

The Sword of Islam

Are you still in doubt about the popular notion that Islam was spread by sword?

Examine the following facts and you will come to believe.

The first few who embraced the 'new' religion 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 in Makkah were the honest merchant, Abu Bakr, the iron man of Arabia, Omar the Great, the shy businessman, Othman, Prophet's brave uncle Hamza and the family of a pagan's slave, 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 driven away from Makkah (with their 'SWORD') in the city of their migration, Madinah, people not only welcomed the bearers, but the 'SWORD' as well. It didn't cease to work even there and it's 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 empires of Rome and Persia, the shores of the Mediteranean, the coast of Malabar and the far away East Indies Islands. People after people went on 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 even 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. Their present addresses are also given. Perhaps you may like to ask them how it feels to be struck by the SWORD OF TRUTH.

Leopold Weiss (now Mohammad Asad): Austrian statesman, journalist and author, former foreign correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*; author of *'Islam at Crossroads'* and *'Road to Makkah'* and translator of the Quran. (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.

Present address: Dar Al-Andalus, 3 Library Ramp, Gibraltar, Morocco.

Ahmed Holt: British Civil Contractor. Travelled extensively in search of the Divine truth. Spent much time in research and comparative study of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. (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! and what am I and for what I am here?

Present address: 23 Welland Garden, Perivale, Middlesex UB6 BSZ, U.K.

Bogdan Kopanski (now Bogdan Ataullah 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]. (Embraced Islam in 1974)

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When I was 12 years old I rejected illogical and contradictory faith of Church. Two years later in 1962, I was fascinated by victorious struggle of the Algerian Muslim Mujahideen against French Colonialism. It was the first 'arrow' of Islam...in the high school and earliest days of my education in the University. I was a typical example of 'rebel generation' of Reds...My way to the Truth of al-Quran was slow and unpaved...In 1974 I visited Turkey, I wrote my M.A. dissertation about Sultan and Caliph Suleiman Kanuni's policy towards Polish Kingdom. There, I was hit by the most beautiful voice of mankind: Adhan, the call to prayer. My hair stood up. Unknown powerful force led me to old masjid in Istanbul. There, old smiling Turkish, bearded man taught me Wudhu, ablution. I confessed to tears Shahadah and I prayed my first Salat al-Maghrib... I swept out the rubbish ideologies... The first time in my life, my mind was relaxed and I felt pleasure of Allah's love in my heart. I was a Muslim...

Present address: 3013 Harrel Drive, 203 Grand Prairie Tx 75051 U.S.A.

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. Worked with 3 former Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu. Received Kalaimamani Award (Big Gem of Arts) from T.N. Government in 1982. (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.

Present address: 1 Ashok Avenue, Rangarajapuram, Kodambakkam, Madras, India.

Herbert Hobohm (now Aman Hobohm): German Diplomat, Missionary and social worker. An intellectual, who has been serving the German Diplomatic Mission in various parts of the world. Presently working as Cultural Attache in German Embassy in Riyadh. (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.

Present address: Cultural Attache, German Embassy, P.O. Box 8974, Riyadh 11492, Saudi Arabia.

Cat Stevens (now Yousuf Islam): British. Formerly Christian, world famous pop singer. (Embraced Islam in 1973)

It will be wrong to judge Islam in the light of the behaviour of some bad Muslims who are always shown on the media. It is like judging a car as a bad one if the driver of the car is drunk and he bangs it with the wall. Islam guides all human beings in the daily life—in it's spritual, mental and physical dimensions. But we must find the sources of these instructions: The Quran and the example of the Prophet. Then we can see the ideal of Islam.

Present address: Chairman, Muslim Aid, 3 Furlong Road, London N7, U.K.

Ms. Margaret Marcus (Now Maryam Jamilah): American, formerly Jewish. Essayist and journalist. Author of many books. (Embraced Islam in 1962)

The authority of Islamic Morals and Laws proceeds from Almighty God. Pleasure and happiness in Islam are but the natural byproducts 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.

Present address: c/o Mr. Mohammad Yusuf Khan, Sant Nagar, Lahore, Pakistan.

Wilfried Hofman (now Murad Hofman): Ph.D. (Law) Harvard, German, Social Scientist and Diplomat. Presently German Ambassador in Algiers. (Embraced Islam in 1980)

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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.

Present address: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, BP 664, Alger-gare, Algeria.

Cassius Clay (now Mohamed Ali Clay): American boxer. (Three times World Heavyweight Champion), formerly Christian. (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.)

Present address: 1200E, 49 St., Chicago IL. 60615.

These were the impressions of a few persons who had themselves been struck by the SWORD OF TRUTH.

As for the propaganda that it was the sword of steel (i.e. the force) which was instrumental in the universal expansion of Islam, we give below remarks of some prominent non-Muslims refuting this baseless claim:

M.K. Gandhi: "...I became more than ever convinced that it was the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the schedule 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 interpidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These, and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every trouble." *Young India*, 1924.

Edward Gibbon: "The greatest success of Mohammad's life was effected by sheer moral force without the stroke of a sword." *History of the Saracen Empire*, London, 1870.

A.S. Tritton: "The picture of the Muslim soldier advancing with a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other is quite false." *Islam*, London, 1951, p.21.

De Lacy O'Leary: "History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims, 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.

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 that, 'there is no compulsion in religion' is well known." *Muhammed the Prophet of Islam*, Riyadh, 1989, p.4.

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.

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.