.

> "*Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil: so fight ye against the friends of Satan*" (Qur'an 4:76).

Regardless of other verses that speak of empathy and compassion for the *kuffaar* (non-believer), this verse is part of the verses, Sunna and Hadith used for justification for the spread of Islam by the sword. Those who practice most any faith outside of Islam are guilty of polytheism. While Christians and Jews are considered 'people of the book', these beliefs are allowed only at the discretion of their Muslim hosts. This is important to remember, as it is used by those believing in a perpetual war with the *kuffaar*, with temporary truces being the only cessations in the hostilities. These calls to hostilities, as the act of *jihad*, are confirmed by all four schools of Islamic jurisprudence; Maliki, Hanafi, Hanbali and Shafi'i.

Robert Spencer, of www.jihadwatch.org, comments editorially in a paper submitted to the web site, The Emory Wheel about the concept of jihad as put forward by the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence:

> These schools formulated laws regarding the importance of jihad and the ways in which it must be practiced, centuries ago. Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (d. 996), a Maliki jurist, declared: "*Jihad is a precept of Divine institution.[Unbelievers] have the alternative of either converting to Islam or paying the poll tax (jizya), short of which war will be declared against them.*"

Likewise, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), a Hanbali jurist who is a favorite of Osama bin Laden and other modern-day jihadists, taught: "*Since lawful warfare is essentially jihad and since its aim is that the religion is God's entirely and God's word is uppermost, therefore according to all Muslims, those who stand in the way of this aim must be fought.*"

The Hanafi school sounds the same notes: "*If the infidels, upon receiving the call [to Islam], neither consent to it nor agree to pay capitation tax, it is then incumbent on the Muslims to call upon God for assistance, and to make war upon them.*" (Hidayah)

The Shafi'i scholar Abu'l Hasan al-Mawardi (d. 1058) agrees, saying that if unbelievers "*refuse to accept [Islam] after this, war is waged against them.*" All this is not merely of historical interest.

A Shafi'i manual of Islamic law was certified in 1991 by the highest authority in Sunni Islam, Cairo's Al-Azhar University, as conforming "to the practice and faith of the orthodox Sunni community." This manual, Umdat al-Salik (available in English as Reliance of the Traveler), after defining the "greater jihad" as "spiritual warfare against the lower self," devotes eleven pages to the "lesser jihad."

It defines this jihad as "war against non-Muslims," and spells out the nature of this warfare in quite specific terms: "the caliph makes war upon Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians... until they become Muslim or pay the non-Muslim poll tax."

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), a pioneering historian and philosopher, was also a Maliki legal theorist. In his renowned Muqaddimah, the first work of historical theory, he notes that "*in the Muslim community, the holy war is a*

religious duty, because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and (the

obligation to) convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force."

In Islam, the person in charge of religious affairs is concerned with "power politics," because Islam is "under obligation to gain power over other nations."

Regardless of the complaints from more moderate factions of Islam, and comments on how compassionate Islam has been at wielding the sword that spreads Islam, the definitive source on the subject makes the use of *jihad* clear. That source is Sahih Muslim's Book 19, "The Book of *Jihad* and Expeditions". This book is part of the *hadith* and is the main source for all things related to *jihad*. Of the some 50 chapters of documentation on various subjects, 26 of them deal directly with the conduct of warfare, 7 deals directly with warfare campaign descriptions conducted by Muhammad himself, and a chapter that confirms accounts of a total of 19 military campaigns Muhammad is said to have conducted.

This 'process' of *jihad* begins as described by one chapter that deals directly with the precept of 'the three choices'. The *hadith* writes,

"*If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the jizha (a tax levied*

against the kuffaar). If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight

them." (Muslim, book 19, no. 4294).

This precept is a current belief, illustrated by both the Osama bin Laden's November 2002 "Letter to the American People" and Iranian President Achmaninejad's offer of 'the three choices' to the peoples of the United States in 2006. Once these choices have been offered (and then subsequently declined), the Islamic requirements for the waging of *jihad* on the *kuffaar* have been met. Any such actions against the *kuffaar* to further the will of Allah is now religiously sanctioned and considered a holy duty of all men of faith.

As stated earlier, Islam is a "nomocracy", and the conducting of *jihad* in this manor (read 'by the sword') has detailed 'rules of engagement' men of the faith must follow. These 'rules of engagement' are

defined by the Islamic texts, respected commentaries, and by written rulings made by religious scholars in response to questions raised by men of the faith in the conducting of *jihad*.

So, how does a religion get from the supplanting of a major "struggle" with spirituality and morality with an elevation of a minor "struggle" to the equivalent major status of a literal *jihad* with all non-believers? It is done through the process of a *fatwa*.

The Definition and Concept of a *Fatwa*

In the beginning years of Islam, the majority of interpreting and applying concepts of *shari'ah* law was left up to the Muslim individual. But, as time passed, a more authoritative process for such rulings was needed. This need was filled by removing this interpretation and application from the individual and turning it over to Islamic scholars. This created a de-facto legislative and judicial combination that resulted in the process of *fatwas*, or written legal rulings on any particular subject brought forward or petitioned by the faithful. Those scholars that have the widest knowledge of Islamic *shari'ah* law, called *mufti*, are now exclusively tasked with this work. The fatwa must be based on four aspects of Islamic law; The Qur'an, the *Sunna*, logical analogy and precedence; the latter two being discretionary.

These rulings of law carry the same weight of legal precedence as rulings of our Supreme Court carry, with the added weight of religious edict. This makes putting these rulings into action a holy act that is sanctioned by Allah directly through his faithful servants.

Personal responsibility, on the part of the *mufti*, is dictated by the severe sin of *istihlal*, or "permitting that which Allah forbade". Honest mistakes in scholarly work are liberally forgiven, but intentional *fatwas* created for evil purposes is a tremendous sin. This is why so few *fatwas* are written to counter the more fundamental rulings, because the scholars in question could, by their actions, create a rift within the body of Islam. There is little incentive to take on such arguments within the faith, which represents an obstacle to countering any such 'literal' rulings.

Basically, any Muslim can submit a query to a scholar, with a fair chance of accurately predicting the written outcome, based on the ideological "bent" of the scholar being questioned. With the advent of the internet and email, *fatwas* can be gotten from a world-wide scholarly resource, all of which possess the legal and religious authority to make any ruling they see fit to make. Most basic *fatwas* have been already made, and are either referenced directly or simply recycled from previous scholars and repeated. But it is the newer *fatwas* post 9-11 that have been called into question by the laity, as more and more *fatwas* contradict either another *fatwa*, or create a fundamentalist view of the tenets of Islam generally and of *jihad* specifically.

Examples of this are the politically embarrassing *fatwas* issued by the *fatwa* committee of the distinguished Islamic school, *Al-Azhar*, in Egypt, which have issued *fatwas* calling for a boycott of the United States, legitimizing suicide terrorism, the banning of St. Valentine's Day, and the banning of nudity between married couples having sex. Understand, though, that all such *fatwas* are written in Arabic and are subsequently translated, and there is some question about the trustworthiness of such translations.

Many such *fatwas* have been released since 9/11. A Google search of '*jihad fatwas'* yields 890,000 hits. This has lead to bigger issues like the true understanding of what the *fatwa* actually says. With the existence of classical, formal and common Arabic, there is no guarantee that the reader will understand precisely what the writer has actually written. While most educated Arabic speaking Muslims in the US and Europe have the educational foundation to effectively know and discern the meanings of these edicts, the vast majority of the billion or so Muslims do not have the needed educational background to know the difference between what the *fatwas* say versus what they are told by others that they say.

With the internet, this access has lead to increased access to *fatwas* and their interpretation. This is, of course, a double-edged sword. As with the lack of a review process of the current crop of new *fatwas*, there is also that same lack of review of their interpretations on the internet.

While many internet sights have compiled such *fatwas* into a searchable and researchable format, there is no process to review that the work done on such compilations are true and correct.

Most Muslims who attend Islamic *madrasas* (schools) are made to learn the Qur'an by memory. Precious few have the educational or verbal skills to actually know what they have been made to memorize. This cycle of dependency by the vast majority of Muslims of their local Imams, Sheiks and Mullahs makes for readily exploitable leadership and guidance of the believers they teach. Enter the generosity of Saudi Arabia, and their Wahabi missionaries.

The more puritanical Wahabi branch of Islam has been spread world-wide through a systematic process of generous donations of both *madrasas* and faculty to teach in them. This extolling of their generosity on the more underprivileged Muslims has lead to a change in the dynamic of the belief base, leading to a resurgent of a more puritanical view of Islam and ultimately of *jihad*. These puritanical views have then lead to the very post-9/11 *fatwas* that have incited such hatred around the globe of the *kuffaar*.

This is somewhat ironic, because it was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that was first to institute a prohibition on *fatwas* without royal mufti review. It didn't work. Liberal Muslims even petitioned the United Nations in October of 2004 to take unilateral action against not only the terrorists, but those who incite terrorism via the *fatwa* legal system. It hasn't worked. Websites like The American Muslim (theamericanmuslim.org) and others have sprung up with their own countering *fatwas*, and countering *fatwas* from elsewhere, denouncing such puritanical legal interpretations. It hasn't worked.

"Enough with these muftis and their fatwas already"

The quote above was from an Egyptian official in response to the nudity ban in marital sex, referenced above. It highlights the growing frustration among more and more Muslims that such *fatwas* are not peer reviewed. This lack of review is at the heart of a growing concern that such lack of review has contributed to the increased quantity, and the lack of scholarly quality, of such *fatwas* believed to be responsible for post-9/11 terrorist and insurgent activities. As referenced above, the ability to predict the outcome of *fatwas* by asking 'loaded' questions of Islamic scholars known for their fundamentalist views, as well as the ability to collect these rulings via email, has contributed to the very concerns that the original view of jihad has been 'hijacked' by fundamentalist beliefs and by those who promote them.

So, what is a radical Muslim, anyway?

When you ask this question as a Google search, you get 1.48 million hits. But let's begin with these points.

The blogger, Jamal, at http://radicalmuslim.blogsome.com writes:

> "A Muslim is, by definition, a follower of Islam, and is therefore, by definition,
> "Islamic." Therefore, if a Muslim who is considered too "Islamic" due to their
> love for peace, submission to the Will of Allah, and belief that Islam is the
> solution to the worlds problems, is then by definition considered "radical",
> should we not all strive to be "radical Islamic Muslims"?"

This is a proto-typical Muslim response to the global characterization of some Muslims as being "radical". Many of the Google hits on this subject are various iterations of this blanket statement.

Ali H. Aslan, in the Turkish Weekly Opinion, writes:

> Definitely, there are "radical Muslims" who choose violence as their means of
> political struggle and go down the wrong road. In fact, for most of them,
> nationalism comes before piety. But there is no such religion as "radical Islam."
> A radical religious understanding, or a radical interpretation of the religion
> which approves terrorism, cannot be Islam by definition. It can only be a
> political ideology that exploits religion. As opposed to this, the "radical
> Islamophobia" phenomenon, which has already existed in the West but got a
> boost since September 11, 2001, is being increasingly adopted as an ideology,
> even as a religion.

Commo Carlos L. Agustin, President of the National Defense College of The Philippines simplistically defines a radical Muslim as someone who subscribes to "…a violent movement to enforce Islam."

But Fred R. von der Mehden, in his paper to The James A. Baker III Institute for Public policy at Rice University writes:

> Even using the employment of violence as a requisite for being radical
> presents complications. Many Muslims in the region [Southeast Asia] would
> exclude from the radical category organizations fighting to defend Islam against
> external forces perceived to be seeking to weaken or dominate Muslim peoples.
> Thus, there are many Southeast Asian Muslims who would refuse to define as
> radical most ethno-religious Muslim separatist minority groups in the
> Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar, except when they intentionally target
> innocent civilians. It is argued that these people are only defending their rights
> against unjust national government policies.

The Bush Administration has also defined what a radical Muslim is. In President Bush's speech to the National Endowment for Democracy in October of 2005 he states:

> This form of [Islamic] radicalism exploits Islam to serve a violent, political
> vision: the establishment, by terrorism and subversion and insurgency, of a
> totalitarian empire that denies all political and religious freedom. These
> extremists distort the idea of jihad into a call for terrorist murder against
> Christians and Jews and Hindus -- and also against Muslims from other
> traditions, who they regard as heretics.

As the quotes indicate above, there is no real consensus as to any such definition of a "radical Muslim". So, even after the research, how do we get to a workable definition?

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, I quoted the Ibn Warraq statement that,

"There are moderate Muslims, but Islam itself is not moderate."

I believe that this assessment of Islam is valid, based on all things that Islam as a religion says, means and stands for. These following points made by Shmuel Bar of the Hudson Institute sum it up most effectively:

A central issue in the legal thinking of radical Islam is the distinction between the "Abode of Islam" (Dar al-Islam) and the "Abode of War" (Dar al-Harb). Modern *fatwas* present a number of criteria for distinguishing between the two:

• The most radical view, held by *takfir* movements, virtually eliminates the category of *dar al-Islam*. In their view, since all Muslim countries are ruled by corrupt apostate regimes, they have ceased to be "Muslim;" their regimes are *kafer* and their citizens have sunken into a state of *jahiliyya* (the ignorance of the truth of Allah that preceded Islam).

• [This is] a classic fundamentalist view held by most Wahabbi and Hanbali Sheikhs, and by most *jihad* movements, [which] implies a sharp dichotomy between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*.

These points, above, make the argument that any Muslim who accepts, promotes and acts upon *fatwas* that put forward a fundamentalist interpretation of the above Islamic concept of *takfir* is a "radical Muslim".

Such fundamentalist interpretations of Islam, and *takfir*, have created a perpetual state of war within Islam against the *kafer* (those declared non-Muslim) and without against the *kuffaar* until there is either the achievement of an Islamic state or their own deaths as martyrs.

But let's go back to the comments of the blogger, Jamal, at http://radicalmuslim.blogsome.com who writes:

> *"A Muslim is, by definition, a follower of Islam, and is therefore, by definition, "Islamic." Therefore, if a Muslim who is considered too "Islamic" due to their love for peace, submission to the Will of Allah, and belief that Islam is the solution to the worlds problems, is then by definition considered "radical", should we not all strive to be "radical Islamic Muslims"?"*

Based on these words, and what has been discussed to this point, what is missing in the above statement? Let's pick it apart, point by point.

> *"A Muslim is, by definition, a follower of Islam, and is therefore, by definition, "Islamic."*

This is a correct statement, without further need for comment.

> *Therefore, if a Muslim who is considered too "Islamic" due to their love for peace,…*

Lets refer to the Qur'an and see where we stand:

> "*Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil: so fight ye against the friends of Satan*" (Qur'an 4:76).

According to the Qur'an, there can only be peace through Allah. If you are not a believer in Allah, you do not fight in the cause of Allah. If you reject faith in Allah, you must therefore be "*fighting in the cause of evil*". There will be no peace because you are a "*...friend of Satan*" according to this verse.

Let's take Jamal's next point:

...submission to the Will of Allah...

Again, "*...those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil.*" I reject submission to Allah, therefore I am, by Qur'anic definition, "*evil*".

And the last point:

"*...and belief that Islam is the solution to the worlds problems..."*

I reject Islam and do not believe that Islam is the solution to the world's problems, therefore I am, by Qur'anic definition, "*evil*" and must be fought against as a "*friend of Satan.*" So, yes, I do believe that all Muslims that believe that:

"*… if a Muslim who is considered too "Islamic" due to their love for peace, submission to the Will of Allah, and belief that Islam is the solution to the worlds problems, is then by definition considered "radical", should we not all strive to be "radical Islamic Muslims"?"*

…are "radical Muslims". Their faith in Allah, according to the Qur'an, requires that I must be "evil" because I reject their faith for myself, and must, by Qur'anic *shari'ah*, be subject to *jihad*.

Let's be clear: reform within the body Islam exists, but is not without risks of a complete loss of credibility and civility. Reformers and converts alike face death sentences, so it's difficult to see how such reforms can be achieved. Google searches reveal that the web is full of Muslim condemnation of the more radical elements of its religion. They don't get much play in the news or on talk radio, but they are there. The braver souls have even made their identity public, placing themselves in real peril.

But there is an argument to be made that such reform cannot and will not ever be forthcoming, as this next paragraph foreshadows.

This paragraph is from Lawrence Auster, of FrontPagemagazine.com, writing on, "The Search for Islam":

> In contrast to the view of Islam advanced by (Daniel) Pipes, which we might call "ecumenist" because it looks forward to an ultimate harmony and even union between Islam and the West, there is a perspective that we might call "civilizationist," because it insists that there are essential incompatibilities between the two civilizations. These different understandings of Islam imply diverging strategic concepts. For the ecumenist school, the only aspect of Islam that represents a danger is the radical, false Islam. We must therefore empower the true, moderate Islam, so that under its guidance the Islamic countries will re-make themselves into decent and free societies. But for the civilizationist school, the problem is not "radical" Islam but *Islam itself*, from which it follows that we must seek to weaken and contain Islam, rather than try to create some new, nicer Islam.

What is ironic is that the two divergent views of Islamic reform, above, are not unique. Great Britain has its Church of England in opposition to the Catholic Church. Christians all over the world owe their organized existence to Martin Luther. But while the concepts of reformation put forward by the paragraph above are similar, Islam is not Christianity, Muhammad is not Jesus Christ, and the Qur'an is not the Bible. If the Qur'an is indeed the inerrant word of Allah, then Islam's practitioners will suffer hellfire and damnation for their reformist views.

In conclusion, Andrew G. Bostom, of FrontPageMagazine.com reviewed Ibn Warraq's book, "Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out", and writes this preface:

Shortly after Ayatollah Khomeini issued his infamous "*fatwa*" (decree) sentencing Salman Rushdie to death for the novel *The Satanic Verses*, in March 1989, London's *Observer* newspaper published a letter from a Pakistani Muslim. The writer, who remained anonymous, stated, "Salman Rushdie speaks for me," and continued by explaining:

"(M)ine is a voice that has not yet found expression in newspaper columns. It is the voice of those who are born Muslims but wish to recant in adulthood, yet are not permitted to on pain of death. Someone who does not live in an Islamic society cannot imagine the sanctions, both self-imposed and external, that militate against expressing religious disbelief. 'I don't believe in God' is an impossible public utterance even among family and friends...So we hold our tongues, those of us who doubt."