

# Scots Muslim writer sparks new Islam row despite living under fatwa

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
**BY PETER SWINDON**



**I believe the way to reduce terrorism is not by segregating communities, it is to take away division**

**A** SCOTTISH Muslim writer who received death threats over his critique of Islam has sparked a fresh religious row over claims that recent Isis-inspired terror attacks are the result of mosques “misinterpreting” the Koran.

Paigham Mustafa, 58, was accused of spreading “Satanic thoughts” in a fatwa issued by 15 imams in Glasgow after he published a series of articles questioning mosque teachings, which he says are based on the Hadith and Sunna, later Islamic texts written after the Koran, which he



**Paigham Mustafa was accused of spreading ‘Satanic thoughts’ in a fatwa issued by imams in Glasgow after he published articles questioning mosque teachings**

**Photograph:**  
**Jamie Simpson**

claims are “replete with violence, misogyny and terror”. In the fatwa, which was distributed to thousands of Muslims in Glasgow in 2001, it was alleged that Mustafa sought to “damage and destroy the doctrines of Islam” and “inject poison” into the minds of young people.

He was forced to miss his father’s funeral amid fears for his safety. He said: “I got a phone call saying I shouldn’t go or there’d be trouble. That really scared me. I haven’t been back [to mosque] since. It’s still not really safe.”

The married father of three later published *The Koran: God’s Message To Mankind*, his interpretation of the central religious text of Islam. A new, updated version of the book has just been published.

The latest row coincides with this weekend’s Eid al-Adha celebrations, and the annual Hajj pilgrimage. Mustafa said: “I believe the way to reduce terrorism is not by segregating communities, it is to take away division. The only way to take away division is to teach the Koran’s true values. I have had support from all over the world but I also still get death threats.”

Mustafa’s book has been dismissed by the Muslim Council of Scotland (MCS) which said he opposed the “consensus of Muslim scholars throughout the history of Islam”.

Liaquat Ali of the MCS said: “He is entitled to his opinion, but not to claim it to be the true message of the Koran, as understood by famous scholars of Koran.”

Pakistan-born Mustafa said the Koran has been “misinterpreted in a very, very big way”. He said: “Sunnism and Shi’ism [the two major denominations of Islam] have very little to do with the actual contents of the Koran. The religions of Sunnism and Shi’ism are cultural. Religion is about rites and rituals whereas the Koran is about values. There are no rites and rituals in the Koran. These are all cultural things which have arisen since the ninth century because that’s when Islam came to be defined as a religion rather than a social system.

“If you look at the first 200 years from the time that Muhammad was there – the Jews, the Christians, the Arabs – all those communities lived together. They ate the same food, dressed the same, spoke the same language and married into each other’s families. These are the things that don’t happen now because they’ve separated and defined themselves as religions, rather than believers of the values that are in the Koran. Reli-

gion is there to baffle, control and fleece people. In separation, there is control and money.”

Mustafa said atrocities such as the recent attack in Barcelona perpetrated by Islamic fundamentalists are “partly political”, but are also inspired by the Hadith and the Sunna texts.

He explained: “These are written traditions that have been attributed to Muhammad. Now these traditions came 200 years after the Koran. You will see in these books the violence, the terror, the killing of non-believers – all these things are there. So, they justify their faith by these books, not by the Koran. If you look at the Koran there is no gratuitous violence. I’m not saying there isn’t violence, but it is in the context of war and punishment, not in the context of terrorism.

“The Koran says there should be justice for everyone and no aggression. But the Hadith and the Sunna are replete with violence, misogyny and terror. And these are the doctrines they preach in the mosques in Glasgow, London, Manchester, all over the world.”

**H**OWEVER, Liaquat Ali of the Muslim Council of Scotland said neither the Koran nor the Hadith incite individuals to commit violence.

He said: “Any verse from Koran or any saying of the Prophet related to so-called violence is not an instruction to individuals. These rules are either about war, which is strictly the business of the state, or they are related to punishment, which is unequivocally directed to the judicial system. If an individual or a group of individuals pick such verses of the Koran or Hadith and try to take the law in their hands, this proves that either they have not understood the true meaning of the Sharia law, or are abusing the name of religion in order to achieve their personal, political goals.”

He said Mustafa is trying to sell more copies of his book by making outspoken pronouncements. “Koran was compiled under the supervision of the Prophet himself. However not all the Hadith were written during his lifetime. This work was done by his disciples. Some individuals, at a later stage, due to political and sectarian differences, fabricated some sayings and attributed them to the Prophet. However, the later scholars, through tremendous scholarly hard work and extensive checking, successfully compiled authentic versions of the sayings of the Prophet.”



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