

Peace AND JUSTICE

PART 2

by Dr Jamal Badawi

Study
Guide



AL HIDAAYAH

الهداية

The Guidance for Humanity

Based on the Glorious Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

From the series:

**PEACE AND
JUSTICE**

COURSE OUTLINE



COURSE TOPICS

1. Common flaws committed while understanding the Qur'an
2. Basic rules of the interpretation of the Qur'an
3. The Muhkamaat and the Mutashaabihaat
4. Sanctity of human life in Islam
5. Interpreting 'Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them' – I
6. Interpreting 'Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them' – II
7. Does the Qur'an permit to kill all the Mushriks of Arabia?
8. Interpreting 'When you meet the Unbelievers, smite at their necks'
9. Was Islam spread by the sword?
10. Interpreting 'Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day'
11. Historical context behind the mention of the 'People of the Book' in Al Qur'an 9:29
12. Interpreting 'Fight the unbelievers who gird you...'
13. What is the concept of Jizyah?

COURSE OUTLINE



COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understanding the correct method of interpreting the verses of the Qur'an
2. Understanding the correct interpretation of the various verses of the Qur'an which have been misinterpreted by the Islamophobes
3. Realising the sanctity of human life in Islam

QUESTION & ANSWER BUCKET

TRANSCRIPTS

ASSESSMENT

Multiple Choice Questions
Match the Columns
True or False

COURSE DURATION

Video	-	2 hours 20 min
Study Guide	-	45 min
Assessment	-	10 min
Total Duration	-	3 hours 15 min



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LESSON 1

INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN



1

COMMON FLAWS COMMITTED WHILE UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN

One cannot take any scripture and pass judgements upon it without following the proper rules of interpretation, therefore some of the common flaws while understanding the interpretation of the Qur'an are –

- i** Making no distinction between the text of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and opinion by jurists.

It is important to understand that one needs to make a distinction between the primary revelatory sources of Islam (Qur'an and Sunnah) and the secondary sources of Islam (opinions of jurists and scholars etc).



The Qur'an is the highest authority of revelation in Islam because of its authenticity and being the verbatim revelation of Allah (swt) revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through angel Jibreel (pbuh).

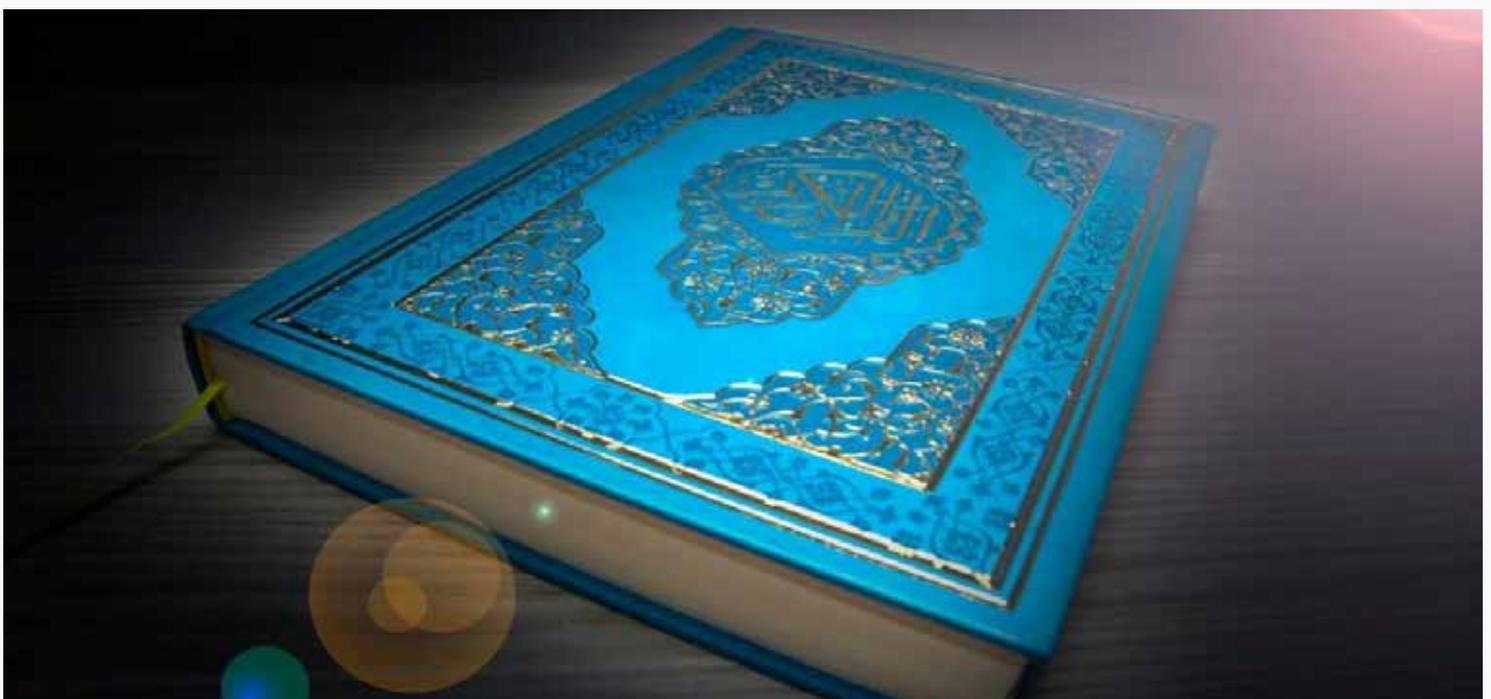
While the Sunnah is referred to the words, actions, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), it varies in its degrees of authenticity because it is only a revelation in meaning.

Allah (swt) inspired the Prophet (pbuh) to utter these words, but the words of the Sunnah are of the Prophet (pbuh).

ii Opinions of the scholars are not infallible

It is important to understand that the opinions and interpretations made by scholars can vary from time to time, and sometimes, even the same scholar may change his opinion about a certain issue depending upon the time and place.

The scholars of Usool (Islamic legal theory or the methodology of interpretation) say that a Fatwa (religious opinion) may change with the change of place, time, customs, and historical circumstances.





BASIC RULES OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN

2

Some of the basic rules and issues to be kept in mind relating to the rules of interpretation of the Qur'an are –

i Importance of understanding the language of the Qur'an

Generally, the attacks on the Qur'an and Islam are done by those who don't really understand the language of the Qur'an.

They argue based on the interpretation of another individual or a random copy of the translations of the meaning of the Qur'an.



ii Understanding the contextual meaning and translation of a word

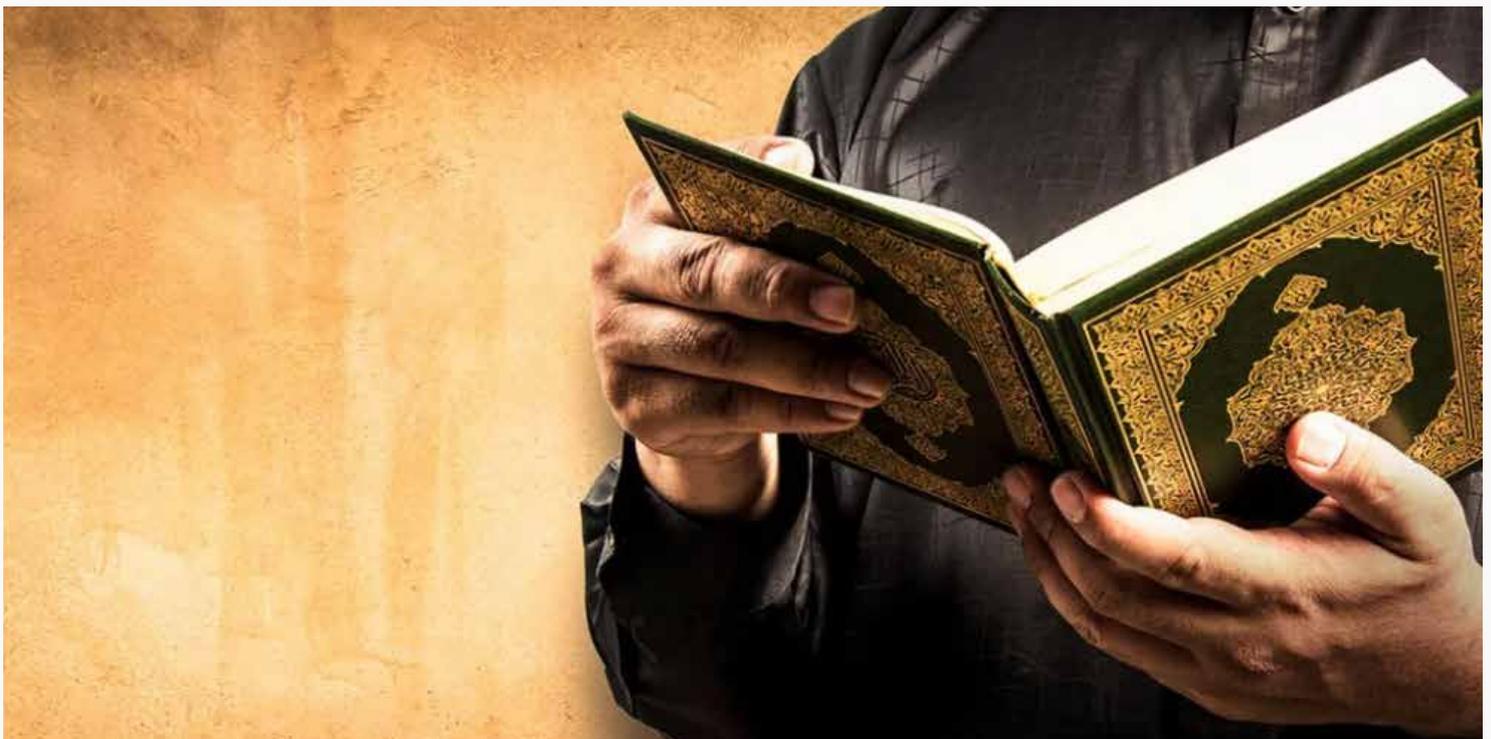
Though a word may be translated correctly, it is important to understand its meaning based on the context it is used in, and not just its literal meaning.

iii A general word may be used in a specific sense

It is also important to know that often a general term is used in the Qur'an, but it is meant for a specific group and a specific term is used but meant for the general people.

iv Understanding the rule of contextual context

The rule of contextual context refers to the Qur'an explaining itself because unlike other books, it is not organised by topics and chapters. Rather it has its own unique presentation where it blends variety of topics to make a particular point.





v Understanding the Qur'an as an interactive scripture

It is important to understand that not everything in the Qur'an was in response to a question posed or issue that arose in the Muslim community, but rather there are definitely some important and key verses in the Qur'an that are interactive.

vi Understanding the reason of revelation of a particular verse

If one does not have the knowledge about the occasion or reasoning of revelation, it would lead to making interpretations without knowledge and leading away from the true meaning of the verses in the Qur'an.





3

THE MUHKAMAAT AND THE MUTASHAABIHAAT

The Muhkamaat and the Mutashaabihaat are very important issues in the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an.



“In it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical.”

Al Qur'an 3:7

Muhkamaat are the clear-cut verses that deal with the basic foundations of faith like the oneness of Allah (swt), belief in the prophets and the revelations, etc.



The verses related to such issues are clear, precise, and easy to understand with no doubt in their interpretation because they are related to the foundations of one's belief.

The Mutashaabihaat are those verses which are understood depending upon its contextual situation and can be interpreted in more than one way, which may not necessarily be contradictory to each other.





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LESSON 2

'THE VERSE OF THE SWORD'

PART 1



4

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE IN ISLAM

Many non-Muslims twist the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an and try to prove that it has no respect for human life and encourages the killing of non-Muslims.



"On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people."

Al Qur'an 5:32



“Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error.”

Al Qur’an 2:256

The verses of the Qur’an very clearly mention the importance and sanctity of human life in Islam.

In fact, the sanctity of human life in Islam is such that Islam prescribes one to act with justice even if it goes against your own interests or that of your close kin.



“O you who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do.”

Al Qur’an 5:8

And (Al Qur’an 2:190-194) further makes it clear that the only two justifications for using force to achieve peace and justice (if it cannot be achieved otherwise) are unprovoked aggression against you or severe oppression.



5

INTERPRETING 'FIGHT AND SLAY THE PAGANS WHEREVER YOU FIND THEM' – I



"Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them."

Al Qur'an 9:5

Oftentimes, the above verse as quoted above is selectively taken out of context and not quoted in full to give a sense that the Qur'an and Islam promote violence and killing of non-Muslims.



- i Many often deliberately try to distort the interpretation by partly quoting the verse in question rather than quoting it in full and with complete context.

They quote the verse from 'kill the unbelievers' even though the actual verse begins with 'But when the forbidden months are past, kill the unbelievers wherever you find them' because if the attention of any truth-seeking non-Muslims drawn towards it, he/she would want to know the context of the verses and the reason for its revelation, which would lead them to discover something contrary to what the Islamophobes are trying to prove.

- ii Including the Jews and the Christians in the explanation of the term Mushriken shows the lack of knowledge of such interpreters.



“Those who reject (Truth), among the People of the Book and among the Polytheists, were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them Clear Evidence.”

Al Qur'an 98:1

The Qur'an divides those who reject Islam into two distinct groups, the Ahlul Kitab (includes the Jews and Christians) and the Mushriks (polytheists).



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LESSON 3

'THE VERSE OF THE SWORD'

PART 2



6

INTERPRETING 'FIGHT AND SLAY THE PAGANS WHEREVER YOU FIND THEM' – II



“Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them.”

Al Qur'an 9:5

- iii The meaning of the term 'Mushrik' from a religious perspective means to associate others in the exclusive worship of Allah (swt) and in His divine attributes.

However, when read in context, the term actually refers to the conflict between the Muslim community and the idolatrous Arabs at that particular time.



Therefore, when the verses in the Qur'an deal with some historical event as in the above verse, the term 'Mushrikeen' does not refer to those who associate others with Allah (swt), but rather refers to the idolatrous Arabs who committed acts of aggression against the Muslims to stem the progress of Islam.

- iv If Islam calls for indiscriminate killing of non-Muslims, how was it possible for minorities to live and thrive under the Muslim rule without any fear or aggression against them.
- v Also, the ruling that Islam has permitted Muslims to marry Jews and Christians under certain conditions would be contradictory if such an interpretation of the above verse would have been correct.
- vi The Prophet (pbuh) established and protected the rights of minorities.

He (pbuh) said that that anyone who hurts a covenanted person living under Muslim protection or takes away anything from him against his will, he has hurt the Prophet (pbuh), and anyone who offends him, is offending God Himself.





7

DOES THE QUR'AN PERMIT TO KILL ALL THE MUSHRIKS OF ARABIA?

Though the Qur'an in (Al Qur'an 9:5) speaks about killing and fighting against the Mushriks, however when read in context from verse 1 to 14, the Qur'an has made several exceptions about fighting against the Mushriks.

i



“(But the treaties are) not dissolved with those Pagans with whom you have entered into alliance and who have not subsequently failed you in aught, nor aided any one against you. So fulfil your engagements with them to the end of their term: for Allah loves the righteous.”

Al Qur'an 9:4



ii



“Except those with whom you made a treaty near the sacred Mosque? As long as these stand true to you, stand you true to them.”

Al Qur’an 9:7

iii

When the Qur’an mentions ‘kill the Mushrikeen’, it is not because of their religion but rather refers to the aggressive Mushrikeen who committed war crimes and unjustified bloodshed against the Muslims.

iv

In fact, the Muslims are permitted to fight against other Muslims if either of them is aggressing against the other.



“If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make you peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah.”

Al Qur’an 49:9





V



“In a Believer they respect not the ties either of kinship or of covenant! It is they who have transgressed all bounds.”

Al Qur’an 9:10

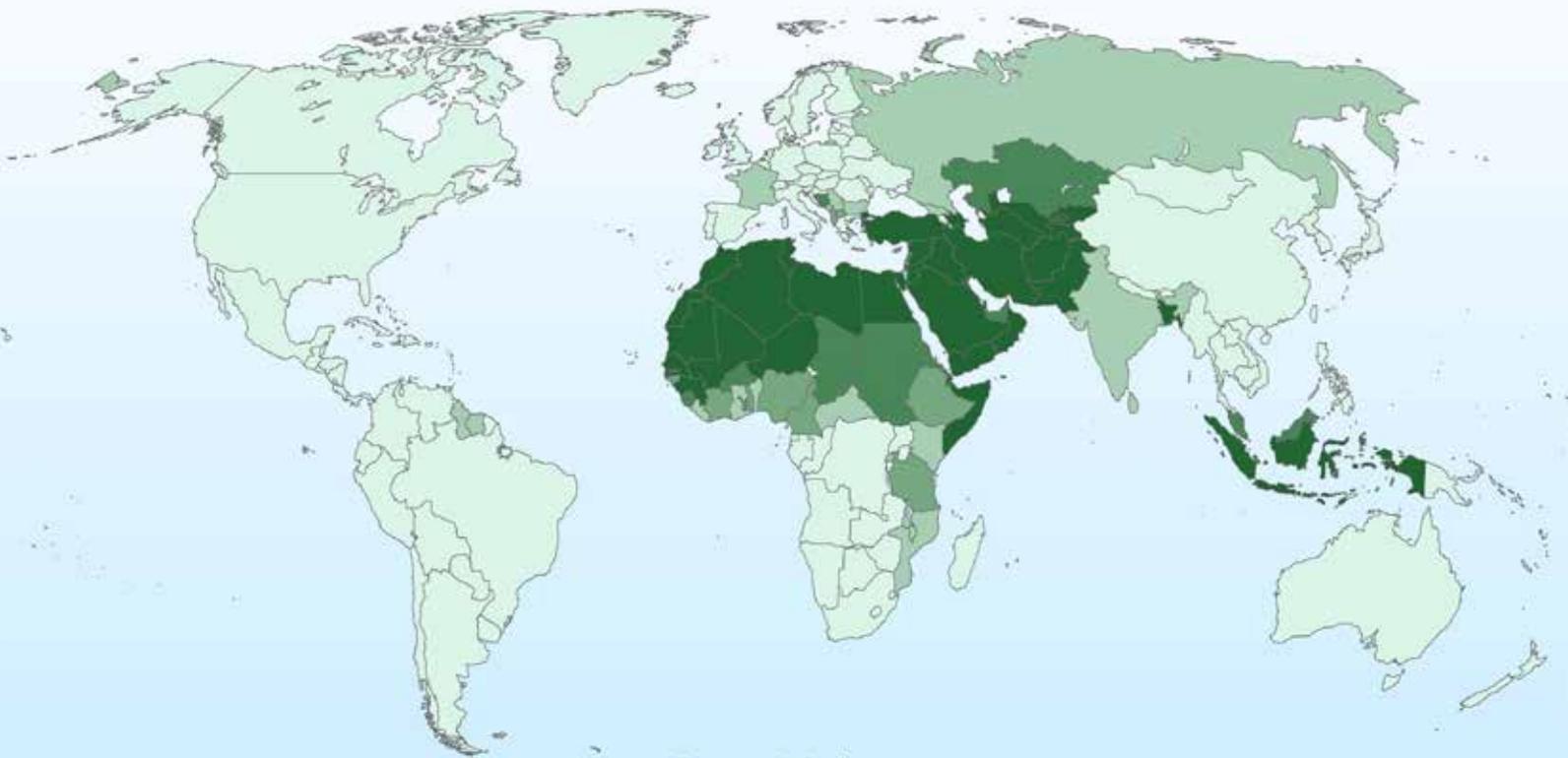


“Will you not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger, and took the aggressive by being the first (to assault) you?”

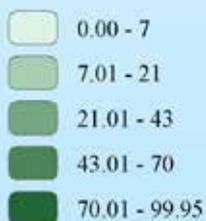
Al Qur’an 9:13

After understanding the exceptions and knowing the basics to interpreting the verses of the Qur’an, any reasonable person who reads the verse (Al Qur’an 9:5) in its entire context would realise that it was revealed in response to the aggression of the Arabs against the Muslims in Makkah by harassing them, taking away their properties, and torturing to death in some cases without having any regard for Allah (kinship) or Zimmah (covenant/ treaty).





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LESSON 4

WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD?



8

INTERPRETING 'WHEN YOU MEET THE UNBELIEVERS, SMITE AT THEIR NECKS'



"When you meet the Unbelievers, smite at their necks."

Al Qur'an 47:4

They claim that the word 'unbelievers' in the above verse is common for all non-Muslims including the Jews and Christians.

Such an explanation is a total disregard to the basic preliminary rules of interpretation and portrays Islam as so superficial that it gives the Muslims a free license to go around killing non-Muslims.



However, if one takes into consideration of the context of the verses before and after the verse in question, any person will easily realise that the verses are in the context of a battlefield, and defence against aggression is a basic human right.

There is even further evidence to prove that the above context is not an apologetic interpretation because the further verses speak about war prisoners and how one should deal with them.



"If you have captors of war, either you release them out of kindness and charity or ransom them."

Al Qur'an 47:4





9

WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD?



"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good)."

Al Qur'an 3:85

Many Islamophobes quote the above verse trying to prove that Islam came to remove the existence of all other religions.

However, when the Qur'an speaks about Islam as the only acceptable religion in the sight of Allah, it is a statement of theological truth accepted by Muslims and not meant as a statement of aggression against others.



Also, when the Qur'an speaks about the punishment in the Hereafter for those who reject the monotheistic faiths, it refers to Allah (swt) not accepting it of him/her in the Hereafter and has no connection with the acceptance or rejection of it by humans in this world.

In fact, when it comes to the consequences of belief or unbelief, every religion has some theological truths and a similar approach towards its unbelievers in the Hereafter, and that cannot be seen as a justification for them to kill the followers of the other religions.



"It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it)."

Al Qur'an 9:33

The Arabic word 'Yuzhirahoo' means prevail in the sense of its innate inherent truth and not military prevailing because it would be against the Muslim belief as the Qur'an prohibits coercion of people for accepting Islam.





Explaining it as a military prevailing would be contradictory because there have been many instances through history wherein Muslims have lost power and have not been in the prevailing state militarily or politically, and yet Islam continued to spread rapidly through the world.

So, the only fact that one can understand that was consistent throughout history is that it prevailed in terms of its attraction of the truth inherent into it.

Though there might be minor and occasional periods of intolerance. Sir Thomas Arnold, after analysing the spread of Islam in various regions in the world, in his book 'Preaching of Islam' points out that the spread of Islam has been through two major forces – trade and preaching.

The only occasions wherein the sword was used was not for fighting against the people, but for fighting against the tyrannical superpowers of the time, the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanid or Persian Empire.

In fact, Islam gave legal protection for minorities in matters of personal laws like marriage, divorce, custody of the children, division of the property etc. It even gave them the freedom of following their own religions and visiting their places of worship.





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LESSON 5

PEACE AND JUSTICE

PART 11



10

INTERPRETING 'FIGHT THOSE WHO BELIEVE NOT IN ALLAH NOR THE LAST DAY'



"Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

Al Qur'an 9:29

Generalisation of the above verse without any limitation gives an incorrect explanation that Muslims are supposed to constantly fight the Jews and Christians at all times and in all places.



This does not make sense as the above explanation goes against the basic message of peace and harmony that Islam preaches.

Dealing with an important rule of the Islamic legal theory, "Al 'Aam Allazi Yuraadu Bihil Khaas" (a general term that is meant for a specific subset based upon the evidence relating to it).

For example, the term 'An Naas' in literal terms refers to humankind as mentioned in Surah An Naas (Al Qur'an 114), however when the same term is used in:



"Men said to them: 'A great army is gathering against you': And frightened them."

Al Qur'an 3:173

Looking at the context and evidence it refers to only a specific subset of people present at that time.

Therefore, for interpreting a verse of the Qur'an, one must rationally look into its historical and textual context and understand what it wishes to convey.

The above verse in Al Qur'an 9:29 is dealing with the situation of warfare and self-defence without any specific relation to the People of the Book.



11

HISTORICAL CONTEXT BEHIND THE MENTION OF THE 'PEOPLE OF THE BOOK' IN AL QUR'AN 9:29

Looking at the historical context, the verse mentions the 'People of the Book' because they were the superpowers of that particular time, the Byzantine empire and the Roman empire.

When the Prophet (pbuh) sent out letters of invitation to Islam, the Persian emperor out of aggression, arrogance, and pride demeaned the Prophet (pbuh)'s message and said: "Does he dare write that to me and he's my slave servant?" Also, the Roman empire and other People of the Book in Madinah tried to gang up against the Muslims and endanger their lives and peaceful existence by killing the envoys and messengers sent to them, killing the religious teachers sent by the Prophet (pbuh), etc.



“Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them.”

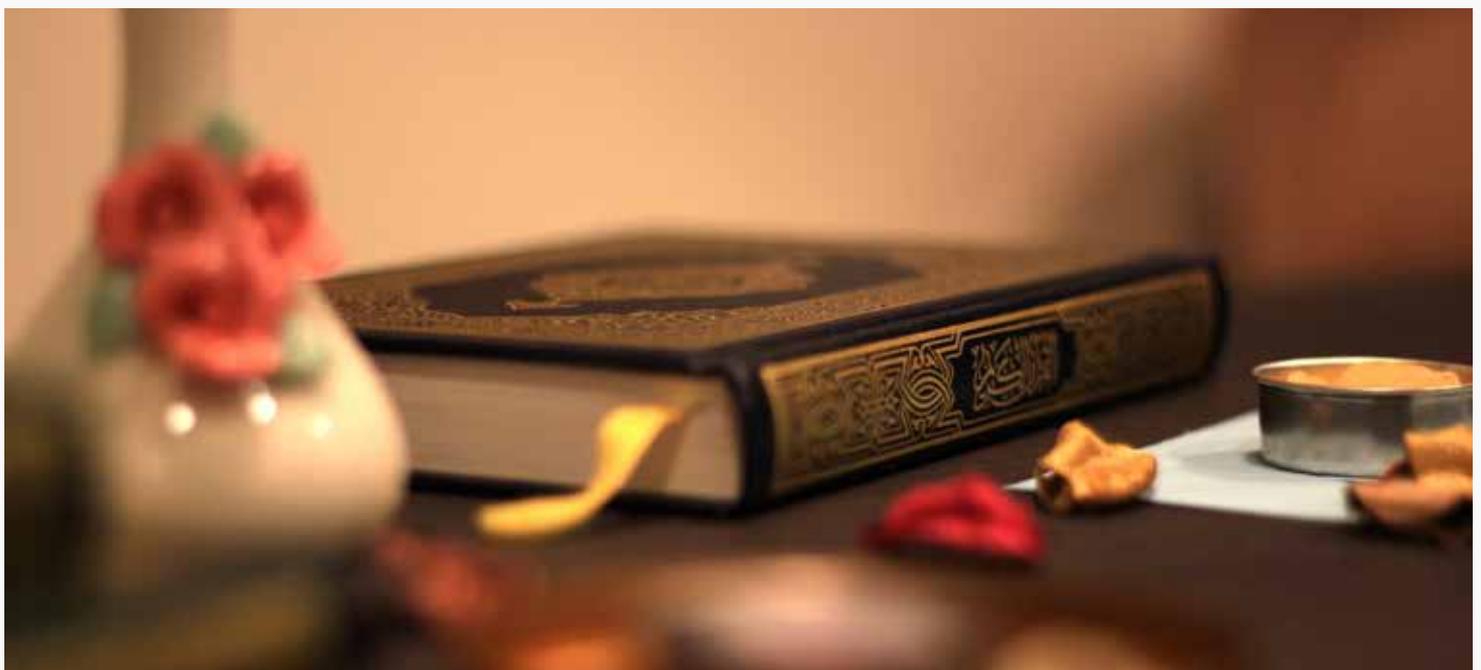
Al Qur'an 60:8

In fact, Islam preaches peaceful co-existence between the people of different religions and prohibits the Muslims from harming any person irrespective of their religious background, if they are not fighting them or oppressing them by taking away their rights.



“And dispute you not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury).”

Al Qur'an 29:46





There is no justification for anyone to claim that Islam preaches fighting against the Jews and Christians because of their religion because the Jews and the Christians believe in the same God that Muslim believe in.

Even though the Jews and Christians may not believe in Allah (swt) or the Hereafter, the above verse does not solely apply to them because it is a well-known rule in Islamic jurisprudence that the right of non-Muslims cannot be harassed or prevented for a certain thing if they believe it as permissible to them even though Islam forbids it.

In fact, Islam has mandated rules like if a Muslim breaks a jar of wine of another Muslim, he has no right to ask for compensation because wine is Haraam (prohibited) for both the parties, but if the same has occurred with a non-Muslim, he/she is entitled to compensation for the Muslim because it is not Haraam for them.



"Let there be no coercion in faith."

Al Qur'an 2:256



Say, "The truth is from your Lord": Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it)."

Al Qur'an 18:29

The above verses of the Qur'an prove that Islam never mandates aggression based on religion, but it is in response to the commission of aggression and crimes against the Muslims by others.

So, here again this verse is talking about the subset of the 'People of the Book' who showed enmity towards the Muslims and gathered armies to destroy them.



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LESSON 6

CONCEPT OF JIZYAH IN ISLAM



12

INTERPRETING 'FIGHT THE UNBELIEVERS WHO GIRD YOU...'



"O you who believe! fight the unbelievers who gird you about and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him."

Al Qur'an 9:123

On the superficial appearance, the above verse seems like sanctioning Muslims to fight against the tribes and nations that gird them about.

And through historical references, we know about the exploitation, suppression and overtaxing of people in countries like Egypt, which were invaded and made like plantations to help the Masters in the central Byzantine Empire.



Islam called for human equality and dignity and started the gradual process of abolishing the institution of slavery. It called for equality of human beings before Allah (swt) irrespective of their status as a King or a pauper.



Since the message of justice and equality in Islam was against the vested interests and agendas of people hiding behind their religions and acting as tyrants, they tried to misconstrue the teachings of Islam and try make it look a violent and terrorising religion all over the world.

And when the verses of the Qur'an speak about defending against the dangers threatening people, it refers to either a response to a previous aggression, or a current aggression, or an imminent danger which if not addressed would be a cause of difficulty in the coming times.



13

WHAT IS THE CONCEPT OF JIZYAH?

The Arabic term Jizyah comes from the word 'Jazaa', which means 'something in return for something'.

According to Islamic law, all citizens living under Muslim rule are entitled to the services of the state, also known as Social Security. In return for those services (policing, internal security, defence, etc), the non-Muslim is expected to pay Jizyah to the state under whose protection they reside in because one cannot only be entitled to services without the expectation of fulfilling the obligations expected of them because Muslims too are expected to pay 2.5% of their wealth in Zakaah every year upon the eligible assets.



It would be unfair upon the Muslims if they were obligated to pay the Zakaah, while the non-Muslims enjoyed the services of the state without any obligations because Zakaah isn't obligated upon them.

Some Islamophobes further claim that Jizyah is a sort of pressure tactic or a bribe for the non-Muslims to accept Islam and stop paying Jizyah.

But what they fail to realise is that their reasoning is irrational and non-sensical because in most cases, if a non-Muslim accepts Islam, he/she would be paying much more in Zakaah than the Jizyah amount.

Therefore, thrusting the obligation of Zakaah upon them even though they don't believe in it is not reasonable.

For example, during the reign of Umar (ra), some Arab tribes hated the word Jizyah, so Umar (ra) being sensitive towards their feelings renamed it as charity.





To further their agenda even more, some people try to misinterpret the word 'Saaghiroon' as humiliation in the context of Jizyah.

The words 'An Yadin' refers to one's power or ability, and in the context of Jizyah, the ability to pay the Jizyah because the basic position taken by Muslim jurists throughout history is that Jizyah is not obligated upon every individual, but rather only upon those who have the necessary means and power to pay it.



For example, Jizyah is not imposed upon the poor, old, and children.

Further, the word 'Saaghiroon' as used in the above context refers to one accepting the authority of the government in rules and regulations, as opposed to using it in its negative context which would refer to one being humiliated.



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QUESTION AND ANSWER BUCKET



HOW HAVE THE SCHOLARS DIVIDED THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD WITH RESPECT TO MUSLIMS?

Q1

Ans: The scholars have divided the world in three camps on the basis of their acceptance for Muslims –

- a** Darul Aman (Abode of Islam): Wherein the Muslims can practice their faith freely without intimidation or fear.
- b** Darul Harb (Abode of war): Wherein Muslims have not been accepted and are afraid for the safety for their life, wealth, and family.
- c** Darul Ahad (Abode of treaty): Wherein Muslims are allowed to practice their religion based on the conditions of the treaty between the Muslims and the non-Muslims.



Q2

WHAT ARE THE ASHHURUL HURUM?

Ans: The Ashhurul Hurum are the sacred months in the lunar calendar wherein it is forbidden to fight against any person or be hostile towards anyone. The months that fall under this are -

- a** Muharram
- b** Rajab
- c** Dhul Qa'dah
- d** Dhul Hijjah



Q3

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS THAT MUSLIMS ARE ALLOWED TO INDULGE IN WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK?

Ans: Among some legal aspects wherein Muslims are allowed to indulge in with the People of the Book but not with any other faiths are limited form of interfaith marriage and eat Kosher meat (i.e., the meat that has been slaughtered by them).

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