

## The Bahā'ī Faith and Islam

The Bahā'ī Faith was founded in Iraq in 1844 by Mīrzā Ḥosayn 'Alī Nūrī, who is known as Bahā' Allāh (“Glory of God” in Arabic). Adherents believe that Bahā' Allāh and his forerunner, who was known as the Bāb (Persian: “Gateway”), were manifestations of God, who is unknowable. Bahā'ī adherents believe in (1) the essential unity of all religions (one divine truth) and the unity of humanity; and (2) that all the founders of the world's great religions have been manifestations of God and agents of a progressive divine plan for the education of the human race.<sup>1</sup>

Bahá'ís believe life's purpose is twofold: to know and love God and attain His presence and to “carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.”<sup>2</sup>

Bahá'ís' principal beliefs are as follows: one loving creator; oneness of mankind; oneness of religion; independent investigation of the truth; harmony between religion and science; international auxiliary language (chosen or developed by mankind as “conducive to unity and concord” and taught universally along with native tongues); universal education; elimination of all forms of prejudice; equality of men and women; abolition of the extremes of wealth and poverty; spiritual solutions to economic problems; universal peace upheld by a world federation.

Islam, especially radical Islam, could not be more different. Muslims typically observe their obligations carefully, “at least on an outwardly visible level.”<sup>3</sup> Honestly, if I came across an overtly devout Muslim, I would not make *any* attempts at evangelization.

First, while Courduan is correct that not every devout Muslim is a jihadist,<sup>4</sup> every jihadist is a devout Muslim, believing that God is the sole lawgiver. Therefore, if I meet a devout Muslim, the

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<sup>1</sup> “Baha'i Faith | History, Practices, & Facts,” Encyclopedia Britannica, last modified July 20, 1998, accessed November 8, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> “Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh,” Bahai.org, last modified 2024, accessed November 7, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Winfried Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*, Second Edition. (InterVarsity Press Academic, 2012), 131.

<sup>4</sup> Winfried Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*, Second Edition. (InterVarsity Press Academic, 2012), 130.

likelihood that I am conversing with a jihadist has just markedly increased. This is an important consideration for me because jihadists have a “collective and individual obligation to defend the Muslim community against apostates and infidels.”<sup>5</sup> According to our hypothetical devout Muslim, I am an infidel.

Even if the Muslim isn't a jihadist, “evangelizing Muslims is a notoriously difficult undertaking” because Islam is a missionary religion.<sup>6</sup> That means that my new devout Muslim ‘friend’ is going to try to either convert or kill me.

Accordingly, Corduan's arguments are all defensive. He lays out points to counter the accusation that I am a polytheist or an idolater or that I follow the dictates of sometimes contradictory ancient texts of dubious authorship.<sup>7</sup> Evangelizing to a devout Muslim is, well, a suicide mission. No, thank you.

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<sup>5</sup> BBC News, “What Is Jihadism?” BBC News, last modified December 11, 2014, accessed November 8, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Winfried Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*, Second Edition. (InterVarsity Press Academic, 2012), 131.

<sup>7</sup> Winfried Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*, Second Edition. (InterVarsity Press Academic, 2012), 132-133.