



## **Suspicion of the spread of Islam by the sword**

**Misconceptions about Islam,**

**Misconceptions of the Nazarites and the Jews,**

By: Shaykh Abul-Hasan 'Ali ar-Ramli

All the praises and thanks are due to Allah the Lord of the 'Alamin and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, whom he was sent as a mercy for the 'Alamin, his household and his companions.

**To proceed,**

Since the early beginning of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and since he started to call people to Islam to get them out of the darkness of shirk (polytheism), the corruption of morals and the wrongdoing of people. From that time up till this moment the enemies of this call wait and watch about it. They spread all types of misconceptions and all types of doubts about it in order to nullify and belie it; once by defaming the prophet (peace be upon him) through accusing him with magic, lying, augury and the likes. Another time by defaming the noble book of Allah which falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it. And another time by defaming the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). However all the wise people have never agreed upon nullifying a single sound ruling of the shari'ah that the prophet has come with nor could they prove a false misconception about it.

The steadfastness of the call to Islam against that defaming and the failure of the opponents and enemies to find an evidence that nullifies this shari'ah although it has many rulings and texts, indicates that this call is the call of *haq* and the word of truthfulness which descended from the Lord of 'Alamin to be a mercy for All the slaves of Allah.

However it is obligatory upon the students of knowledge, who devoted themselves to defend the religion of Allah, to strive the effort, for the sake of Allah, to nullify those misconceptions and expose their falseness using the tongue and the pen, "so that those who were to be destroyed (for their rejecting the Faith) might be destroyed after a clear evidence, and those who were to live (i.e. believers) might live after a clear evidence. And surely, Allâh is All-Hearer, All-Knower." (Al-Anfal 8:42)

Yet the students who stand to refute those misconceptions should be aware of one important matter which some refuters have fallen into. The refuters should not be affected by the misconceptions themselves or any other effects. They should be affected only by the book and the Sunnah as well as the legal sound rules; otherwise we will fall into squeezing the texts to satisfy so-and-so. And thus we will fall into changing the rulings of Allah or obscuring the religion for the slaves of Allah.

Consequently when I pondered over the refutations of the students of knowledge concerning this misconception I found them affected so much with the misconception to the degree that led them to either excessiveness or negligence and I shall clarify this in the proper place and time God willing. So we should present the haq (truth) that satisfies and pleases Allah [Exalted be He] as the shari'ah of Allah is perfect and accurate and there is nothing, in it, to be ashamed of except for the ignorant who has no knowledge of its details and philosophies. And Allah is The One who guides to the truth.

### **The first misconception is:** Islam has spread by sword:

The enemies of Islam kept on repeating this misconception although many scholars and students of knowledge have refuted it and proved that it is null and void. Moreover some Orientalists have refuted it and this agrees with what we have said before that all the wise people have never agreed upon nullifying a single sound ruling of the shari'ah that the prophet has come with nor could they prove a false misconception about it.

Yet when I examined these refutations I found that one of them has been affected by this misconception as far as he denied the legitimacy of the offensive jihad (jihadut-talab)[1] entirely and claimed that the jihad that the Prophet (peace be upon him) launched against the Romans was a defensive jihad and just for self defence.

This say is certainly null and void. It is a violation against the shari'ah of Allah [Exalted be He] and a contradiction to the book and Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah (nation). On the contrary the jihad of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was launched to remove the obstacles which stood as a barrier in the way of spreading the Islamic call in the world countries. There will never cease to be, in every country, some people of falsehood who, due to their love of themselves and their sentiments, stand in the way of the call of truth for the sake of power, money or any other secular benefit.

Most of such people are from among those who own glory, money and power in their countries. They (either obstacles or people) even might be from among the

fathers, mothers, tribes or traditions that stand as a barrier between the people and the call to Islam, either by preventing its arrival or by belying it through spreading lies and distorting the image of Islam in the eyes of people. Therefore Allah [exalted be He] has legitimized the jihad of talab (offensive) to remove those obstacles away from the way of the call so as it reaches all the people.

On the other hand some others opposed this and confirmed that Islam has spread by sword lest the ruling of Jihad at-talab fades away from the hearts of the Muslims. Yet this say has been issued by a man who was affected by enthusiasm so he did not reflect upon what he has said. However we shall clarify the truth concerning this matter, God willing, relying on the say of one of the greatest scholars of Islam who is well-known to everybody and he is one of the salaf scholars who have not been affected by any effect except the book and the Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah. That scholar is Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) who said, in his book "Hidayatul-Hayaaraa fee ajwibatul-yahudi wan-nasaaraa" (i.e. guiding the confused to the answers of the Jews and Nazarites) (p10-Islamic University):

"Chapter: And from among the obligations upon the slave towards his Lord is to refute the violations against the book of Allah [Exalted be He], His messenger and His religion, and to strive against them (i.e. the violators) by confronting them with evidence, clarifications, sword, spear, and finally by heart, and beyond that there is no faith even to the extent of a mustard seed, so we have heard that some infidels have rumored some issues and that some Muslims, having no satisfactory answers, thought that by beating the infidels they might solve the problem and cure the sickness, so they beat them and said: "This is the answer"! So the infidels, in return, said: "Our people were right then, when they said: "Islam has been spread by sword and not by the book", then they separated; one team was beaten and the other was the beater while the truth has been lost between both of them.

Therefore I got ready, for the sake of Allah asking the help of Him believing not in the say of the incapable ignorant who say that the disbelievers should be treated by the whip and not by the argument. Certainly this is a fleeing from the battle and a reliance on the incapability and weakness, while Allah has ordered to invite the disbelievers to Islam with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better to establish the authority over them "so that those who were to be destroyed (for their rejecting the Faith) might be destroyed after a clear evidence, and those who were to live (i.e. believers) might live after a clear evidence." (Al-Anfal 8:42). And the sword was legitimized to carry out arguing in order to establish the authority, to rectify or adjust the obstinate and as a prescribed punishment for the denier, Allah [Exalted be He] says: " Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth

iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allâh may test who it is that will help Him (His religion), and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allâh is All-Strong, All-Mighty." (Al-Hadid 57:25). Therefore the religion of Islam has been established by the guiding book and carried out by the sharp sword; it is either the revelation or the sword-edge which adjusts the denier who turns away from the truth."

Imam Ibn Qayyem Al-Jawziyyah also said in "Zadu-ma'aad (1\179,411-A-risaalah):"And he (i.e. the Prophet peace be upon him) used to lean on a stick while giving the speech (such as Friday ceremony and the likes) on the *minbar* (pulpit), as related by Abu Dawood on the authority of Ibn Shihab. The first three rightly-guided caliphs used to do the same after the death of the Prophet. He sometimes used to lean on a bow. Yet no one reported, in a sound narration, that he used to lean on a sword. Meanwhile may ignorant people think that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to hold a sword while he was on the pulpit, indicating that the religion has been established by the sword. Certainly this is a loathsome ignorance for two reasons:

The first: It is well-affirmed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has leaned on the stick and on the bow.

The second: The religion has been established by the revelation and as for the sword it was used to wipe out the people of deviation and polytheism. And remember that the Medinah of the Prophet where he used to give the speech was conquered by the Qur'an and not by the sword."

**I say:** so it has become crystal clear that the religion of Islam has been established by revelation. As for the sword it was used as a means for removing the obstacles from the way of clarification and establishing the authority over the people. However, what do those people aim at by rumoring this misconception? Verily those people know well that a religion which has been spread out among the vast majority of the people without any use of force is the true religion. Therefore, and to get away from this evidence, they wanted to nullify the fact that Islam has touched the hearts of people due to its truthfulness. Furthermore I shall, God willing, mention historical evidences that none can deny save an ignorant or arrogant. I will mention some of the countries that Islam has been spread out therein without any invasion by the armies of Islam.

**The first:** The people of Medinah. There is no doubt that the first Islamic state was established in Medinah and this state was found by establishment of authority through argument and calcification.

**The second:** People of Hajar, known today as Bahrain, and their story is well-

known in the two saheehs of Al-Bukharee and Muslim and others within the story of Abdul-qais delegation.

**The third:** The people of Oman. They embraced Islam voluntarily as related in "Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd" (1/351) and refer also to "subol -Al-huda war-rashad" (6/264) and "Al-Isaabah" of Ibn Hajar (6/48).

**The fourth:** The people of Yemen. They embraced Islam without any force as related by Ibn Katheer in "The Prophetic Biography"(4/203).

**The fifth:** The Arabic tribes of who embraced Islam after the conquest of Mecca. The Arabs used to ennoble Mecca and they witnessed what has happened to the people of Habashah (Abyssinia known today as Ethiopia) and their king when they attacked Mecca. So they (The Arabs) used to believe that none can enter Mecca with his army, therefore they said:"Leave Muhammad to his people (i.e. his tribe); if he defeats them then he is right. So, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered Mecca and defeated his people all the tribes entered the religion of Islam in crowds.

**The sixth:** The biggest Islamic country today is Indonesia. The armies of Islam have never reached there, yet Islam has reached there by the Muslim merchants as related by more than one of its historians.

**The seventh:** 60% of Malaysia population are Muslims although the armies of Islam have never entered it, rather Islam has entered there by the merchants likewise Indonesia although the historians differed in determining the way but they all have agreed that Islam did not enter there by sword.

**The eighth:** There are lots of native Muslims in Japan, how could Islam reach there although its armies have never reached there?

**The ninth:** Europe: Islam has spread in Europe to the extent that some of its leaders sounded the tocsins because they were afraid that Europe might have become an Islamic continent. However European politicians, economists, priests and others have embraced Islam although the armies of Islam have never entered there save some parts of Europe.

**The tenth:** America: Islam has spread among all classes of the people in Canada and the United States while the armies of Islam have never reached there. Consequently great numbers of people all around the world have entered Islam although the Islamic forces have never reached their countries.

However we should differentiate between the spread of the Islamic state, as there is no doubt that it occurred by the sword to remove the obstacles and barriers, and

the spread of Islam in the hearts of people which occurred through clarification and establishing the authority.

Thus, the spread of Islam continues nowadays although the Muslims have no might or powerful armies. Furthermore no one can claim that the Muslims in any era have forced anybody to embrace Islam while Allah [Exalted be He] says: "There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path." (Al-Baqarah 2:256). Ibn Katheer (may Allah has mercy upon him), in his exegesis (1/682-Al-Baqarah 256), said: "i.e. do not force anybody to enter the religion of Islam as it is clarified and its proofs and evidences are crystal clear to the extent that there is no need to force anybody to enter it. Yet, anyone whom Allah has guided to Islam, opened his breast and brightened his insight would enter it upon a clear evidence. On the other hand anyone whom Allah has set a seal on his heart and on his hearing, (i.e. he is closed from accepting Allâh's Guidance), and on his eyes there is a covering, will never gain anything if he enters the religion by force."

Besides if embracing Islam was by force, as they claim, then there should not be anybody of people of other religions in the countries ruled by Muslims. On the contrary we can see clearly that the Jews, the Nazarites and others have been living in the Muslim countries since the early establishing of the country of Islam until this day. Furthermore if that claim was true the Muslims would never accept conciliation with anybody neither would they accept the jizyah (poll tax)[\[2\]](#) from anybody nor would they exclude anybody, from killing, in their battles like as they used to save the children, the elders and the priests from killing. All of this clearly indicates that the Muslims wanted merely to remove the obstacles and barriers from the way of spreading the call to Islam. Killing and bloodshed was not, at any rate, their aim.

**Finally** I shall quote some of the declarations of some Orientalists who have refuted this misconception:

Thomas Carlyle said:"Verily accusing him (i.e. Muhammad) with spreading Islam at the point of the sword is unreasonable nonsense. It is not imagined and should not be allowed to understand that a single man draws his sword to kill the whole people or to accept his call. If those who were capable of fighting his enemies accepted his call, then their belief of him was voluntarily."

The historian Gibbon said:"A malicious law has been attached to the followers of Muhammad which says: It is obligatory to eradicate all the religions by the sword." He also said:"This ignorant and extremist accusation is refuted by Qur'an as well as

the history of Islamic conquests wherein the conquerors were famous and well-known for their tolerance towards the Christian worship. The greatest success in the life of Muhammad came through the might of morals and not by any strike of a sword."

However, this shall satisfy the one who seeks the truth and guidance and Allah [Exalted be He] is The One who guides to the truth and the close of our request shall be: Al-Hamdu Lillâhi Rabbil-'Alamîn [All the praises and thanks are to Allâh, the Lord of 'Alamîn (mankind, jinns and all that exists)].

---

[1] Offensive jihad is launched in order to secure the borders of the Islamic lands, to spread the Islamic religion to people in cases where the governments do not allow it and to remove all the obstacles that stand as a barrier between the call to Islam and the people in the non-Muslim countries.

[2] Translator's Note:

Jizyah: Head tax imposed by Islam on all non-Muslims living under the protection of an Islamic government. [See *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 4, Page No. 251 Chapter 21, and *Ahadîth* No. 384, 385 and 386.]