

Translator's Introduction

Orientalists have, from the very beginning, propagated that Islām is a violent religion that was spread by the sword. This myth is even promulgated today albeit in a different form and context. At present, the 'violence' of Islām is portrayed by small fanatic groups who kill innocent civilians. Ironically, these extremist groups like the Tālibān, kill more Muslims than people following any other creed.

Yet since 9/11, the world has been bombarded with repeated messages against this 'violent religion'. As if those who are making these accusations are themselves any less violent. The USA is the only country in the world to use the A-bomb and kill a large civilian population without any remorse or apology. They are the ones who violently invade and ravage lands belonging to others and yet have the audacity to call Islām what they have called it. This is the highest form of hypocrisy.

Human beings are dynamic creatures with the ability to be peaceful and loving in one instance while being hostile and aggressive the next. The same person may be smiling one minute and fuming with rage just moments later. Islām recognizes these intrinsic features in human beings and trains one to mould them and harness them properly, when to be angry and when to be happy, when to be kind and when to be fierce.

Islām does not condone the idea of humiliation and subjugation by other human beings. For this reason we find that, after years of persecution at the hands of the Quraysh, the divine ordinance for battle was received by the Holy Prophet (S). Initially, some of the weaker Muslims showed hesitation at the idea of picking up weapons and fighting for their rights. Some lacked the courage while others were content being in the camp of the oppressed. However, the Prophet (S) recited to them the Holy verses wherein the believers were called to arms to protect their rights and property, and the Muslims complied.

The beauty of the battles that followed was the humanity that was displayed by the Prophet (S) and his followers. Usually, when one goes to war, they tend to lose their ability of distinguishing right from wrong and many atrocities are committed by soldiers because of this. The adrenaline rush caused by life threatening situations clouds their judgment and they end up killing innocents and doing all sort of beastly things. The latest example of this is what the USA did (and continues to do) in 'Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo.

The Prophet (S) warned his soldiers not to fight in such a manner that they end up neglecting the basic principles that make a human being human. They were not to kill innocent women, children, old people and the handicapped. They were not permitted to cut down trees or fill up wells. They were to offer the enemy an opportunity to surrender and not pursue those who fled from battle. These were just some of the numerous injunctions that the Holy Prophet (S) laid down for the Muslims at a time when the norm among the Arabs was to treat the enemy ruthlessly and without any mercy whatsoever.

The Holy Prophet (S), or the 'supreme commander' as the author of this work refers to him time and again, had no interest in building a large empire. Rather, he readily made those who were willing to live peacefully, his allies. The sword was only raised against open enemies who were out to destroy Islām and the Muslims.

Further, many of the defeated prisoners of war became Muslims when they saw how the Prophet (S) treated them. Contrary to their expectation of harsh and brutal treatment, they were treated with kindness and mercy. Just this was enough to make many of them Muslims. This was how Islām really spread, not at the tip of the blade as wrongly hypothesized by Western Orientalists.

Translating this work posed a number of challenges. First, the enormous amount of transliteration. In Arabic, different dialects pronounce words differently. We have tried as much as possible to conform with the standard Arabic transliteration but this has not been a priority and at times one Arabic name may have been transliterated in two or three similar ways. Care has been taken, however, that this should in no way cause any confusion about who or what is being referred to and it should only be deemed a handicap of the English language, nothing more.

Second, one will notice that this work, which was originally a dissertation for the author's PhD, has a string of footnotes as long as the eye can see! These footnotes only serve to provide a basis for his statements and refer the reader to where he or she can turn if more information or detail is required.

Third, I have taken the liberty of adding my own notes wherever I thought a clarification was required. As the translator of this work, probably the hardest thing for me was to contend with some conclusions that are made by the author. Unfortunately, the esteemed author has not endeavored to carry out any scrutiny of the sources he has referred to and has taken these reports at face value. As a student of history, the importance of carefully analyzing reports and looking for possible loopholes and inconsistencies is well known to me.

However, since my task was to translate this otherwise important work, I only added very brief notes in areas where I disagreed with the author. Readers who are interested can of course delve deeper and conduct their own research in those areas.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Dr. Abu Fizza Haydari for meticulously going through my final draft, editing and proofreading it. And of course thanks is due to the publishers Heritage International Inc. for undertaking the task of getting this work translated and published. All praise, in the

end, belongs only to the Almighty.

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