

Itching to Convert? Try *Moronism!*

I am vehemently against all kind of abuse, torture and humiliation inflicted upon any human being, criminal or not - from a petty shoplifter in Brooklyn to those languishing now - *God alone knows why* - for almost 5 years in Gitmo (kind of our own Abu Ghraib). And over the years, every time, President Bush, the Attorney General Gonzales or Senator McCain uttered the oft-repeated phrase, "We (The US) do not torture", I exhaled a sigh of relief - believing and savoring every phonetic of it - no matter how phony that statement sounded then or sounds now, in the light of what we know. But in the wake of slowly albeit steadily rising sinister attempts by the misguided jihadists of Western origin, I find my hitherto firm stand on this sensitive issue, wavering. More so, when such sinister plots are concocted and perpetrated in the name of Islam, which despite the lung-emptying hoarse shrieks of Bill O'Reilly et al., has never condoned nor ever will, such inhumane thoughts and cowardly acts.

Remember, John Walker Lindh, Jose Padilla, Adam Gadahn, Christopher Paul Kenyatta Law (all US citizens), Richard Reid, Dhiren Barot, Andrew Rowe (British citizens) and David Hicks (Australian citizen)? They are (except Adam Gadahn, aka Azzam Al-Amriki, the so-called American face and voice of Al-Qaeda) all serving long sentences either in the US or in their home countries for carrying out (or attempting to) terrorist attacks on behalf of Al-Qaeda. The other day we heard of another mastermind: Russell Defreitas. He and his three co-conspirators from Guyana and Trinidad had plans to blow up pipelines leading up to JFK airport. These men have one thing in common: they are all new Muslim converts. And this is what I find most alarming, as if the doctrine of 'violence and terror' is the prescribed 101 for these converts; fantasy can't be further from it.

There are about 1.2 billion Muslims on this planet: good, bad and rotten. As far as eye can see and imagination extend, a tiny fraction of it is already putting Islam and rest of us to utter shame. Islam doesn't need any more converts, for God's sake! In fact, if all the converts with their deviated ideologies and corrupted beliefs together with those of us who are too meek and weak to muster the conscience and guts to speak against the atrocities being committed in the name of Islam, were confined to Guantanamo Bay till the Judgment Day, it wouldn't faze Islam's glory even by an iota.

I consider myself a passionate Muslim and attempt to fulfill what it commands me to do as a human being. This includes striving to keep my friends and neighbors safe, protect their property, and defend their honor in the same way as I would mine. My belief also exhorts me to be vigilant towards those harboring ill against innocent fellow citizens and the land I call home.

I love my religion; it is the 'new' followers that I have trouble with and cannot stand. So, how can we Muslims stop the growth and menace of such extremism in our midst? Very simple. Desperate times call for desperate measures. Next time someone declares his/her express desire to convert, the Muslim community should show him/her the 'new' 1-day crash-course manifesto:

- Exposure to intense illumination and sleep deprivation (between 1 and 6 AM)
- Blaring heavy metal rendition (between 6 and 10 AM)
- Confinement to a pitch-dark room (between 10 AM and 3 PM)
- Flight to Gitmo and hovering over the Bay (between 3 and 9 PM) and,
- Water-boarding (between 9 PM and 1 AM).

Torture? By golly, *no!* I'd call it...hmm...the New Test(ament) for embracing Islamic faith. Welcome to *radical* Islam, bro!