

No, ISIS doesn't represent Islam

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria continues to make news by violating Islam and human rights. On Sunday came reports that ISIS had destroyed the treasured Temple of Bel, a week after images were released of the destruction of the temple of Baal Shamin. Last month also saw reports of how ISIS has created, in effect, a "bureaucracy of rape," while this week marks a year since journalist Steven Sotloff was beheaded.

The list of horrors is a long one. Sadly, it

also exposes our collective failure as humanity to respond appropriately to extremism. ISIS is setting the agenda – and highlighting our ineptness in the process.

Take, for example, how ISIS has been forcing ethnic Yazidi women into sexual slavery, a practice it says is rooted in historic precedence.

The truth is that from a doctrinal, Islamic perspective, slavery is as an affront to the natural state of the freedom in which God

created human beings that is tied to the first pillar of Islam (declaration of faith). All humans are equal before God and are distinguished only by their own good actions.

Indeed, the Quran advocated for a departure from this age-old practice of human bondage, calling for the just and humane treatment of slaves as human beings and not property. It also encouraged the act of freeing slaves as an act of worship; slavery is outlawed throughout the world and should



never be reconsidered if we accept liberation as the most important value in Islam.

Outdated dogma

So why is it that groups such as ISIS can use outdated dogma to rationalize murder and rape and create a facade of religious legitimacy?

The trouble comes from the fact that organizations such as ISIS and Boko Haram cherry pick tribal customs and then apply an Islamic veneer to rationalize them.

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