

# **ISLAM AND TERRORISM**

**BY**

**DR. ZAKIR NAIK**

## **MUSLIMS ARE FUNDAMENTALISTS AND TERRORISTS**

Question:

**Why are most of the Muslims fundamentalists and terrorists?**

Answer:

This question is often hurled at Muslims, either directly or indirectly, during any discussion on religion or world affairs. Muslim stereotypes are perpetuated in every form of the media accompanied by gross misinformation about Islam and Muslims. In fact, such misinformation and false propaganda often leads to discrimination and acts of violence against Muslims. A case in point is the anti-Muslim campaign in the American media following the Oklahoma bomb blast, where the press was quick to declare a 'Middle Eastern conspiracy' behind the attack. The culprit was later identified as a soldier from the American Armed Forces.

Let us analyze this allegation of 'fundamentalism' and 'terrorism':

### **1. Definition of the word 'fundamentalist'**

A fundamentalist is a person who follows and adheres to the fundamentals of the doctrine or theory he is following. For a person to be a good doctor, he should know, follow, and practise the fundamentals of medicine. In other words, he should be a fundamentalist in the field of medicine. For a person to be a good mathematician, he should know, follow and practise the fundamentals of mathematics. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of mathematics. For a person to be a good scientist, he should know, follow and practise the fundamentals of science. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of science.

### **2. Not all 'fundamentalists' are the same**

One cannot paint all fundamentalists with the same brush. One cannot categorize all fundamentalists as either good or bad. Such a categorization of any fundamentalist will depend upon the field or activity in which he is a fundamentalist. A fundamentalist robber or thief causes harm to society and is therefore undesirable. A fundamentalist doctor, on the other hand, benefits society and earns much respect.

### **3. I am proud to be a Muslim fundamentalist**

I am a fundamentalist Muslim who, by the grace of Allah, knows, follows and strives to practise the fundamentals of Islam. A true Muslim does not shy away from being a fundamentalist. I am proud to be a fundamentalist Muslim because, I know that the fundamentals of Islam are beneficial to humanity and the whole world. There is not a single fundamental of Islam that causes harm or is against the interests of the human race as a whole. Many people harbour misconceptions about Islam and

consider several teachings of Islam to be unfair or improper. This is due to insufficient and incorrect knowledge of Islam. If one critically analyzes the teachings of Islam with an open mind, one cannot escape the fact that Islam is full of benefits both at the individual and collective levels.

#### **4. Dictionary meaning of the word 'fundamentalist'**

According to Webster's dictionary 'fundamentalism' was a movement in American Protestantism that arose in the earlier part of the 20th century. It was a reaction to modernism, and stressed the infallibility of the Bible, not only in matters of faith and morals but also as a literal historical record. It stressed on belief in the Bible as the literal word of God. Thus fundamentalism was a word initially used for a group of Christians who believed that the Bible was the verbatim word of God without any errors and mistakes.

According to the Oxford dictionary 'fundamentalism' means 'strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam'.

Today the moment a person uses the word fundamentalist he thinks of a Muslim who is a terrorist.

#### **5. Every Muslim should be a terrorist**

Every Muslim should be a terrorist. A terrorist is a person who causes terror. The moment a robber sees a policeman he is terrified. A policeman is a terrorist for the robber. Similarly every Muslim should be a terrorist for the antisocial elements of society, such as thieves, dacoits and rapists. Whenever such an anti-social element sees a Muslim, he should be terrified. It is true that the word 'terrorist' is generally used for a person who causes terror among the common people. But a true Muslim should only be a terrorist to selective people i.e. anti-social elements, and not to the common innocent people. In fact a Muslim should be a source of peace for innocent people.

#### **6. Different labels given to the same individual for the same action, i.e. 'terrorist' and 'patriot'**

Before India achieved independence from British rule, some freedom fighters of India who did not subscribe to non-violence were labeled as terrorists by the British government. The same individuals have been lauded by Indians for the same activities and hailed as 'patriots'. Thus two different labels have been given to the same people for the same set of actions. One is calling him a terrorist while the other is calling him a patriot. Those who believed that Britain had a right to rule over India called these people terrorists, while those who were of the view that Britain had no right to rule India called them patriots and freedom fighters.

It is therefore important that before a person is judged, he is given a fair hearing. Both sides of the argument should be heard, the situation should be analyzed, and the reason and the intention of the person should be taken into account, and then the person can be judged accordingly.

#### **7. Islam means peace**

Islam is derived from the word 'salaam' which means peace. It is a religion of peace whose fundamentals teach its followers to maintain and promote peace throughout the world.

Thus every Muslim should be a fundamentalist i.e. he should follow the fundamentals of the Religion of Peace: Islam. He should be a terrorist only towards the antisocial elements in order to promote peace and justice in the society.

## **WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD?**

Question:

How can Islam be called the religion of peace when it was spread by the sword?

Answer:

It is a common complaint among some non-Muslims that Islam would not have millions of adherents all over the world, if it had not been spread by the use of force. The following points will make it clear, that far from being spread by the sword, it was the inherent force of truth, reason and logic that was responsible for the rapid spread of Islam.

### **1. Islam means peace.**

Islam comes from the root word 'salaam', which means peace. It also means submitting one's will to Allah (swt). Thus Islam is a religion of peace, which is acquired by submitting one's will to the will of the Supreme Creator, Allah (swt).

### **2. Sometimes force has to be used to maintain peace.**

Each and every human being in this world is not in favour of maintaining peace and harmony. There are many, who would disrupt it for their own vested interests. Sometimes force has to be used to maintain peace. It is precisely for this reason that we have the police who use force against criminals and anti-social elements to maintain peace in the country. Islam promotes peace. At the same time, Islam exhorts its followers to fight where there is oppression. The fight against oppression may, at times, require the use of force. In Islam force can only be used to promote peace and justice.

### **3. Opinion of historian De Lacy O'Leary.**

The best reply to the misconception that Islam was spread by the sword is given by the noted historian De Lacy O'Leary in the book 'Islam at the cross road' (Page 8):

'History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myth that historians have ever repeated.'

### **4. Muslims ruled Spain for 800 years.**

Muslims ruled Spain for about 800 years. The Muslims in Spain never used the sword to force the people to convert. Later the Christian Crusaders came to Spain and wiped out the Muslims. There was not a single Muslim in Spain who could openly give the adhan, that is the call for prayers.

### **5. 14 million Arabs are Coptic Christians.**

Muslims were the lords of Arabia for 1400 years. For a few years the British ruled, and for a few years the French ruled. Overall, the Muslims ruled Arabia for 1400 years. Yet today, there are 14 million Arabs who are Coptic Christians i.e. Christians since generations. If the Muslims had used the sword there would not have been a single Arab who would have remained a Christian.

## **6. More than 80% non-Muslims in India.**

The Muslims ruled India for about a thousand years. If they wanted, they had the power of converting each and every non-Muslim of India to Islam. Today more than 80% of the population of India are non-Muslims. All these non-Muslim Indians are bearing witness today that Islam was not spread by the sword.

## **7. Indonesia and Malaysia.**

Indonesia is a country that has the maximum number of Muslims in the world. The majority of people in Malaysia are Muslims. May one ask, 'Which Muslim army went to Indonesia and Malaysia?'

## **8. East Coast of Africa.**

Similarly, Islam has spread rapidly on the East Coast of Africa. One may again ask, if Islam was spread by the sword, 'Which Muslim army went to the East Coast of Africa?'

## **9. Thomas Carlyle.**

The famous historian, Thomas Carlyle, in his book 'Heroes and Hero worship', refers to this misconception about the spread of Islam: 'The sword indeed, but where will you get your sword? Every new opinion, at its starting is precisely in a minority of one. In one man's head alone. There it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it, there is one man against all men. That he takes a sword and try to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can.'

## **10. No compulsion in religion.**

With which sword was Islam spread? Even if Muslims had it they could not use it to spread Islam because the Qur'an says in the following verse:

'Let there be no compulsion in religion:  
Truth stands out clear from error'  
[Al-Qur'an 2:256]

## **11. Sword of the Intellect.**

It is the sword of intellect. The sword that conquers the hearts and minds of people. The Qur'an says in Surah Nahl, chapter 16 verse 125:

'Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord  
with wisdom and beautiful preaching;  
and argue with them in ways that are  
best and most gracious.'  
[Al-Qur'an 16:125]

## **12. Increase in the world religions from 1934 to 1984.**

An article in Reader's Digest 'Almanac', year book 1986, gave the statistics of the increase of percentage of the major religions of the world in half a century from 1934 to 1984. This article also appeared in 'The Plain Truth' magazine. At the top was Islam, which increased by 235%, and Christianity had increased only by 47%. May one ask, which war took place in this century which converted millions of people to Islam?

**13. Islam is the fastest growing religion in America and Europe.**

Today the fastest growing religion in America is Islam. The fastest growing religion in Europe is Islam. Which sword is forcing people in the West to accept Islam in such large numbers?

**14. Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson.**

Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson rightly says, 'People who worry that nuclear weaponry will one day fall in the hands of the Arabs, fail to realize that the Islamic bomb has been dropped already, it fell the day MUHAMMED (pbuh) was born'