

Preface

*See to it that ... no bitter root grows up
to cause trouble and defile many.*
Letter to the Hebrews 12:15

Rejection is one of the most disturbing and destructive of human experiences. It forms the bitter root of many ills, defiling its victims with anger, hatred of others, self-hatred, a wounded spirit, and despair. Rejection is a tear in the fundamental fabric of human identity, a gouge in the divine image. Overcoming rejection is the core of spiritual healing, leading to restoration, freedom, new hope, and a reclaimed destiny.

Rejection can be manifested in individual lives. It can also be expressed in the collective historical consciousness of communities and societies, where one group has been demeaned by another.

One of the most profound and least-understood manifestations of rejection in human history is the Islamic institution of the *dhimma*, the theologically-driven political, social, and legal system, imposed by Islamic law upon non-Muslims as an alternative to Islam (i.e. conversion) or the sword (i.e. death or captivity). The *dhimma* is the ‘third choice’ offered to non-Muslims under *jihad* conditions, and those who have accepted it are known as *dhimmis*. Their condition, *dhimmitude*, forms the subject of this book, which describes the challenge posed by Islam’s treatment of non-Muslims, exposes the spiritual roots of this challenge, and offers a solution.

Whereas rejection is an expression of the power of evil to damage, overwhelm and ultimately destroy human beings, the triumph of grace is the defeat of rejection, ushering in love and reconciliation where once there had been bitter despair. An invitation is issued here for the reader – whatever his or her faith background – to walk along a road through understanding, and ultimately to freedom from dhimmitude and its demeaning spiritual effects.

The resources offered here include a truth encounter with the Islamic doctrines of *jihad* and dhimmitude, informed by the life and example of Muhammad. Together these have imposed rejection upon non-Muslims under the *Sharia* down through history to the present day.

Renouncing enmity

In the current atmosphere of fear and uncertainty concerning religious differences, there is a tendency to divide the world into two camps of ‘enemies’ vs. ‘friends’. Tolerance, we find, has its limits, and it comforts us to think that we are of the ‘right’ party.

We must steadfastly seek to resist such a divisive understanding of people. Although there are some who might call people of one faith or another their ‘enemies’, Jesus’ instructions are pertinent: ‘Love your enemies’.¹ We can also be mindful of the wise counsel Abigail gave to David, when he was on his way to wreak vengeance on her husband Nabal, not to ‘have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself’.²

In this context, recourse to the language of marginalization or retribution is a needless spiritual defeat. We must be prepared to call bad ideas evil if that is what they are. Yet, in doing this, it is not up to us to condemn people as evil, let alone to issue declarations of hatred and enmity against them.

When Jesus was advising his followers of the inevitability of their future suffering, he warned them against allowing bitter experiences of rejection to fuel enmity in their hearts. Instead, looking upon persecution as a blessing, they should aim to do good to their persecutors, blessing them and interceding on their behalf.³

In this struggle, the dividing line between good and evil is not something that separates one person from another. As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn learned in the Soviet gulags, it runs through each and every human heart:

In the intoxication of youthful successes I had felt myself to be infallible, and I was therefore cruel. In the surfeit of power I was a murderer, and an oppressor. In my most evil moments I was convinced that I was doing good, and I was well supplied with systematic arguments. And it was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually it was disclosed to me that **the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either – but right through every human heart – and through all human hearts.**⁴

1 Matthew 5:43.

2 1 Samuel 25:31.

3 Luke 6:20-23, 27-28.

4 The *Gulag Archipelago*, p.25.

Statement of purpose, and a dedication

The Third Choice has been written to meet three main purposes:

- To explain the nature of the *dhimma* pact;
- To enable non-Muslims to withstand the *dhimma* and find freedom from it;
- To help people understand the nature and impact of Islamic politics in the world, both today and in the past, and especially its impact upon the human rights of non-Muslims.

People of many faiths and none need to find freedom from the age-old legacy of the *dhimma*, and Muslims too, for dhimmitude degrades oppressors and oppressed alike. This book is therefore dedicated to the healing and freedom of all those who have fallen within the reach of dhimmitude, whatever their religious convictions, non-Muslim and Muslim alike.

For millions today, dhimmitude is not only an all-too-familiar lived daily reality; it is also a personal inheritance, extending back in the generational line beyond memory. Whether dhimmitude is a part of the reader's personal history or not, my desire is that this book will help equip him or her to live as a free person, able to renounce and reject the *dhimma*'s false and demeaning claims.