



↔ **The Preaching of** ↔

ISLAM

EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK BY
Orientalist Historian T. W. Arnold



Illustrating the Justice of the
Muslims During Conflict and War



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Title: The Preaching of Islam (Excerpts from the Book by
Orientalist Historian T. W. Arnold)

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(صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) May Allāh bless and protect him (the Prophet).

(عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ) (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) Peace be upon him / her / them.

(رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) May Allāh be pleased with him.

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Introduction



There is no moral and behavioural code which draws out perfection in human character in a more complete way than the code of Islām. If Muslims were to truly act upon this guidance, they would receive recognition and praise, as they often did in past centuries, when even warring enemies had to concede their moral and ethical superiority.

Sir Thomas Walker Arnold (d. 1930) was a knighted British Orientalist scholar and historian of Islamic Art who wrote a book titled *The Preaching of Islam*¹ documenting the spread of Islām across the East and West. Drawing upon hundreds of resources written in more than ten languages, including those from centres of Orientalist studies such as Holland, Arnold provides a picture different from that of modern loons and rabid Islām haters.

In this treatise we provide numerous excerpts showing how the moral excellence and impeccable character of Muslims, alongside their justice, led them to be welcomed by oppressed minorities and adherents of other religions among the

¹ *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith.*

Jews, Christians and Magians. This work was written and published at the end of the 19th century, in 1896. This was well before the ideological attack against Islām and Muslims took shape in the latter half of the 20th century to facilitate and justify military adventures for the Greater Israel project. Therefore, it provides an unbiased treatment of the subject and is absent the false stereotypes of Islām, Muslims and Arabs that were propagated by Zionist-funded propaganda through the media, think-tanks, institutions and Hollywood drivel. The “clash of civilisations” and “war on terror” narratives were engineered in the late 20th century to sell these wars of conquest in the Middle East to Western populations. As for terrorism and groups like ISIS (Daesh), then they do not serve the interests of Muslim nations. In fact, Muslims are their greatest victims. These groups have been seeded and supported and are directed by various intelligence agencies to create instability in Muslim lands and justify military interventions and occupations. Hence, these groups cannot be used to paint a realistic picture of Islām, its foundations, morals and ethics.

In the Islāmic legislation, peaceful preaching (*da'wah*) is the foundation, and has never been abrogated by the legislation of jihād as has been demonstrated by the famous Muslim

scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) with strong evidences.¹ Muslims call to the establishment of prayer, fasting, charity, kindness to parents, relatives and neighbours, good manners and moral perfection. They preach against all forms of injustice, oppression and evil, including idolatry and the various nation destroyers such as usury, gambling, alcohol and the affairs that destroy the family institution.

However, this does not serve the ambitions and interests of those who desire to enslave mankind through these vices and other schemes and intrigues. They are the ones who enslave nations through usury, instigate wars to profit from military spending and lure nations into debt, spread hedonism, licentiousness and pornography, create ideological movements such as feminism, gay rights and transgenderism to erode the fabric of societies and weaken nations, so that they can no longer defend themselves due to the absence of cohesion. These profiteers only ever fight for their own self-interest. Hence, they erect obstacles in the path of truth to protect and advance their accumulation of possessions, riches and pleasures to the impoverishment and detriment of the masses.

Jihād was legislated as a necessity to remove such obstacles, so that people can hear the message of truth without hindrance,

1 Refer to our paper on this subject, *Terrorism Is Not Jihād* (2017), which is part of an unpublished work.

distortion and misrepresentation, and so that they are able to choose to believe freely, after truth and guidance have been made clear to them. In this jihād, only combatants are fought, and it is prohibited to kill women, children, the old, and those given to worship in monasteries and all other non-combatants.

This is proof that in the Islāmic Sharī'ah, war is not waged for mere conquest and domination, nor to kill non-Muslims merely because of unbelief, but rather, to protect the foundation, which is peaceful preaching, so that the message can reach mankind without hindrance. The conveyance of the message of truth and justice was the duty of all of the Prophets and Messengers, and they did so with wisdom, sound argument and good admonition. Fighting was legislated as a necessity to ensure that this instrument of preaching is never curtailed, and the light of guidance is never extinguished.¹

We leave you with excerpts from the book which highlight the justice of Muslims during war and conflict.²

Abū 'Iyaaḍ Amjad Rafīq

Jumādā al-Ākhirah 1447 / December 2025

1 For more details refer to our publication, *This is Islām*.

2 All footnotes in the following chapters represent Arnold's original references and notes. Any footnotes preceded by [CN:] are the compiler's notes.

The Success of Islamic Preaching Returns to the Power and Simplicity of the Muslim Creed



Explaining the causes that led to the success of Muslims in preaching and winning converts very easily, Arnold writes:¹

“Foremost among these is the simplicity of the Muslim creed, There is no god but God²; Muḥammad is the Apostle of God. Assent to these two simple doctrines is all that is demanded of the convert, and the whole history of Muslim dogmatics fails to present any attempt on the part of ecclesiastical assemblies to force on the mass of believers any symbol couched in more elaborate and complex terms.

1 *The Preaching of Islam* (Constable & Company, 1913), pp. 413-414.

2 [CN:] This is an inaccurate translation. There are many gods worshipped, but there is only One True God who is worthy of worship and whose worship is truth and justice. Hence, the correct translation is “There is no god (worthy of worship) but Allāh” or “There is no god (worshipped in truth) but Allāh”.

This simple creed demands no great trial of faith, arouses as a rule no particular intellectual difficulties and is within the compass of the meanest intelligence. Unencumbered with theological subtleties, it may be expounded by any, even the most unversed in theological expression. The first half of it enunciates a doctrine that is almost universally accepted by men as a necessary postulate,¹ while the second half is based on a theory of man's relationship to God that is almost equally wide-spread, viz. that at intervals in the world's history God grants some revelation of Himself to men through the mouthpiece of inspired prophets.

This, the rationalistic character of the Muslim creed, and the advantage it reaps therefrom in its missionary efforts, have nowhere been more admirably brought out than in the following sentences of Professor Montet:

'Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically. The definition of rationalism as a system that bases religious beliefs on principles furnished by the reason,

1 [CN:] Not all who believe in a supreme God give exclusive worship to Him, and hence are not true believers in the unity of God, which rationally necessitates disbelief in the worship of any other gods erected besides Him.

applies to it exactly.¹ It is true that Muḥammad, who was an enthusiast and possessed, too, the ardour of faith and the fire of conviction, that precious quality he transmitted to so many of his disciples,—brought forward his reform as a revelation: but this kind of revelation is only one form of exposition and his religion has all the marks of a collection of doctrines founded on the data of reason.² To believers, the Muhammadan creed is summed up in belief in the unity of God and in the mission of His Prophet, and to ourselves who coldly analyse his doctrines, to belief in God and a future life; these two dogmas, the minimum of religious belief, statements that to the religious man rest on the firm basis of reason, sum up the whole doctrinal teaching of the Qur'an. The simplicity and the clearness of this teaching are certainly among the most obvious forces at work in the religion and the missionary activity of Islam... **In every sense of the term, of the teachings of the Prophet, the Qur'an has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting-point, and the dogma of the unity of God has always been proclaimed**

1 [CN:] The Islāmic creed is not based on reason (*‘aql*) but is in agreement with sound, uncorrupted reason. The Qur'ān and the Prophetic Sunnah are the foundation of Islāmic beliefs. Some of these beliefs which relate to affairs of the unseen and the hereafter may not be comprehensible by reason, but at the same time, not impossible to it.

2 The creed of Islām, that there is none worthy of worship in truth but Allāh alone and invalidation of what is contrary to it, is demonstrated by sound reason.

therein with a grandeur, a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam. This fidelity to the fundamental dogma of the religion, the elemental simplicity of the formula in which it is enunciated, the proof that it gains from the fervid conviction of the missionaries who propagate it, are so many causes to explain the success of Muhammadan missionary efforts. A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding, might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvellous power of winning its way into the consciences of men.”¹

Comment:

The attraction and greatness of the Islāmic creed lies in its simplicity and powerful appeal to the innate, original disposition (*fiṭrah*) and reason (*‘aql*). Its truth is immediately grasped, as is its unifying potential for mankind. For there is only one Lord of mankind, and hence, only one Lord worthy of worship. “And your god is but One (True) God.” [2:193]. “Indeed, this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me (alone).” (21:93). When all other gods erected by men, or false conceptions of god, are

1 Edouard Montet: *La propagande chretienne et ses adversaires musulmans*, pp. 17-18. (Paris, 1890).

dissolved, mankind's differences and enmities are dissolved with them, and they become a single nation upon the original true religion, submission to the will and pleasure of the Lord, namely, Islām. This was the state of humanity prior to the era of Noah (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). The Prophets and Messengers were only sent to guide mankind back to the true religion after they had erred and gone astray. Their message, in its foundations, was the same, and it was to invite people back to what is already deeply ingrained in their souls; the necessity of showing gratitude to the One True God for all of His innumerable bounties and giving Him exclusive worship. That is the religion of truth, and it has only ever had one name, which is Islām.

An Alexandrian Jew Converts to Islām After Seeing Muslims in Prayer



From the causes mentioned by Arnold which led many to Islām is the Muslim prayer. He writes:¹

“Very effective also, both in winning and retaining, is the ordinance of the daily prayers five times a day. Montesquieu² has well said, ‘A religion burdened with many practices creates a stronger attachment to it than one that is less so; we cherish the things we are constantly occupied with.’³ The religion of the Muslim is continually present with him and in the daily prayer manifests itself in a solemn and impressive ritual, which cannot leave either the worshipper or the spectator unaffected. Sa’id b. Ḥasan, an Alexandrian Jew, who embraced Islam in the year 1298, speaks of the sight of the Friday prayer in a mosque as a determining factor in his own conversion. During a severe illness he had a vision in which a voice bade him declare himself a Muslim. ‘And when I entered the

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 417-418.

2 *De l’Esprit des Lois*, livre xxv. chap. 2.

3 [CN:] This is a translation of the original in French, quoted by Arnold.

mosque' (he goes on) 'and saw the Muslims standing in rows like angels, I heard a voice speaking within me, 'This is the community whose coming was announced by the prophets (on whom be blessings and peace!); and when the preacher came forth clad in his black robe, a deep feeling of awe fell upon me... and when he closed his sermon with the words, 'Verily God enjoineth justice and kindness and the giving of gifts to kinsfolk, and He forbiddeth wickedness and wrong and oppression. He warneth you; haply ye will be mindful.'¹ And when the prayer began, I was mightily uplifted, for the rows of the Muslims appeared to me like rows of angels, to whose prostrations and genuflections God Almighty was revealing Himself, and I heard a voice within me saying, 'If God spake twice unto the people of Israel throughout the ages, verily He speaketh unto this community in every time of prayer,' and I was convinced in my mind that I had been created to be a Muslim."²

1 Qur., chap. xvi. v. 92.

2 Goldziher, Saïd b. Hasan d'Alexandrie. (*Revue des Etudes Juives*, tome XXX. pp. 17-18.) (Paris, 1895). And in a footnote, Arnold adds: "This has been emphasised by many observers, but it will be enough here to quote the words of an eminent Christian bishop. 'No one who comes in contact for the first time with Mohammedans can fail to be struck by this aspect of their faith... Wherever one may be, in open street, in railway station, in the field, it is the most ordinary thing to see a man, without the slightest touch of Pharisaism or parade, quietly and humbly leaving whatever pursuit he may be at the moment engaged in, in order to say his prayers at the appointed hour. On a larger scale,

The Spread of Islām Through Trade and Commerce



Arnold writes:¹ “Many other circumstances might be adduced that have contributed towards the missionary success of Islam—circumstances peculiar to particular times and countries. Among these may be mentioned the advantage that Muhammadan missionary work derives from the fact of its being so largely in the hands of traders, especially in Africa and other uncivilised countries where the people are naturally suspicious of the foreigner. For, in the case of the trader, his well-known and harmless avocation secures to him an immunity from any such feelings of

no one who has ever seen the courtyard of the Great Mosque at Delhi on the last Friday in the fast-month (Ramazan) filled to overflowing with, perhaps, 15,000 worshippers, all wholly absorbed in prayer, and manifesting the profoundest reverence and humility in every gesture, can fail to be deeply impressed by the sight, or to get a glimpse of the power which underlies such a system; while the very regularity of the daily call to prayer, as it rings out at earliest dawn, before light commences, or amid all the noise and bustle of the business hours, or again as the evening closes in, is fraught with the same message.” (Dr. G. A. Lefroy: *Mankind and the Church*, pp. 287-8. (London, 1907.))

1 *The Preaching of Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

suspicion, while his knowledge of men and manners, his commercial savoir-faire, gain for him a ready reception, and remove that feeling of constraint which might naturally arise in the presence of the stranger. He labours under no such disadvantages as hamper the professed missionary, who is liable to be suspected of some sinister motive, not only by people whose range of experience and mental horizon are limited and to whom the idea of any man enduring the perils of a long journey and laying aside every mundane occupation for the sole purpose of gaining proselytes, is inexplicable, but also by more civilised men of the world who are very prone to doubt the sincerity of the paid missionary agent.”

Comment:

One of the main causes of the spread of Islām was through the honest dealings, good morals and upright character of Muslim traders. Often, non-Muslims saw the stark contrast between their co-religionists and Muslims, having been victims of unfair dealings and oppression from their own people. These tradesmen did not set out, through duplicity and dissimulation, as missionaries intending to convert others, but for trade and commerce. Hence, it was the upright character, fair dealing and diligent observance of their religion that impressed non-Muslims, leading them to accept Islām.

The Toleration of Islām



Arnold writes:¹ “In the preceding pages it has been shown that the theory of the Muslim faith enjoins toleration and freedom of religious life for all those followers of other faiths who pay tribute in return for protection, and though the pages of Muhammadan history are stained with the blood of many cruel persecutions, still, on the whole, unbelievers have enjoyed under Muhammadan rule a measure of toleration, the like of which is not to be found in Europe until quite modern times.

Forcible conversion was forbidden, in accordance with the precepts of the Qur’ān: — ‘Let there be no compulsion in religion’ (ii. 257). ‘Wilt thou compel men to become believers? No soul can believe but by the permission of God’ (x. 99, 100).

The very existence of so many Christian sects and communities in countries that have been for centuries under Muhammadan rule is an abiding testimony to the toleration they have enjoyed, and shows that the persecutions they have

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 419-420.

from time to time been called upon to endure at the hands of bigots and fanatics, have been excited by some special and local circumstances rather than inspired by a settled principle of intolerance.”

Comment:

The Muslim scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 1350) said: “It will become clear to whoever reflects upon the biographical account of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he did not compel a single person to accept his religion, ever. Rather, he [only] fought whoever fought against him [first]... the people entered his religion wilfully, out of choice. The majority of the people of the Earth entered his call when guidance became clear to them and that He is the Messenger of God in truth.”¹

1 *Hidāyat al-Hayārā* (Dār ‘Ālam al-Fawā'id) pp. 29-30. American historian of world religions Huston Smith (1919-2016), in his *The Illustrated World's Religions* (HarperCollins, 1994), under the subheading “The Use of Force” writes: “Muslims report that the most inflexible image of Islam that they encounter in the West is that of a militant religion that has spread primarily by the sword. They see this as a prejudice, born of the thirteen hundred years in which Islam and Europe have shared common borders and much of the time fought over them. It is a stereotype, forged by people who have seen Islam as their enemy.” (p. 168). He goes on to say: “As an outstanding general, Muhammad left many traditions regarding the decent conduct of war. Agreements are to be honored and treachery avoided; the wounded are not to be mutilated, nor the dead disfigured. Women, children, and the old are to be spared, as are orchards, crops, and sacred objects” (p. 168). And a little later: “Muhammad adhered meticulously to the charter

Muslims wage war not for mere conquest or forced conversion, but to remove any barriers and to counter any aggression and violence that aims to hinder the message of Islām being conveyed to people. This ensures that they have a free choice to accept Islām after learning about it and understanding its reality. Or they may choose to live under its protection, under just law, better morality and safety, with the freedom to practice their own religion, and whereby they can interact with Muslims and learn about their religion.

Non-Muslims live under Muslim rule by paying a small tribute that applies to each able male of working age. This exempts them from any military duties to protect the land and guarantees their protection. This is the meaning of “Ahl al-Dhimmāh” or “Dhimmī”, meaning people or a person of protected status. They have the freedom to practice their religion and govern themselves according to their own religious scriptures and laws.

he forged for Medina, which — grounded as it was in the Koranic injunction, “**Let there be no compulsion in religion**” (2:257) — is arguably the first mandate for religious tolerance in human history”, and further on the same page: “In favor of Islam are the long centuries during which in India, Spain, and the Near East, Christians, Jews, and Hindus lived quietly and in freedom under Muslim rule. Even under the worst rulers, Christians and Jews held positions of influence and in general retained their religious freedom. It was Christians, not Muslims (we are reminded) who in the fifteenth century expelled the Jews from Spain where under Islamic rule they had enjoyed one of their golden ages.” (p. 169).

The Qur'an commands that they are to be treated with justice and benevolence: “God (Allāh) does not forbid you from being kind and acting justly towards those who did not fight you because of religion and did not expel you from your homes. Indeed, God loves those who act justly.” [60:8]

In the context of this same verse, the Muslim jurist Aḥmad bin Idrīs al-Miṣrī (d. 1285) stated regarding interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims: “The covenant of the guarantee of safety (*dhimmāh*)¹ obligates certain rights from us which are due to them — [the non-Muslims] — because they are in our neighbourhood and under our protection. They are under the protection (*dhimmah*) of God the Most High, of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and of Islām. Whoever transgressed against them, even if it was with an evil word or backbiting them with respect to the honour of one of them, or any harm among the types of harm — or who even aided

1 The dictionary meaning of *dhimmah* is: covenant, contract, bond, protection, shelter, alliance, responsibility, clientship, care, custody, covenant of protection, inviolability, security of life and property, the neglect of which brings blame.

In his famous Arabic Lexicon, Edward Lane summarises the essence of the meaning of *dhimmah* as: “A sacred thing which one is under an obligation to reverence, respect, or honour, and defend; everything entitled to reverence, respect, honour or defence in the character and appurtenances of a person; security, safety, security of life and property protection or safeguard; a promise, or an assurance, of safety, protection, or safeguard, indemnity.” Refer to *Lane’s Lexicon*, and also the dictionaries of Steingass and Hans Wehr.

in that — then he has ruined the guarantee of (safety) of God, of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and of the religion of Islām that had been granted to them...”

Then he explained the meaning of being kind as mentioned in the previous verse: “To show gentleness to their weak, to satisfy the needs of their poor, to feed their hungry, to clothe their naked, to use gentle, kind speech to them from the angle of compassion and mercy towards them — not out of fear or inferiority — to bear whatever harm arises from them when they are our neighbours despite having the ability to end (their harm), doing this out of compassion for them, not out of fear or veneration of them. To supplicate for guidance for them, that they be made people of happiness, to advise them in all their affairs that pertain to their religion and [likewise] their worldly affairs.

To protect them in their absence when anyone embarks upon harming them, to protect their wealth, their families, their honour and all of their rights and beneficial interests. That they are supported in repelling any oppression against them and delivering all their rights to them. A (Muslim) does all such acts of goodness towards them that one who is in a privileged position can possibly do towards the one who is under-privileged and likewise, [all acts of goodness] that [even] an enemy could possibly do towards an enemy, for all of that is from nobility in character and manners. It

is desirable that all of what we do with respect to them is from this angle, not from the angle of pride and loftiness on our behalf and nor from the angle of belittling ourselves and exalting them through such actions towards them.”¹

1 Refer to his work *al-Furūq* (3/14). He is known as al-Qarāfī, and is a famous Mālikī jurist.

Crusaders Accept Islām After Being Robbed and Cheated by Fellow Christians



Arnold writes:¹ “The history of the ill-fated second Crusade presents us with a very remarkable incident of a similar character. The story, as told by Odo of Deuil, a monk of St. Denis, who, in the capacity of private chaplain to Louis VII, accompanied him on this Crusade and wrote a graphic account of it, runs as follows.

While endeavouring to make their way overland through Asia Minor to Jerusalem the Crusaders sustained a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Turks in the mountain-passes of Phrygia (A.D. 1148), and with difficulty reached the seaport town of Attalia.

Here, all who could afford to satisfy the exorbitant demands of the Greek merchants, took ship for Antioch; while the sick and wounded and the mass of the pilgrims were left behind at the mercy of their treacherous allies, the Greeks,

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

who received five hundred marks from Louis, on condition that they provided an escort for the pilgrims and took care of the sick until they were strong enough to be sent on after the others.

But no sooner had the army left, than the Greeks informed the Turks of the helpless condition of the pilgrims, and quietly looked on while famine, disease and the arrows of the enemy carried havoc and destruction through the camp of these unfortunates.

Driven to desperation, a party of three or four thousand attempted to escape, but were surrounded and cut to pieces by the Turks, who now pressed on to the camp to follow up their victory.

The situation of the survivors would have been utterly hopeless, had not the sight of their misery melted the hearts of the Muhammadans to pity. They tended the sick and relieved the poor and starving with open-handed liberality. Some even bought up the French money which the Greeks had got out of the pilgrims by force or cunning, and lavishly distributed it among the needy.

So great was the contrast between the kind treatment the pilgrims received from the unbelievers [Muslims] and the cruelty of their fellow-Christians, the Greeks, who imposed forced labour upon them, beat them and robbed them of what little they had left, that many of them voluntarily embraced the faith of their deliverers.”

Crusaders Abandon Negative Perceptions of Muslims and Accept Islām After Interactions



Arnold writes:¹ “The increasing intercourse between Christians and Muslims, the growing appreciation on the part of the Crusaders of the virtues of their opponents, which so strikingly distinguishes the later from the earlier chroniclers of the Crusades,² the numerous imitations of Oriental manners and ways of life by the Franks settled in the Holy Land, did not fail to exercise a corresponding influence on religious opinions.

One of the most remarkable features of this influence is the tolerant attitude of many of the Christian Knights towards the faith of Islam—an attitude of mind that was most vehemently denounced by the Church.

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 89-91.

2 Guizot: *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*, p. 234. (Paris, 1882.)

When Usāma b. Munqidh, a Syrian Amīr of the twelfth century, visited Jerusalem, during a period of truce, the Knights Templar, who had occupied the Masjīd al-Aqṣā, assigned to him a small chapel adjoining it, for him to say his prayers in, and they strongly resented the interference with the devotions of their guest on the part of a newly-arrived Crusader, who took this new departure in the direction of religious freedom in very bad part.¹

It would indeed have been strange if religious questions had not formed a topic of discussion on the many occasions when the Crusaders and the Muslims met together on a friendly footing, during the frequent truces, especially when it was religion itself that had brought the Crusaders into the Holy Land and set them upon these constant wars.

When even Christian theologians were led by their personal intercourse with the Muslims to form a juster estimate of their religion, and contact with new modes of thought was unsettling the minds of men and giving rise to a swarm of heresies, it is not surprising that many should have been drawn into the pale of Islam.²

1 Usāma b. Munqidh, p. 99.

2 Prutz, pp. 266-7.

The renegades in the twelfth century were in sufficient numbers to be noticed in the statute books of the Crusaders, the so-called Assises of Jerusalem, according to which, in certain cases, their bail was not accepted...¹

The heroic life and character of Saladin seems to have exercised an especial fascination on the minds of the Christians of his time; some even of the Christian knights were so strongly attracted towards him that they abandoned the Christian faith and their own people and joined themselves to the Muslims; such was the case, for example, with a certain English Templar, named Robert of St. Albans, who in A.D. 1185 gave up Christianity for Islam and afterwards married a grand-daughter of Saladin.²

1 *Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois*. (Recueil des historiens des Croisades, Assises de Jérusalem, tome ii. p. 325.)

2 Roger Hoveden, vol. ii. p. 307.

Native Christians Welcomed Muslim Rule to Escape Tyranny of Fellow Christians



Arnold writes:¹ “The native Christians certainly preferred the rule of the Muhammadans to that of the Crusaders,² and when Jerusalem fell finally and for ever into the hands of the Muslims (A.D. 1244), the Christian population of Palestine seems to have welcomed the new masters and to have submitted quietly and contentedly to their rule.”³

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, p. 96.

2 Prutz, pp. 146-7, 150.

3 The prelates of the Holy Land wrote as follows, in 1244, concerning the invasion of the Khwarizmians, whom Sultan Ayyūb had called in to assist him in driving out the Crusaders: “They freely spread throughout the land, even to the parts of Nazareth and Saphet, without any resistance, occupying it and dividing it among themselves as if it were their own. They appointed Christian legates and porters to the villages and hamlets, receiving from the rustics the rents and tributes which they used to pay to the Christians, who, having now become enemies of the Christians and rebels, universally adhered to the said Corosminis [Khwarizmians].” (Matthei Parisiensis Chronica Majora, ed. H. R. Luard, vol. iv. p. 343.) (London, 1872-83.). Translated from Latin quote.

This same sense of security of religious life under Muslim rule led many of the Christians of Asia Minor, also, about the same time, to welcome the advent of the Saljūq Turks as their deliverers from the hated Byzantine government, not only on account of its oppressive system of taxation, but also of the persecuting spirit of the Greek Church, which had with such cruelty crushed the heresies of the Paulicians and the Iconoclasts.

In the reign of Michael VIII (1261-1282), the Turks were often invited to take possession of the smaller towns in the interior of Asia Minor by the inhabitants, that they might escape from the tyranny of the empire; **and both rich and poor often emigrated into Turkish dominions.**¹

1 Finlay, vol. iii. pp. 358-9. J. H. Krause: Die Byzantiner des Mittelalters, p. 276. (Halle, 1869.)

Christian Copts of Egypt Welcomed the Rule of Muslims to Escape Byzantine Oppression



Arnold writes:¹ “Islam was first introduced into Africa by the Arab army that invaded Egypt under the command of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ² in A.D. 640. Three years later the withdrawal of the Byzantine troops abandoned the vast Christian population into the hands of the Muslim conquerors.

The rapid success of the Arab invaders was largely due to the welcome they received from the native Christians, who hated the Byzantine rule not only for its oppressive administration, but also—and chiefly—on account of the bitterness of theological rancour.

The Jacobites, who formed the majority of the Christian population, had been very roughly handled by the Orthodox

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

2 [CE:] He was a Companion of the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

adherents of the court and subjected to indignities that have not been forgotten by their children even to the present day.¹

Some were tortured and then thrown into the sea; many followed their Patriarch into exile to escape from the hands of their persecutors, while a large number disguised their real opinions under a pretended acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon.²

To these Copts, as the Jacobite Christians of Egypt are called, the Muhammadan conquest brought a freedom of religious life such as they had not enjoyed for a century.

On payment of the tribute, 'Amr left them in undisturbed possession of their churches and guaranteed to them autonomy in all ecclesiastical matters, thus delivering them from the continual interference that had been so grievous a burden under the previous rule; he laid his hands on none of the property of the churches and committed no act of spoliation or pillage.³

1 Amélineau, p. 3; Caetani, vol. iv. p. 81 sq. Justinian is said to have had 200,000 Copts put to death in the city of Alexandria, and the persecutions of his successors drove many to take refuge in the desert. (Wansleben: *The Present State of Egypt*, p. 11.) (London, 1678.)

2 Renaudot, p. 161. Severus, p. 106.

3 John, Jacobite bishop of Nikiu (second half of seventh century), p. 584. Caetani, vol. iv. pp. 515-16.

In the early days of the Muhammadan rule then, the condition of the Copts seems to have been fairly tolerable, and there is no evidence of their widespread apostasy to Islam being due to persecution or unjust pressure on the part of their new rulers.

Even before the conquest was complete, while the capital, Alexandria, still held out, many of them went over to Islam,¹ and a few years later the example these had set was followed by many others.”

1 John of Nikiu, p. 560.

The Christians of Arabia Willingly Accepted Islām and Aided Muslims Against the Persians



Arnold writes:¹ “Accordingly it is not surprising to find that many of the Christian Bedouins were swept into the rushing tide of this great movement and that Arab tribes, who for centuries had professed the Christian religion, now abandoned it to embrace the Muslim faith.

Among these was the tribe of the Banū Ghassān, who held sway over the desert east of Palestine and southern Syria, of whom it was said that they were ‘Lords in the days of the ignorance and stars in Islam.’²

After the battle of Qādisiyyah (A.H. 14) in which the Persian army under Rustam had been utterly discomfited, many Christians belonging to the Bedouin tribes on both sides of the Euphrates came to the Muslim general and said: ‘The tribes that at the first embraced Islam were wiser than we.

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 47-52.

2 Mas’ūdī, tome iv. p. 238.

Now that Rustam hath been slain, we will accept the new belief.¹

Similarly, after the conquest of northern Syria, most of the Bedouin tribes, after hesitating a little, joined themselves to the followers of the Prophet.²

That force was not the determining factor in these conversions may be judged from the amicable relations that existed between the Christian and the Muslim Arabs. Muḥammad himself had entered into treaty with several Christian tribes, promising them his protection and guaranteeing them the free exercise of their religion and to their clergy undisturbed enjoyment of their old rights and authority...³

In the battle of the Bridge (A.H. 13) when a disastrous defeat was imminent and the panic-stricken Arabs were hemmed in between the Euphrates and the Persian host, a Christian chief of the Banū Ṭayy sprang forward like another Spurius Lartius to the side of an Arab Horatius, to assist Muthannah the Muslim general in defending the bridge of boats which could alone afford the means of an orderly retreat. When fresh levies were raised to retrieve this disgrace, among the reinforcements that came pouring in from every direction

1 Muir: *Caliphate*, pp. 121-2.

2 Caetani, vol. iii. p. 814 (§ 323).

3 Caetani, vol. ii. pp. 260, 299, 351.

was a Christian tribe of the Banū Namir, who dwelt within the limits of the Byzantine empire, and in the ensuing battle of Buwayb (A.H. 13), just before the final charge of the Arabs that turned the fortune of battle in their favour, Muthannah rode up to the Christian chief and said: 'Ye are of one blood with us; come now, and as I charge, charge ye with me.'

The Persians fell back before their furious onslaught, and another great victory was added to the glorious roll of Muslim triumphs. One of the most gallant exploits of the day was performed by a youth belonging to another Christian tribe of the desert, who with his companions, a company of Bedouin horse-dealers, had come up just as the Arab army was being drawn up in battle array. They threw themselves into the fight on the side of their compatriots; and while the conflict was raging most fiercely, this youth, rushing into the centre of the Persians, slew their leader, and leaping on his richly-caparisoned horse, galloped back amidst the plaudits of the Muslim line, crying as he passed in triumph: 'I am of the Banū Taghlib. I am he that hath slain the chief.'¹

The tribe to which this young man boasted that he belonged was one of those that elected to remain Christian, while other tribes of Mesopotamia, such as the Banū Namir and the Banū Qudā'ah, became Muslim...

1 Muir: *Caliphate*, pp. 90-4.

From the examples given above of the toleration extended towards the Christian Arabs by the victorious Muslims of the first century of the Hijrah and continued by succeeding generations, we may surely infer that those Christian tribes that did embrace Islam, did so of their own choice and free will.¹

The Christian Arabs of the present day, dwelling in the midst of a Muhammadan population, are a living testimony of this toleration... Many of the Arabs of the renowned tribe of the Banū Ghassān, Arabs of the purest blood, who embraced Christianity towards the end of the fourth century, still retain the Christian faith, and since their submission to the Church of Rome, about two centuries ago, employ the Arabic language in their religious services.²

1 “In the early years, however, the Arabs did not persecute anyone for reasons of faith, they did not take any pains to convert anyone, so that under Islam, after the first conquests, the Semitic Christians enjoyed a religious tolerance that had not been seen for several generations.” (Caetani, vol. v. p. 4.). Translated from Latin quote.

2 W. G. Palgrave: *Essays on Eastern Questions*, pp. 206-8. (London, 1872.)

Christians Preferring the Justice and Toleration of Islām to Escape Persecution by Christians



Arnold writes:¹ “If we turn from the Bedouins to consider the attitude of the settled inhabitants of the towns and the non-Arab population towards the new religion, we do not find that the Arab conquest was so rapidly followed by conversions to Islam.

The Christians of the great cities of the eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire seem for the most part to have remained faithful to their ancestral creed, to which indeed they still in large numbers cling.”

Arnold notes that Arab conquest over the Christian lands did not lead to large-scale conversions. Conversions happened afterwards, and they were willing conversions after Christians saw the justice and toleration of Islām. Rather, they preferred the rule of Islām over that of their fellow Christians.

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 52-55.

Arnold goes on to explain how Christians, fearing that they might be persecuted by other Christians on grounds of centuries-old sectarian differences that had arisen, willingly and eagerly received government by Muslims:

“But Heraclius shared the fate of so many would-be peacemakers: for not only did the controversy [about the nature of Christ] blaze up again all the more fiercely, but he himself was stigmatised as a heretic and drew upon himself the wrath of both parties.

Indeed, so bitter was the feeling he aroused that there is strong reason to believe that even a majority of the orthodox subjects of the Roman Empire, in the provinces that were conquered during this emperor's reign, were the well-wishers of the Arabs; they regarded the emperor with aversion as a heretic, and were afraid that he might commence a persecution in order to force upon them his Monotheistic opinions.¹

1 That such fears were not wholly groundless may be judged from the emperor's intolerant behaviour towards many of the Monophysite party in his progress through Syria after the defeat of the Persians in 627. (See Michael the Elder, vol. ii. p. 412, and Caetani, vol. ii. p. 1049.) For the outrages committed by the Byzantine soldiers on their coreligionists in the reign of Constans II (642-668), see Michael the Elder, vol. ii. p. 443.

They therefore readily—and even eagerly—received the new masters who promised them religious toleration, and were willing to compromise their religious position and their national independence if only they could free themselves from the immediately impending danger... The people of Emessa closed the gates of their city against the army of Heraclius and told the Muslims that they preferred their government and justice to the injustice and oppression of the Greeks.”¹

1 Al-Balādhri, p. 137.

Patriarch of Antioch (1199 CE): Muslims Sent by God to Establish Justice Among Christians



Arnold writes:¹ “Michael the Elder [1199 CE], Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, writing in the latter half of the twelfth century, could approve the decision of his co-religionists and see the finger of God in the Arab conquests even after the Eastern churches had had experience of five centuries of Muhammadan rule.

After recounting the persecutions of Heraclius, he writes: “This is why the God of vengeance, who alone is all-powerful, and changes the empire of mortals as He will, giving it to whomsoever He will, and uplifting the humble—beholding the wickedness of the Romans who, throughout their dominions, cruelly plundered our churches and our monasteries and condemned us without pity—brought from the region of the south the sons of Ishmael, to deliver us through them from the hands of the Romans.

And, if in truth, we have suffered some loss, because the catholic churches, that had been taken away from us and

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

given to the Chalcedonians, remained in their possession; for when the cities submitted to the Arabs, they assigned to each denomination the churches which they found it to be in possession of (and at that time the great church of Emessa and that of Harran had been taken away from us); nevertheless **it was no slight advantage for us to be delivered from the cruelty of the Romans, their wickedness, their wrath and cruel zeal against us, and to find ourselves at peace.**¹”

1 Michael the Elder, vol. ii. pp. 412-13. Barhebræus, about a century later, wrote in a similar strain. (*Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. J. B. Abbeloos et Lamy, p. 474.)

Christians of Syria and Jordan Welcoming Muslim Armies with Profound Respect



Arnold writes:¹ “When the Muslim army reached the valley of the Jordan and Abū ‘Ubaydah pitched his camp at Fiḥl, the Christian inhabitants of the country wrote to the Arabs, saying: ‘O Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantines, though they are of our own faith, because you keep better faith with us and are more merciful to us and refrain from doing us injustice and your rule over us is better than theirs, for they have robbed us of our goods and our homes.’²

The people of Emessa closed the gates of their city against the army of Heraclius and told the Muslims that they preferred their government and justice to the injustice and oppression of the Greeks.³

Such was the state of feeling in Syria during the campaign of 633-639 in which the Arabs gradually drove the Roman

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, p. 55.

2 Azdī, p. 97.

3 Balādhurī, p. 137.

army out of the province. And when Damascus, in 637, set the example of making terms with the Arabs, and thus secured immunity from plunder and other favourable conditions, the rest of the cities of Syria were not slow to follow. Emessa, Arethusa, Hieropolis and other towns entered into treaties whereby they became tributary to the Arabs. Even the patriarch of Jerusalem surrendered the city on similar terms.

The fear of religious compulsion on the part of the heretical emperor made the promise of Muslim toleration appear more attractive than the connection with the Roman Empire and a Christian government.

Further, the self-restraint of the conquerers and the humanity which they displayed in their campaigns, must have excited profound respect¹ and secured a welcome for an invading army that was guided by such principles of justice and moderation as were laid down by the Caliph Abu Bakr...”

1 For the outrages committed by the Byzantine soldiers, on the other hand, on their co-religionists in Cappadocia, in the reign of Constans II. (642-668), see Michel le Grand, p. 234.

Comment:

These principles being referred to are mentioned in a report from al-Ṭabarī in his *Tārīkh*, wherein Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (رضي الله عنه), the first Caliph, advised the leader of the Muslim army, Usāmah bin Zayd (رضي الله عنه) with the following:¹

O people, stop [for a moment], I advise you with ten:

[01] Do not be treacherous (with secret violation of agreements).

[02] Do not take spoils of war dishonestly.

[03] Do not be treacherous (with open violation of agreements).

[04] Do not mutilate (those who die in battle).

[05] Do not kill a small child, an old man, or a woman.

[06] Do not cut down or burn the date-palm tree.

[07] Do not cut fruit-bearing trees.

[08] Do not slaughter any sheep, cow or camel unless it is for eating.

1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (2/463).

[09] You will come upon people who have isolated themselves in monasteries, so leave them alone and what they have preoccupied themselves with.

[10] You will come upon people who come to you with vessels of various types of food. If you eat anything from them, mention the name of Allāh over them.

Islām Saved Christians from Self-Destruction and Oppression and Gave Them Security and Justice



Arnold writes:¹ “Indeed, so far from the development of the Christian Church being hampered by the establishment of Muhammadan rule, the history of the Nestorians exhibits a remarkable outburst of religious life and energy from the time of their becoming subject to the Muslims.²”

Alternately petted and persecuted by the Persian kings, in whose dominions by far the majority of the members of this

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

2 A Dominican monk from Florence, by name Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, who visited the East about the close of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, speaks of the toleration the Nestorians had enjoyed under Muhammadan rule right up to his time: “And I have found through ancient and authentic histories of the Saracens, that the Nestorians themselves were friends of Muḥammad and confederates with him, and that Muḥammad himself commanded his descendants to respect the Nestorians most of all. Which even to this day the Saracens themselves diligently observe.” (Laurent, p. 128.). Translated from Latin quote.

sect were found, it had passed a rather precarious existence and had been subjected to harsh treatment, when war between Persia and Byzantium exposed it to the suspicion of sympathising with the Christian enemy.

But, under the rule of the caliphs, the security they enjoyed at home enabled them to vigorously push forward their missionary enterprises abroad. Missionaries were sent into China and India, both of which were raised to the dignity of metropolitan sees in the eighth century; about the same period they gained a footing in Egypt, and later spread the Christian faith right across Asia, and by the eleventh century had gained many converts from among the Tatars.¹

If the other Christian sects failed to exhibit the same vigorous life, it was not the fault of the Muhammadans. **All were tolerated alike by the supreme government, and furthermore were prevented from persecuting one another.**²

In the fifth century, Barsauma, a Nestorian bishop, had persuaded the Persian king to set on foot a fierce persecution of the Orthodox Church, by representing Nestorius as a friend of the Persians and his doctrines as approximating to their own; as many as 7800 of the Orthodox clergy, with an

1 J. Labourt: *De Timotheo I, Nestorianorum Patriarcha*, p. 37 sqq. (Paris, 1904.)

2 E. von Dobschütz, p. 390-1.

enormous number of laymen, are said to have been butchered during this persecution.¹

Another persecution was instituted against the Orthodox by Khusrau II, after the invasion of Persia by Heraclius, at the instigation of a Jacobite, who persuaded the King that the Orthodox would always be favourably inclined towards the Byzantines.²

But the principles of Muslim toleration forbade such acts of injustice as these: on the contrary, it seems to have been their endeavour to deal fairly by all their Christian subjects: e.g. after the conquest of Egypt, the Jacobites took advantage of the expulsion of the Byzantine authorities to rob the Orthodox of their churches, but later they were restored by the Muhammadans to their rightful owners when these had made good their claim to possess them.”³

1 Michael the Elder, vol. ii. p. 439-40.

2 Makīn, p. 12. J. Labourt: *Le Christianisme sous la dynastie sassanide*, p. 139 sq. (Paris, 1904.)

3 Renaudot, p. 169.

Christians Rushed to the Purity of Islāmic Monotheism from a ‘Bastard Oriental Christianity’



Arnold writes:¹ “In view of the toleration thus extended to their Christian subjects in the early period of the Muslim rule, the common hypothesis of the sword as the factor of conversion seems hardly satisfactory, and we are compelled to seek for other motives than that of persecution...

Many Christian theologians² have supposed that the debased condition—moral and spiritual—of the Eastern Church of that period must have alienated the hearts of many and driven them to seek a healthier spiritual atmosphere in the faith of Islam which had come to them in all the vigour of new-born zeal.³

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

2 Cf. in addition to the passages quoted below, *M'Clintock & Strong's Cyclopædia*, sub art. Mohammedanism, vol. vi. p. 420. James Freeman Clarke: *Ten Great Religions*, Part ii. p. 75. (London, 1883.)

3 Thus the Emperor Heraclius is represented by the Muhammadan historian as saying, “Their religion is a new religion which gives them

For example, Dean Milman¹ asks, ‘What was the state of the Christian world in the provinces exposed to the first invasion of Mohammedanism? Sect opposed to sect, clergy wrangling with clergy upon the most abstruse and metaphysical points of doctrine. The orthodox, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, the Jacobites were persecuting each other with unexhausted animosity; and it is not judging too severely the evils of religious controversy to suppose that many would rejoice in the degradation of their adversaries under the yoke of the unbeliever, rather than make common cause with them in defence of the common Christianity. In how many must this incessant disputation have shaken the foundations of their faith! **It had been wonderful if thousands had not, in their weariness and perplexity, sought refuge from these interminable and implacable controversies in the simple, intelligible truth of the Divine Unity, though purchased by the acknowledgment of the prophetic mission of Mohammed.**’

Similarly, Caetani sees in the spread of Islam, among the Christians of the Eastern Churches, a revulsion of feeling from the dogmatic subtleties introduced into Christian

new zeal.” (Ṭabarī, p. 2103.)

[CN:] The religion of Islām is not new, but is the religion of all the prophets and messengers sent throughout history to various nations.

1 *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 216-17.

theology by the Hellenistic spirit, 'For the East, with its love of clear and simple concepts, Hellenic culture was, from the religious point of view, a misfortune, because it changed the sublime and simple teachings of Christ into a creed bristling with incomprehensible dogmas, full of doubts and uncertainties; these ended with producing a feeling of deep dismay and shook the very foundations of religious belief; **so that when at last there appeared, coming out suddenly from the desert, the news of the new revelation, this bastard oriental Christianity, torn asunder by internal discords, wavering in its fundamental dogmas, dismayed by such incertitudes, could no longer resist the temptations of a new faith, which swept away at one single stroke all miserable doubts, and offered, along with simple, clear and undisputed doctrines, great material advantages also. The East then abandoned Christ and threw itself into the arms of the Prophet of Arabia.**'¹

1 Caetani, vol. ii. pp. 1045-6.

Islām Spread Swiftly Through Removal of Superstition, Corruption and Injustice



Arnold writes:¹ “Again, Canon Taylor² says: ‘It is easy to understand why this reformed Judaism [meaning Islam]³ spread so swiftly over Africa and Asia.

The African and Syrian doctors had substituted abstruse metaphysical dogmas for the religion of Christ: they tried to combat the licentiousness of the age by setting forth the celestial merit of celibacy and the angelic excellence of virginity—seclusion from the world was the road of holiness, dirt was the characteristic of monkish sanctity—the people were practically polytheists, worshipping a crowd of martyrs, saints and angels; the upper classes were

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

2 A paper read before the Church Congress at Wolverhampton, October 7th, 1887.

3 [CN:] Meaning to say that Islam is a correction or reformation of an errant Judaism. However, Islām is not a reformed Judaism, since Judaism is an altered and abrogated ethnocentric religion which departed from the way of Moses (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام). Islām is the religion preached by all of the prophets and messengers.

effeminate and corrupt, the middle classes oppressed by taxation,¹ the slaves without hope for the present or the future.

As with the besom of God, Islam swept away this mass of corruption and superstition. It was a revolt against empty theological polemics; it was a masculine protest against the exaltation of celibacy as a crown of piety. It brought out the fundamental dogmas of religion—the unity and greatness of God, that He is merciful and righteous, that He claims obedience to His will, resignation and faith.

It proclaimed the responsibility of man, a future life, a day of judgment, and stern retribution to fall upon the wicked; and enforced the duties of prayer, almsgiving, fasting and benevolence.

It thrust aside the artificial virtues, the religious frauds and follies, the perverted moral sentiments, and the verbal subtleties of theological disputants. It replaced monkishness by manliness. It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind, and recognition to the fundamental facts of human nature.”

1 For the oppressive fiscal system under the Byzantine empire, see Gfrörer: *Byzantjnische Geschichten*, vol. ii. pp. 337-9, 389-91, 450.

20,000 Jews, Christians and Magians Accepted Islām After the Death of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal



Arnold writes:¹ “On the other hand, the influence of the more orthodox doctors of Islam in the conversion of unbelievers is attested by the tradition that twenty thousand Christians, Jews and Magians became Muslims when the great Imām Ibn Ḥanbal died.”²

Comment:

The great Muslim scholar, Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 855 CE) was respected and revered greatly by non-Muslims. He was treated by a Christian physician once. When the Christian entered upon him, he said: “I have desired to see you for many years. Your presence is not only rectification for the people of Islām, but for the whole of creation. There

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, p. 74.

2 Ibn Khallikān, vol. i. p. 45.

is none to be found among our Christian associates except that he is pleased with you.”¹

As has preceded in earlier parts of this series, Christians received justice, moderation and tolerance from the Muslims, and they recognised the role of Muslim scholars in encouraging and admonishing their rulers to abide by justice and fairness. This was after they had faced centuries of persecution from their co-religionists, as Christians had been torn apart by religious dogmas and controversies and were slaughtering and oppressing each other.

Islām literally saved them from self-destruction and brought them security, justice and even invigoration.

The funeral of Imām Aḥmad was attended by close to 900,000 people and this had a deep impact on Jews, Christians and Magians who were subjects under Muslim rule, enjoying its justice and moderation. Seeing the effect of belief in the Divine Unicity (Tawhīd) and the Qur’ān upon the character of the Muslims, tens of thousands accepted Islām, willingly, without compulsion.

1 In the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad (p. 79) with checking of Aḥmad Shākir.

What Attracted Christians to Islām and Led Them to Conversion



Arnold writes:¹ “While there was so much in the Christian society of the time to repel, there was much in the character and life of the [Muslim] Turks to attract, and the superiority of the early Ottomans as compared with the degradation of the guides and teachers of the Christian Church would naturally impress devout minds that revolted from the selfish ambition, simony and corruption of the Greek ecclesiastics.

Christian writers constantly praise these [Muslim] Turks for the earnestness and intensity of their religious life; their zeal in the performance of the observances prescribed by their faith; the outward decency and modesty displayed in their apparel and mode of living; the absence of ostentatious display and the simplicity of life observable even in the great and powerful.²

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 169-171.

2 *Turchicæ Spurcitæ Suggillatio*, fol. xiii. (b); fol. xv. (b); fol. xvii. (b); fol. xx. (a). Veniero, pp. 32, 36. Busbecq, p. 174.

The annalist of the embassy from the Emperor Leopold I to the Ottoman Porte in 1665-1666, especially eulogises the devoutness and regularity of the Turks in prayer...

Many a tribute of praise is given to the virtues of the Turks even by Christian writers who bore them no love ; one such [Alexander Ross] who had a very poor opinion of their religion, speaks of them as follows:

‘Even in ... Alcoran you shall find some jewels of Christian Virtues; and indeed if Christians will but diligently read and observe the Laws and Histories of the Mahometans, **they may blush to see how zealous they are in the works of devotion, piety, and charity, how devout, cleanly, and reverend in their Mosques, how obedient to their Priest, that even the great Turk himself will attempt nothing without consulting his Mufti; how careful are they to observe their hours of prayer five times a day wherever they are, or however employed. How constantly do they observe their Fasts from morning till night a whole month together; how loving and charitable the Muslemans are to each other, and how careful of strangers may be seen by their Hospitals, both for the Poor and for Travellers; if we observe their Justice, Temperance, and other moral Vertues, we may truly blush at our own coldness, both in devotion and charity, at our injustice, intemperance, and oppression; doubtless these Men will rise up in judgment against us; and surely their**

devotion, piety and works of mercy are main causes of the growth of Mahometism.¹

The same conclusion is drawn by a modern historian, who writes: ‘We find that many Greeks of high talent and moral character were so sensible of the superiority of the Mohammedans, that even when they escaped being drafted into the Sultan’s household as tribute-children, they voluntarily embraced the faith of Muhammad. **The moral superiority of Othoman society must be allowed to have had as much weight in causing these conversions, which were numerous in the fifteenth century, as the personal ambition of individuals.**’”

Comment:

There is no doubt that in history fanatical Christians showed disdain for Islām and its adherents based upon either pride and arrogance or misconceptions. However, this did not prevent them from being truthful about observed realities which could not be denied by the senses.

As you can see from some of the quotes above, Islām-haters of the past had the decency to be truthful and just about the tremendous good they saw from Muslims, despite their hate and religious fanaticism.

1 Alexander Ross, p. ix.

This shows the difference between Christians of the past (and no doubt there are many like this that still exist today) and the dishonest and fraudulent, such as Tommy Robinson and the unintelligent riff-raff of the EDL, Britain First and others posing as Christians, trying to incite their crusade.

They compare not to those hateful Christians for whom at least some respect can be given if only for the virtue of truthfulness in speech regarding the matter at hand. What is enraging them is that educated Christian people [the majority of them women too] are accepting Islām precisely because of the reasons given in the quote from Alexander Ross. Go and read it one more time.

So what they are doing is using the actions of sinful, evil Muslim criminals [which Islām condemns and for which it specifies capital punishment] to spread lies about Islām and Muslims as a means of hindering others from learning about Islām objectively, out of pure envy, jealousy and hate, all concealed under the alleged banner of opposing and fighting radical Islām.

The Spread of Islām to Persia: Zoroastrians Welcome Muslims as Deliverers from Tyranny



Arnold writes:¹ “In order to follow the course of the spread of Islam westward into Central Asia, we must retrace our steps to the period of the first Arab conquests.

By the middle of the seventh century, the great dynasty of the Sāsānids had fallen, and the vast empire of Persia that for four centuries had withstood the might of Rome and Byzantium, now became the heritage of the Muslims.

When the armies of the state had been routed, the mass of the people offered little resistance; the reigns of the last representatives of the Sāsānid dynasty had been marked by terrible anarchy, and the sympathies of the people had been further alienated from their rulers on account of the support they gave to the persecuting policy of the state religion of Zoroastrianism.

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 206-210.

The Zoroastrian priests had acquired an enormous influence in the state; they were well-nigh all-powerful in the councils of the king and arrogated to themselves a very large share in the civil administration. They took advantage of their position to persecute all those religious bodies—and they were many)—that dissented from them. Besides the numerous adherents of older forms of the Persian religion, there were Christians, Jews, Sabæans and numerous sects in which the speculations of Gnostics, Manichæans and Buddhists found expression.

In all of these, persecution had stirred up feelings of bitter hatred against the established religion and the dynasty that supported its oppressions, and so caused the Arab conquest to appear in the light of a deliverance.¹ The followers of all these varied forms of faith could breathe again under a rule that granted them religious freedom and exemption from military service, on payment of a light tribute...

To the distracted Christian Church in Persia the change of government brought relief from the oppression of the Sāsānid kings, who had fomented the bitter struggles of Jacobites and Nestorians and added to the confusion of warring sects.

1 *Caetani*, vol. ii. pp. 910-11. A. de Gobineau (1), pp. 55-6.

Some reference has already been made to earlier persecutions, and even during the expiring agony of the Sāsānid dynasty, Khusrau II, exasperated at the defeat he had suffered at the hands of the Christian emperor, Heraclius, ordered a fresh persecution of the Christians within his dominions, a persecution from which all the various Christian sects alike had to suffer.

These terrible conditions may well have prepared men's minds for that revulsion of feeling that facilitates a change of faith. 'Side by side with the political chaos in the state was the moral confusion that filled the minds of the Christians; distracted by such an accumulation of disasters and by the moral agony wrought by the furious conflict of so many warring doctrines among them, they tended towards that peculiar frame of mind in which a new doctrine finds it easy to take root, making a clean sweep of such a bewildering babel and striving to reconstruct faith and society on a new basis.

In other words the people of Persia, and especially the Semitic races, were just in the very mental condition calculated to make them welcome the Islamic revolution and urge them on to enthusiastically embrace the new and rugged creed, which with its complete and virile simplicity swept away at one stroke all those dark mists, opened the soul to new, alluring and tangible hopes, and promised

immediate release from a miserable state of servitude.¹ But the Muslim creed was most eagerly welcomed by the townsfolk, the industrial classes and the artisans, whose occupations made them impure according to the Zoroastrian creed, because in the pursuance of their trade or occupations they defiled fire, earth or water, and who thus, outcasts in the eyes of the law and treated with scant consideration in consequence, embraced with eagerness a creed that made them at once free men, and equal in a brotherhood of faith.²

Nor were the conversions from Zoroastrianism itself less striking: the fabric of the National Church had fallen with a crash in the general ruin of the dynasty that had before upheld it; having no other centre round which to rally, the followers of this creed would find the transition to Islam a simple and easy one, owing to the numerous points of similarity in the old creed and the new...

That this widespread conversion was not due to force or violence is evidenced by the toleration extended to those who still clung to their ancient faith. Even to the present day there are some small communities of fire-worshippers to be found in certain districts of Persia, and though these have in later

1 Caetani, vol. ii. p. 910.

2 A de Gobineau (2), pp. 306-10.

years often had to suffer persecution,¹ their ancestors in the early centuries of the Hijrah enjoyed a remarkable degree of toleration, their fire-temples were respected, and we even read of a Muhammadan general (in the reign of al-Mu'tasim, A.D. 833-842), who ordered an imām and a mu'adhdhin to be flogged because they had destroyed a fire-temple in Sughd and built a mosque in its place.²

In the tenth century, three centuries after the conquest of the country, fire-temples were to be found in 'Irāq, Fārs, Kirmān, Sijistān, Khurāsān, Jibāl, Ādharbayjān and Arrān, i.e. in almost every province of Persia.³ In Fārs itself there were hardly any cities or districts in which fire-temples and Magians were not to be found.⁴ Al-Sharastānī also (writing as late as the twelfth century), makes mention of a fire-temple at Isfīniyā, in the neighbourhood of Baghdād itself.⁵

1 Dosabhai Framji Karaka: *History of the Parsis*, vol. i. pp. 56-9, 62-7. (London, 1884.). Nicolas de Khanikoff says that there were 12,000 families of fire-worshippers in Kirmān at the end of the 18th century. (*Mémoire sur la partie méridionale de l'Asie centrale*, p. 193. Paris, 1861.)

2 Chwolsohn, vol. i. p. 287.

3 Mas'ūdī, vol. iv. p. 86.

4 Ištakhrī, pp. 100, 118. Ibn Ḥawqal, pp. 189-190.

5 *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, edited by Cureton, part i. p. 198.

In the face of such facts, it is surely impossible to attribute the decay of Zoroastrianism entirely to violent conversions made by the Muslim conquerors.

The number of Persians who embraced Islam in the early days of the Arab rule was probably very large from the various reasons given above, but the late survival of their ancient faith and the occasional record of conversions in the course of successive centuries, render it probable that the acceptance of Islam was both peaceful and voluntary.”

The Spread of Islām to Spain: Warmly Welcomed by Persecuted Jews, Down-Trodden Slaves and Social Classes



Arnold writes:¹ “In 711 the victorious Arabs introduced Islam into Spain: in 1502 an edict of Ferdinand and Isabella forbade the exercise of the Muhammadan religion throughout the kingdom.

During the centuries that elapsed between these two dates, Muslim Spain had written one of the brightest pages in the history of medieval Europe.

Her [i.e. Islam] influence had passed through Provence into the other countries of Europe, bringing into birth a new poetry and a new culture, and it was from her that Christian scholars received what of Greek philosophy and science they had to stimulate their mental activity up to the time of the Renaissance.

1 *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, pp. 131-133, 136-139, 144.

But these triumphs of the civilised life—art and poetry, science and philosophy—we must pass over here and fix our attention on the religious condition of Spain under the Muslim rule.

When the Muhammadans first brought their religion into Spain they found Catholic Christianity firmly established after its conquest over Arianism. The sixth Council of Toledo had enacted that all kings were to swear that they would not suffer the exercise of any other religion but the Catholic, and would vigorously enforce the law against all dissentients, while a subsequent law forbade any one under pain of confiscation of his property and perpetual imprisonment, to call in question the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Evangelical Institutions, the definitions of the Fathers, the decrees of the Church, and the Holy Sacraments.

The clergy had gained for their order a preponderating influence in the affairs of the state;¹ the bishops and chief ecclesiastics sat in the national councils, which met to settle the most important business of the realm, ratified the election of the king and claimed the right to depose him if he refused to abide by their decrees.

1 Baudissin, p. 22.

The Christian clergy took advantage of their power to persecute the Jews, who formed a very large community in Spain; edicts of a brutally severe character were passed against such as refused to be baptised;¹ and they consequently hailed the invading Arabs as their deliverers from such cruel oppression, they garrisoned the captured cities on behalf of the conqueror and opened the gates of towns that were being besieged.²

The Muhammadans received as warm a welcome from the slaves, whose condition under the Gothic rule was a very miserable one, and whose knowledge of Christianity was too superficial to have any weight when compared with the liberty and numerous advantages they gained, by throwing in their lot with the Muslims.

These down-trodden slaves were the first converts to Islam in Spain. The remnants of the heathen population of which we find mention as late as A.D. 693,³ probably followed their example. Many of the Christian nobles, also, whether from genuine conviction or from other motives, embraced the new creed.⁴

1 Helfferich, p. 68.

2 Makkarī, vol. i. pp. 280-2.

3 Baudissin, p. 7.

4 Dozy (2), tome ii. pp. 45-6.

Many converts were won, too, from the lower and middle classes, who may well have embraced Islam, not merely outwardly, but from genuine conviction, turning to it from a religion whose ministers had left them ill-instructed and uncared for, and busied with worldly ambitions had plundered and oppressed their flocks.¹

Having once become Muslims, these Spanish converts showed themselves zealous adherents of their adopted faith, and they and their children joined themselves to the Puritan party of the rigid Muhammadan theologians as against the careless and luxurious life of the Arab aristocracy.²

At the time of the Muhammadan conquest the old Gothic virtues are said by Christian historians to have declined and given place to effeminacy and corruption, so that the Muhammadan rule appeared to them to be a punishment sent from God on those who had gone astray into the paths of vice...³

The toleration of the Muhammadan government towards its Christian subjects in Spain and the freedom of intercourse between the adherents of the two religions brought about a certain amount of assimilation in the two communities.

1 A. Müller, vol. ii. p. 463.

2 Dozy (2), tome ii. pp. 44-6.

3 So St. Boniface (A.D. 745, Epist. lxii.). (pp. 531-2).

Inter-marriages became frequent;¹ Isidore of Beja, who fiercely inveighs against the Muslim conquerors, records the marriage of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the son of Mūsā, with the widow of King Roderic, without a word of blame.²

Many of the Christians adopted Arab names, and in outward observances imitated to some extent their Muhammadan neighbours, e.g. many were circumcised,³ and in matters of food and drink followed the practice of the “unbaptized pagans...”⁴

From such close intercourse with the Muslims and so diligent a study of their literature—when we find even so bigoted an opponent of Islam as Alvar⁵ acknowledging that the Qur’ān was composed in such eloquent and beautiful language that even Christians could not help reading and admiring it...

What deep roots Islam had struck in the hearts of the Spanish people may be judged from the fact that when the last remnant of the Moriscoes was expelled from Spain in 1610, these

1 See the letter of Pope Hadrian I to the Spanish bishops: (Migne: Patr. Lat., tome xcvi. p. 385.)

2 Isidori Pacensis Chronicon, § 42 (p. 1266).

3 Alvar: Indic. Lum., § 35 (p. 53). John of Gorz, § 123 (p. 303).

4 Letter of Hadrian I, p. 385. John of Gorz, § 123 (p. 303).

5 Alvar: Ind. Lum.. § 29. (Migne: Patr. Lat., tome cxxi. p. 546.)

unfortunate people still clung to the faith of their fathers, although for more than a century they had been forced to outwardly conform to the Christian religion, and in spite of the emigrations that had taken place since the fall of Granada, nearly 500,000 are said to have been expelled at that time.¹ Whole towns and villages were deserted and the houses fell into ruins, there being no one to rebuild them.²

These Moriscoes were probably all descendants of the original inhabitants of the country, with little or no admixture of Arab blood; the reasons that may be adduced in support of this statement are too lengthy to be given here; **one point only in the evidence may be mentioned, derived from a letter written in 1311, in which it is stated that of the 200,000 Muhammadans then living in the city of Granada, not more than 500 were of Arab descent, all the rest being descendants of converted Spaniards.**³

1 Lea, *The Moriscos*, p. 259.

2 Morgan, vol. ii. p. 337.

3 Id. p. 289.

Conclusion



What has preceded are only some examples from Arnold's book and there are hundreds more that could be extracted from other non-Muslim sources.

The intent behind them is to show that the pillars, commands and prohibitions of Islām and its morality and ethics have been shown to nurture human character to a level of perfection that is — even if unwillingly — recognised by enemies and foes, even in the midst of conflict and war, and whose factual realities, even the most bigoted and hateful cannot dismiss.

It is from this angle that one can appreciate why Islām is winning large numbers and rapidly growing through conversions, despite all the immense negativity.

Those who interact with devout, upright Muslims who are upon an orthodox understanding of Islām find great disparity between how Muslims are presented in the media and what they have directly learned and personally experienced with Muslims.

It is important to note that not all Muslim individuals, societies, rulers or governments may exhibit the types of ethics and qualities which have been exemplified above. To take drug-dealers, pimps, groomers, murderers, oppressors, extremists, terrorists, the injustices of localised cultural traditions and bad leaders as examples of what Islām is and what it calls to is from profound ignorance or pure dishonesty.

May peace and blessings be upon the Prophets and Messengers of Allāh, and upon Muḥammad, his family and Companions.

The Preaching of Islam

There is no moral and behavioural code which draws out perfection in human character in a more complete way than the code of Islām. If Muslims were to truly act upon this guidance, they would receive recognition and praise, as they often did in past centuries, when even warring enemies had to concede their moral and ethical superiority.

Sir Thomas Walker Arnold (d. 1930) was a knighted British Orientalist scholar and historian of Islamic Art who wrote a book titled *The Preaching of Islam* documenting the spread of Islām across the East and West. Drawing upon hundreds of resources written in more than ten languages, including those from centres of Orientalist studies such as Holland, Arnold provides a picture different from that of modern loons and rabid Islām haters.

In this treatise we provide numerous excerpts showing how the moral excellence and impeccable character of Muslims, alongside their justice, led them to be welcomed by oppressed minorities and adherents of other religions, from the Jews, Christians and Magians.



— Abū 'Iyaad —
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