

The Sword of Islam

What is this "sword" that Islam was spread by?

The first few who embraced the "new" religion in Makkah in the Arabian Peninsula at the hands of the Prophet, were his wife Khadijah, his servant Zaid and his eleven year old cousin Ali. Among the ones who later joined this faith were the honest merchant, Abu Bakr; the iron man of Arabia, Umar the Great; the shy businessman, Uthman; the Prophet's brave uncle Hamza and a slave of a pagan, Bilal. They simply couldn't resist the MAGIC SWORD of a humble and lonely Prophet? The negligible minority of the believers in this new Faith was soon exiled from Makkah and they arrived in the city called Yathreb which later became known as MADINAH. The Muslim emigrants to Madinah brought their SWORD with them. The SWORD continued to work and its magnetic force continued to "pull" people towards it until the whole of Arabia joined the Faith. Compared to the population of the rest of the world at that time, the Arabs constituted a tiny minority. A fraction of this minority decided to take the SWORD beyond the boundaries of the Arabian desert to the mighty Mediterranean, the coast of Malabar and the far away East Indies Islands. People after people continued surrendering to this SWORD and joining the Faith.

So sharp was the edge of the SWORD! It simply conquered the hearts; bodies yielded automatically. It is the SWORD OF TRUTH, whose mere shine eliminates falsehood just like light wipes away darkness.

HAS THE SWORD GONE BLUNT? NO, FAR FROM IT.

It continues to pierce the hearts of countless men and women today – in spite of the relentless efforts by persons with vested interests who like darkness to prevail, so that they may rob people of their good things. Read below the impressions of some who were recently conquered by the same SWORD. They are from different countries, speak different languages and have different backgrounds.

1. LEOPOLD WEISS (now Mohammed Asad): Austrian statesman, journalist, former foreign correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, author of *Islam at Cross Roads* and *Road to Mecca* and translator of the Qur'an. He embraced Islam in 1926.

"Islam appears to me like a perfect work of Architecture. All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and support each other. Nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking, with the result of an absolute balance and solid composure."

2. AHMED HOLT: British Civil Contractor, traveler in search of the Divine truth, spent much of his time in research and comparative study of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He embraced Islam in 1975.

"The SWORD OF ISLAM is not the sword of steel. I know this by experience, because the sword of Islam struck deep into my own heart. It didn't bring death, but it brought a new life; it brought an awareness and it brought an awakening as to who am I and what am I and for what am I here."

3. BOGDAN KOPANSKI (now Bogdan Atallah Kopanski): originally Polish, now American; Ph.D. in history and politics, had a very interesting journey to Islam and faced severe hardships; was imprisoned twice by the Polish communist regime (1968, 1981-82). He embraced Islam in 1974.

"When I was 12 years old I rejected the illogical and contradictory faith of the Church. Two years later in 1962 I was fascinated by the victorious struggle of the Algerian Muslim mujahideen against French colonialism. It was the first arrow of Islam...The high school and earliest days of my education in the University, I was a typical example of the 'rebel generation' of Reds...My way to the Truth of Al-Qur'an was slow and unpaved... In 1974 I visited Turkey, I wrote my M.A. dissertation about Sultan and Caliph Suleiman Kanuni's policy towards the Polish Kingdom. There I was hit by the most beautiful voice of mankind, Adhan, the call to prayer. My hair stood up. An unknown, powerful force led me to an old masjid in Istanbul. There, old, smiling, Turkish bearded men taught me Wuzu, ablution. I

confessed to tears, Shahada, and I prayed my first Salah Maghrib...I swept out the rubbish ideologies...The first time in my life, my mind was relaxed and I felt the pleasure of Allah's love in my heart. I was a Muslim..."

4. VENGATACHALAM ADIYAR (now Abdullah Adiyar): Indian, noted Tamil writer and journalist; worked as a news editor in Dr. M. Karunanidhi's daily *Murasoli* for 17 years; assisted 3 former Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu. Received Kalaimamani Award (Big Gem of Arts) from Tamil Nadu Government in 1982. He embraced Islam in 1987.

"In Islam I found suitable replies to nagging queries arising in my mind with regard to the theory of creation, status of woman, creation of universe, etc. The life history of the holy Prophet attracted me very much and made easy for me to compare with other world leaders and their philosophies."

5. HERBERT HOB OHM (now Aman Hobohm): German diplomat, missionary and social worker. An intellectual who has been serving the German diplomatic missions in various parts of the world. Presently working as Cultural Attache in German Embassy in Riyadh. He embraced Islam in 1941.

"I have lived under different systems of life and have had the opportunity of studying various ideologies, but have come to the conclusion that none is as perfect as Islam. None of the systems has got a complete code of a noble life, Only Islam has it and that is why good men embrace it. Islam is not theoretical; it is practical. It means complete submission to the will of God."

6. CAT STEVENS (now Yusuf Islam): British; formerly a Christian and a world famous pop singer. He embraced Islam in 1973.

"It will be wrong to judge Islam in the light of the behavior of some bad Muslims who are always shown on the media. It is like judging a car as a bad one if the driver if the car is drunk and he bangs it into the wall. Islam guides all human beings in daily life – in it's spiritual, mental and physical dimensions. But we must find the sources of these instruction, the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet. Then we can see the ideal of Islam."

7. MARGARET MARCUS (now Maryam Jamilah): American; formerly a Jewess, essayist and author of many books. She embraced Islam in 1962.

"The authority of Islamic Morals and Laws proceeds from Almighty God. Pleasure and happiness in Islam are but the natural by-products of emotional satisfaction in one's duties conscientiously performed for the pleasure of God to achieve salvation. In Islam duties are always stressed above rights. Only in Islam was my quest for absolute values satisfied. Only in Islam did I at last find all that was true, good, beautiful and which gives meaning and direction to human life and death.

8. WILFRIED HOFMAN (now Murad Hoffman): Ph.D. in law (Harvard); German social scientist and diplomat; presently German Ambassador in Algeria. He embraced Islam in 1980.

"For some time now, striving for more and more precision and brevity, I have tried to put on paper in a systematic way, all philosophical truths, which in my view, can be ascertained beyond reasonable doubt. In the course of this effort it dawned on me that the typical attitude of an agnostic is not an intelligent one; that man simply cannot escape a decision to believe; that the createdness of what exists around us is obvious; that Islam undoubtedly finds itself in the greatest harmony with overall reality. Thus I realize, not without shock, that step by step, in spite of myself and almost unconsciously, in feeling and thinking I have grown into a Muslim. Only one last step remained to be taken: to formalize my conversion. As of today I am a Muslim. I have arrived."

9. CASSIUS CLAY (now Muhammad Ali): American; three times World Heavyweight Champion, formerly a Christian. He embraced Islam in 1965.

"I have had many nice moments in my life. But the feelings I had while standing on Mount Arafat on the day of Hajj (Muslims' pilgrimage), was the most unique. I felt exalted by the indescribable spiritual atmosphere there as over a million and a half pilgrims invoked God to forgive them of their sins and bestow on them His choicest blessings. It was an exhilarating experience to see to people belonging to different colors, races and nationalities, kings, heads of states and ordinary men from very poor countries all clad in two simple white sheets praying to God without any sense of either pride or inferiority. It was a practical manifestation of the concept of equality in Islam." (Speaking to the daily "*Al-Madinah*" Jeddah, 15 July, 1989)

These were the impressions of a few persons who had themselves been struck by the SWORD OF TRUTH, that is, the Message of Islam.

AS FOR THE PROPAGANDA THAT IT WAS THE SWORD OF STEEL, THAT IS, FORCE, WHICH WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE UNIVERSAL EXPANSION OF ISLAM, WE GIVE BELOW QUOTATIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF SOME OF THE PROMINENT NON-MUSLIM SCHOLARS AND LEADERS REFUTING THIS BASELESS ACCUSATION.

1. M. K. GANDHI: "...I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and his own mission. These, and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every trouble." *YOUNG INDIA*, 1924

2. EDWARD GIBBON: "The greatest success of Mohammed's life was effected by sheer moral force without the stroke of a sword." *HISTORY OF THE SARACEN EMPIRE*, London, 1870

3. A. S. TRITTON: "The picture of the Muslim soldier advancing with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other is quite false." *ISLAM*, London, 1951, p. 21

4. DE LACY O'LEARY: "History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslim, sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated." *ISLAM AT CROSSROADS*, London, 1923, p. 8

5. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO: "My problem to write this monograph is easier because we are not generally fed now on that (distorted) kind of history and much time need not be spent on pointing out our misrepresentations of Islam. The theory of Islam and sword, for instance, is not heard now in any quarter worth the name. The principle of Islam, there is no compulsion in religion, is well known." *MOHAMMED THE PROPHET OF ISLAM*, Riyadh, 1989, p. 4

6. JAMES A. MICHENER: "No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam...The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts that idea, and the Qur'an is explicit in support of the freedom of conscience." *ISLAM – THE MISUNDERSTOOD RELIGION, READERS' DIGEST* (American Edition) May 1955

7. LAWRENCE E. BROWNE: "Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword." *THE PROSPECTS OF ISLAM*, London, 1944.

IF YOU TOO POSSESS A SOFT TENDER HEART AND AN OPEN MIND, DO WRITE TO US FOR SOME BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE WAY OF LIFE CALLED "ISLAM". DO NOT BELIEVE THE HEARSAY. LEARN FROM THE DIRECT SOURCES. WE ARE READY TO HELP.

RECOMMENDED INTRODUCTORY PUBLICATIONS:

1. III&E Brochure series.
2. *WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ISLAM AND MUSLIMS* by Suzanne Haneef, Kazi Publications, Chicago, Illinois
3. *ISLAM IN FOCUS* by H. Abdulati, American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, Indiana
4. *THE BIBLE, THE QUR'AN AND SCIENCE* by Maurice Bucaille, American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, Indiana
5. *QUR'AN, AND INTRODUCTION* by A. R. Doi, Kazi Publications, Chicago, Illinois
6. *HADITH, AN INTRODUCTION* by A. R. Doi, Kazi Publications, Chicago, Illinois
7. *MUHAMMAD, HIS LIFE BASED ON THE EARLIEST SOURCES* by Martin Lings, Inner Traditions International, Rochester, Vermont
8. *LIFE OF MUHAMMAD* by A. H. Siddiqi, Kazi Publications, Chicago, Illinois
9. *HISTORY OF ISLAM* by Masud-ul-Hasan, Islamic Publications, Lahore, Pakistan
10. *THE CULTURAL ATLAS OF ISLAM* by I. R. al-Faruqi and Lois L. al-Faruqi, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, New York

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