

A series of distortions and
arrogations unveiled

Prophetic Guidance - Issue #4

Clarification of the meaning
of the hadith

**“I was
commanded
to fight people”.**

En


S A N A D

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful.

All praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon the noblest of the prophets and messengers, our master and prophet Muhammad, the trustworthy, and upon his family and all his companions

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"I was commanded to fight people until they attest that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and establish prayer and pay the obligatory charity. And if they do this, their blood and property are guaranteed protection on my behalf except when justified by law, and their judgment is left to Allah."¹

An introduction to understanding this hadith

To correctly understand what this hadith indicates, two important aspects should be pointed out:

the importance of the Arabic language in understanding the sacred texts;
study of Islam through a comprehensive view.

The importance of the Arabic language in understanding sacred texts

Allah honored the Arabic language by sending down the last of His scriptures in it, in which He said that the Qur'an was sent down "in clear Arabic," and making it the language of His final Messenger. Thus, the importance of the Arabic language in relation to the Qur'an and Sunnah is obvious and undeniable. Ignorance of the Arabic language is ignorance of the religion and its sacred texts, especially those whose superficial meaning contains ambiguities that cannot be eliminated except through knowledge of the rules of Arabic speech. Otherwise, a misunderstanding of Allah and His Messenger during the application of Sharia norms will bring great harm and great evil. This means that the basis of error lies in misunderstanding what Allah Most Exalted and His Messenger ﷺ mean.

1. The hadith was narrated by Bukhari (25), the book of faith, chapter "If they turn [to God], maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way"; Muslim (22), the book of faith, the chapter on the command to fight people until they attest that there is no god but Allah. The hadith is from Abdullah ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both.

Studying Islam through a Comprehensive View

The reader of the sacred texts of the Sharia should have an all-encompassing view, bringing together its foundations and branches, principles and goals. It is necessary to reconcile the sacred texts with the unchanging provisions of religion. Texts that have an ambiguous or unclear meaning must be checked against unambiguous texts, as ordered in the Holy Quran itself. At the same time, it is necessary to rely on the knowledge of generalities and particularities, the unconditional and conditional, the abstract and the clear, the reasons for revelation and Prophetic statements, as well as other rules known to the science of the foundations of Islamic jurisprudence. None of the sacred texts can be ignored, because it is better to combine and use them, by eliminating an imaginary contradiction, than leaving them. Thus, it becomes clear that the truth is indivisible and does not contain contradictions, and comes from one source.

Question: Does the said hadith mean the permission of bloodshed and murder because of faith?

To answer this question, let us first clarify the following:

People who misunderstand this hadith fall into two categories.

The first category: some of our youth who have not received an Islam education built on its principles and rules. They do not know the spirit of its tolerant teachings and great principles that are solicitous about the preservation of the life of a person, regardless of his or her faith, as one of the necessities of the humane Sharia and a foundational goal among the five Sharia goals: the preservation of religion, life, reason, honor and property. The Almighty said: "If anyone kills a person- unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land- it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind." (Surah Ma'ida, 32).

Islam did not limit itself to preserving life, it also commanded to respect it, and this principle is clearly enshrined in the Qur'an with the words of Allah Almighty: "Indeed, We have honored the children of Adam" (Surah Isra', 70). The Most Pure Sunnah shows us a practical example of respect for people, regardless of their religion, in the person of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, when he stood up in respect of the funeral procession of a Jew. He ﷺ explained to his companions, who were surprised by this gesture: "Isn't this a soul?"¹

¹ The hadith was narrated by al-Bukhari, no. 1312 (the book of funerals, the chapter on standing up before the funeral procession of a Jew); Muslim, no. 961 (book of funerals, the chapter on standing up before a funeral procession) from Qais ibn Saad and Sahl ibn Hunayf, may Allah be pleased with them.

However, these people did not receive knowledge from devout, authoritative scholars who are accredited and accepted as being firmly grounded in knowledge. The misunderstanding of the hadith "I am commanded to fight with people" led them to consider it an evidentiary basis, allowing (according to their groundless statement) destruction and explosions. Thus, under the cover of religion, they spread wickedness on earth, "and Allah does not love those who spread wickedness" (Surah Ma'ida, 64).

And how much blood has been shed and how many souls have been destroyed! They have brought harm to themselves and others, and to their society, becoming a vehicle for the execution of enemy plans, whether they realize it or not.

The second category:

some non-Muslims, and Muslims influenced by their culture. They ascribe any flaw to Islam and accuse it of all sins, claiming that it is a religion of intimidation, unable to coexist peacefully, containing calls for evil, murder and destruction in its texts. Moreover, they called Islam a religion not suitable for the modern world, which spreads peace and stability.

The truth is that the first category of young deceived Muslims was the main factor in strengthening this prejudiced judgment in the minds of people. After all, they committed disgusting deeds and chose violence and destruction for themselves as a method, until people began to judge Islam by their irresponsible, useless and harmful deeds.



A specious argument and its refutation

1 - Hadith "I am commanded to fight people until they attest that there is no god but God..."

The first question: does the hadith indicate the permissibility of killing a non-believer, or the obligatory nature of this, if he does not follow Islam, as the first category understood it?

The second question: is Islam a religion of intimidation and murder and do its sacred texts call for hatred and rejection of others, as the second category understood it?

Refutation of the specious argument

A deliberate exploratory look at the linguistic meanings that the words of this hadith carry will clarify its meaning and discard imaginary misunderstandings.

Lexical units:

The difference between the words "uqatil" (fight) and "aqtul" (kill)

The question is: is there a difference between "kill" and "fight"?

This subtle expression was the subject of their misunderstanding. They confused the meaning of "uqatil" (fight), mentioned in the text of this hadith, and "aqtul" (kill), and there is a huge difference between them.

"Uqatil" is one of the forms of interaction (mufa'ala) that indicates the mutual participation of persons in the action. That is, both sides are fighting with each other. If you say: "Tajadala (the parties are engaged in a mutual dispute)," then this will mean that each of the parties took part in the dispute. And in this hadith, each side participates in the battle.

This prompted such a great scholar in Arabic as Imam al-Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) to say: "Fighting in no way means killing, because sometimes it is allowed to fight a person, but it is not allowed to kill him."¹

All this was clearly expressed by a group of scholars such as Ibn Daqiq al-'Id², Ibn Rajab³, Ibn Hajar⁴ and even Ibn Taymiyyah⁵, etc.

¹ Fath al-Bari, Vol. 1, p. 76.

² Commentary on Umdat al-ahkam, Vol. 2, p. 220.

³ Ibn Rajab. Jami 'al' ulumi wa-l-hikam, p. 230.

⁴ Fath al-Bari, Vol. 1, p. 76.

⁵ Majmu al-Fatawa, Vol. 19, p. 20; Vol.28, p. 354.

Question: Does this hadith carry the meaning of fighting with all people until they accept Islam?

A thousand times no! This has not been said by any of the scholars of the Islamic community throughout the centuries. On the contrary, it goes against the teachings of this true religion and the purest Sharia. Clarification of this:

The word "people" is a general word, which has a specific meaning. This is confirmed by numerous examples from the Quran, Sunnah and Arabic. Allah, the Majestic, says: "Proclaim the Pilgrimage to people, and they will come to you on foot" (Surah Hajj, 27). The word "people" in this verse means only those who believe, and not all people.

The Almighty also said: "He will speak to people in his infancy and in his adulthood. He will be one of the righteous." (Surah Aal 'Imran, 46). Here, the word "people" refers to those who questioned Mary (peace be upon her) about her child, and not all people. Also, the Almighty said: "Those whose faith only increased when people said, 'Look, those people have gathered against you, therefore be fearful of them' and who replied, 'God is enough for us: He is the best protector,'" (Surah Aal 'Imran, 173). The second occurrence of "people" refers to Abu Sufyan, as Mujahid and Ikrimah said.¹

The word "people" in this context is a general expression, which implies a specific meaning, namely the polytheistic Arabs who fought against the Prophet ﷺ, wanting to destroy him and his companions and eradicate his call, and not all people. And their description was revealed in Surah Tawbah: "Where believers are concerned, they respect no tie of kinship or treaty. They are the ones who are committing aggression," (Surah At-Tawbah, 10) as well as in the words of the Almighty: "Who broke their oaths, who tried to drive the Messenger out, who initiated war against you" (Surah

The life of the Prophet

A reality that confirms the understanding of the majority of scholars of the hadith

Whoever reflects on the life of the Prophet and the events associated with him ﷺ, will be convinced that he is a mercy bestowed on this world, and that he is full of kindness and mercy, as the Qur'an called him. This needs no proof. This is recorded by history on bright pages, the likes of which have not been seen by humanity. Indeed he ﷺ was merciful even to those who were openly hostile to him from the beginning to the end of his call. The following is sufficient to support this:

1. Tafsir at-Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 250, 251.

2. Al-Sindi's commentary on Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 2, p. 457.

*-He ﷺ refused to destroy them at the beginning of his call and prayed: "O Allah guide my people, for they do not know." He said this out of prophetic sagacity and the mercy of his message. Look at the gentle words with which he began his prayer: "O Allah, guide." He then attributed them to himself, despite their unbelief, and said, "my people." He then excused them, "Indeed, they do not know."

*-He forgave them after defeating them. He said, "Go! Truly, you are free." Moreover, he announced: "Everyone who enters his house will be safe." If the goal was to kill all those who did not believe, he would have said: "He who becomes Muslim is safe," and not "Whoever enters his house will be safe."

Unacceptable contradiction

How can the Prophet ﷺ command the killing of non-Muslims and then allow kindness towards them and giving of gifts to them?!

After all, the words of the Almighty were sent down to him: "God does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes: God loves the just." (Surah Mumtahana, 8).

Also, in a sound hadith it is narrated that Umar saw a silk cloak and said, "O Messenger of Allah, why don't you buy it to wear on Friday and when receiving delegations?" The Prophet said: "O Umar, it is worn by people who have no share (in the Hereafter)." Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was presented with several of these cloaks and he sent one of them to Umar as a present. Umar came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "O Messenger of Allah, you sent me these clothes after I heard what you said about them." The Prophet answered: "I did not give it to you to wear it, but to sell or to give to someone else to wear." Umar then gave it to his step brother, who was a polytheist¹, since the prohibition on wearing silk did not apply to him.

This incident occurred during the Madinan period in the "Year of Delegations" (8th year AH), that is, after the opening of Mecca. This means that the unreasonable claim by some that the command of kind and just treatment of peaceful unbelievers was abrogated by the verse of the "sword" is incorrect. A peaceable non-Muslim who does not commit aggression or fight cannot be fought, and, moreover, it is allowed to treat him kindly and give him gifts.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 71 (chapter on maintaining family ties with a polytheist).

Statement and clarification to refute this specious argument

Islam is a religion of mercy and good morals. It is the greatest blessing that Allah has bestowed upon its followers. Islam came in order to establish a connection between creation and their Creator, and a connection between a Muslim both with his Muslim brother and with an adherent of another faith. It covers all areas of life and is suitable for any time and place, and makes them better. A Muslim does not cease to sense this tremendous blessing, and since he is far from selfishness, he wants this good to spread to all of humanity, not to mention the fact that he is commanded to convey and call to Allah with wisdom and good teaching. The call in this form is one of the most important responsibilities. The Prophet ﷺ said: "If one person is guided through you, it will be better for you than owning red camels."¹ The Almighty said: "Whoever follows the right path follows it for his own good." (Surah Yunus, 108). And whoever does not accept, then the Almighty said: "There is no compulsion in religion: true guidance has become distinct from error." (Surah Baqara, 256). The Almighty also said to His noble Prophet ﷺ: "Had your Lord willed, all the people on earth would have believed. Would you then force people to become believers?" (Surah Yunus, 99).

Based on this principle, Muslims took on their shoulders the mission of calling and conveying light to all people so that humanity attains happiness in this world and the next. However, evil is in constant struggle with good, and this is the law of life at all times and places.

Even when the call to Allah is carried out with excellence, it can be impeded, and obstacles can turn from a verbal form into an encroachment. Consequently, fighting is legalized when an assailant attacks the call and its supporters, because the protection of human life is one of the most important duties approved in heavenly and other religions. In fact, this is innate in human nature and is rejected only by those whose nature has deviated from the laws of life. This is the meaning that the sacred hadith conveys.

That is, "I was commanded to convey the call of my Lord with wisdom and good teaching. If someone is at enmity with me and fights to deprive people of their right to choose their faith, then I will fight with him until I free people from those who compel them to unbelief. The result of removing this obstacle by invoking wisdom and good teaching, will be that they will testify that there is no god but Allah."

Through a combination of the sacred texts in accordance with a complete view of Islam, the meaning of the hadith becomes clear.

1. The hadith was transmitted in two collections of authentic hadiths: Sahih al-Bukhari, the book of military campaigns, the chapter on the call of the Prophet to Islam, no. 2942; Sahih Muslim, Book of Companions, chapter on the merits of Ali ibn Abi Talib, no. 2406

In summary

1 - **The importance of the Arabic language** in understanding Islamic sacred texts as the only way to understand the meanings of speech.

2 - The importance of combining the sacred texts of the Sharia, a comprehensive view of Islam, as well as the knowledge of the sciences that serve in understanding the sacred texts, with reference to firmly grounded scholars in matters that are unclear at first glance.

3 - Islam severely forbade the shedding of blood and increased the punishment for it. It stated this in clear and unambiguous texts. How could it be otherwise, when the Almighty says in His Noble Book: "If anyone kills a person- unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land- it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind." (Surah Ma'ida, 32). This is confirmed by the actions of the Prophet ﷺ and his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

4 - This hadith is from sacred texts that are manipulated and misunderstood by some people, but does not correspond to their unsubstantiated claims.

5 - The word "uqatil" (fight) in the hadith is a form of mutual interaction indicating that there is action on both sides, in the sense that he will fight those who will fight him and initiate war against him to prevent the call of Allah.

6 - The definite article "al" in the word "al-nas" (people) indicates specific people, namely the Arab polytheists who fought against the Conveyer of the call and became a stumbling block to it.

7 - It is impermissible to kill those who do not want to accept the religion. The Almighty said: "There is no compulsion in religion." (Surah Al-Baqara, 256).

8 - **We accept external acts of worship from anyone who affirms monotheism.**

The judgment of the reality of their motives is left to God. The hadith also points to the inviolability of a Muslim's blood, honor and property.

Thus, this hadith in no way indicates or calls for killing people, harming them or forcing them to believe, as we have already explained. And Allah knows best.

A series of distortions and arrogations unveiled

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: 'This knowledge will be transmitted from every generation by its upright; they negate from it the distortions of the extreme, the false claims of the falsifiers, and interpretations of the ignorant.'¹

Some of those that possess misapprehensions have understood the discourse of God and the words of His Prophet ﷺ in a manner which does not agree with the academic methodology inherited from the pious predecessors (al-salaf al- li), and does not harmonize with the objectives and greater values of the divine revelation.

They have taken some verses of the noble Qur n which were revealed in regard to the non-Muslims, and made them applicable to the Muslims. They have adopted verses which came as exceptions and applied to them general rulings. They have distorted the meanings of the words of God in a manner that has led to the establishment or formation of grave erroneous concepts within the minds of the general Muslim populace, a result of which are mannerisms and actions that have no correlation with the true intrinsic religion of Islam.

We shall become acquainted through the parts of this continuous series about the distortions of the meanings of the verses of the Noble Qur n and the Prophetic traditions (hadith) which the adherents of these distorted ideas have fallen within, their misguidance concerning legal rulings, and their embracing of wrong conceptions. All of which distanced them from God's intended meanings, as well as His Prophet's and the righteous predecessors (salaf al- lih) that followed.

1 This is a mashhūr hadith, which was authenticated by Ibn Abd alBarr, and it has been reported from A mad b. anbal that he said: 'it is an authentic hadith'