

Islam can be a violent faith, says Queen's chaplain: Canon expresses concerns about

100 passages in the Koran that 'invite people to violence'

- **Rev Gavin Ashenden said some 100 passages in Koran incite violence**
- **Said Bible instead preaches forgiveness and delivering people from sin**
- **Asked if Koran was 'evil' he said 'I will let people decide for themselves'**

By Jack Doyle for the Daily Mail

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There are passages in the Koran which 'invite people to violence', one of the Queen's chaplains said last night.

Reverend Canon Gavin Ashenden, the former chaplain of Sussex University and one of 35 who serve Her Majesty, expressed concern about more than 100 passages in the Muslim holy book.

But the Church of England priest declined to say whether parts of the Koran are 'evil', instead advising people to make up their own minds.

He was responding to comments by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who warned this week about being too quick to brand people with strong religious views 'extremists'.

Yesterday, more than 60 imams and leaders of Muslim groups signed an open letter to the Government accusing it of criminalising Islam.

They claimed the 'terror threat' was being exploited for political capital ahead of the election, as 'the big parties inevitably try to outdo each other in their nastiness'.

The signatories, which included journalist Yvonne Ridley and former Guantanamo detainee Moazzam Begg, criticised the ‘demonisation of Muslims in Britain ... despite their disavowal of violence and never having supported terrorist acts’.

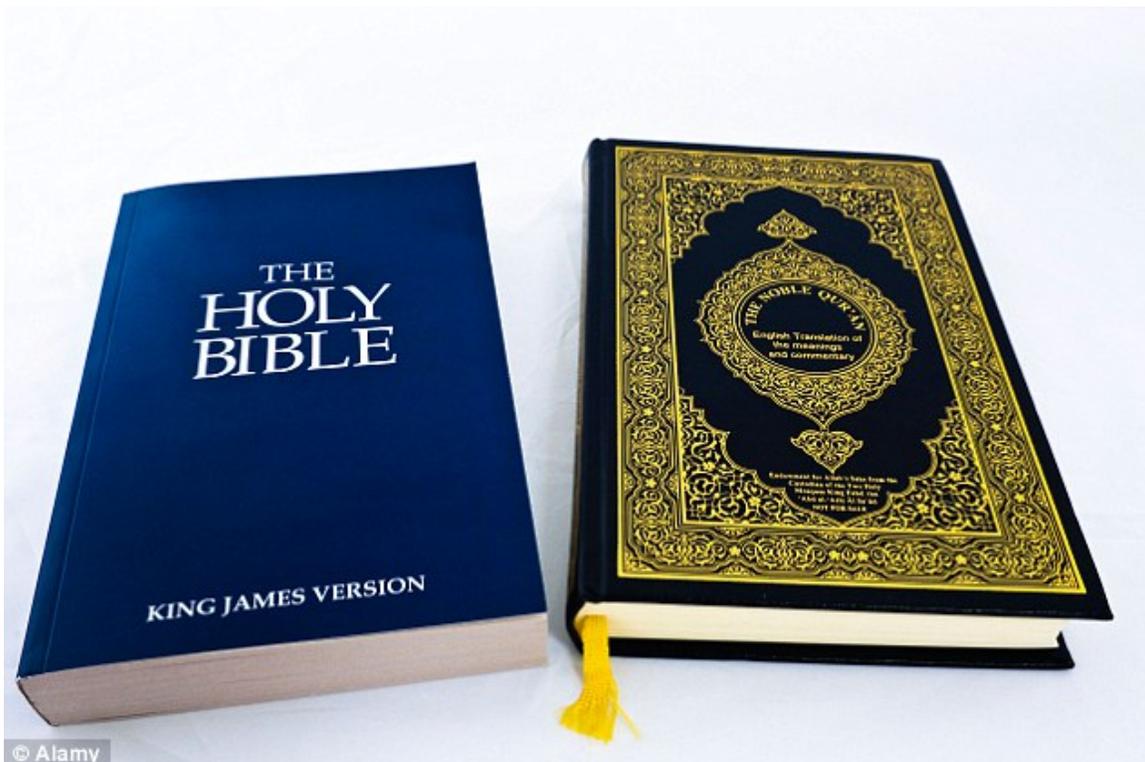
Rev Ashenden was responding to comments by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby who has reportedly claimed young people are turning to jihad because mainstream religion is not ‘exciting’.

The Archbishop said Britain’s religious communities needed to do more to provide an alternative to extremism that gives youngsters a ‘purpose in life’.

But Rev Ashenden told LBC radio he was ‘attracted to Christianity because it invites people to the extremity of forgiveness and love’.

He added: ‘Islam has, I think, over 100 verses inviting people to violence in the Koran which Christianity doesn’t have.’

‘If you’re going to invite people to be dedicated ... followers of their scriptures, Christians will go around forgiving people and Islamists will do something else.’



Asked to compare the Bible and the Koran, he said the Christian holy text invites its followers to forgive and try to lead people away from sin, while the Muslim text invites people to violence

Presenter Iain Dale said Muslims would say Islam was ‘entirely peaceful’, but Rev Ashenden said parts of the Koran ‘tell you to kill your enemies’.

He then quoted verses which he said urged Muslims to ‘strike off the heads’ of ‘those who disbelieve’.

When warned his comments could offend Muslims, he said: ‘If they are offended by my quoting the Koran they are not offended by me, they are offended by the Koran.’

He added: ‘If you’re going to talk about excitement in Christianity it’s about delivering people from evil and transforming people’s lives.’

Asked whether he would describe certain parts of the Koran as evil, he said: ‘I notice that they invite people to violence. I’ll let other people decide whether that’s good or evil.’

The Church of England did not respond when contacted last night. Buckingham Palace declined to comment.