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The Respect for Human Life in Islam is Unmatched -

Islamophobic Misconception That Sword Spread Islam is Corrected. By Mohammed Hameed Siddiqui

Understanding what drives Islamophobia

Unfortunately, Islamophobic misconceptions and misbeliefs are on the rise globally. Mainly, this is happening in most of the democracies of the world. The growth in this misinformation is systematic, well-organized, and precisely targeted with surgical efficiency. The tools in social media were developed in the last two decades to expand markets using mathematical algorithms. Algorithms are nothing but the step-by-step process of carrying out a task.

A social media algorithm is a complex set of rules and calculations used by social media platforms to prioritize the content that users see in their feeds. Users' *past behavior*, *content relevance*, and *the popularity of posts* are some of *the vital algorithm factors* taken into account by social media platforms. These techniques work equally well in both cases, promoting truth and non-truth.

While many Muslim scholars use *conventional* and *honest* approaches to promote truth, others use more sophisticated social media's mathematical techniques to propagate Islamophobic misconceptions, misbeliefs, and disinformation against Islam. Seemingly persuasive narratives can change people's opinions with truth or non-truth. The human mind tends to remember untruth if these are repeated widely and frequently. This weakness is used in developing algorithms designed to market the brand and gain popularity in elections.

Their tactics include employing hired lobbyists, collaborating with anti-Muslim entities, disseminating misinformation through multiple social media channels to influence council members, targeting an elected official, and concealing their activities behind a bogus secular front organization.

The Truth about the Spead of Islam

In Islam, the life and dignity of every person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition. One of the popular Islamophobic misconceptions is that Islam was spread by sword. This and other disinformation gained traction after social media became essential in the contemporary world. This article reviews whether or not Islam was spread by sword.



We will review all the battles that were imposed on Prophet Muhammad and what were the outcome of losses on either side throughout the 23 years of prophethood.

The holy Quran says,

سئو ر أ المائدة

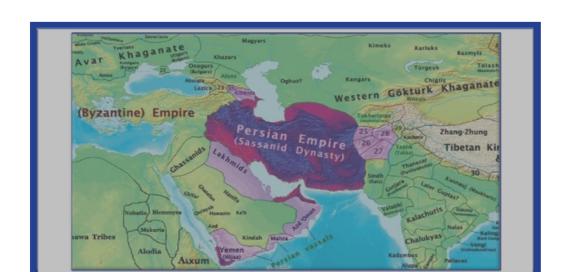
مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَالِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِيَ إِسْرَ أَعِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسُا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَق فَسَاذٍ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ ٱلنَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ ۚ أَحْيَاهَاۚ فَكَانَمَا ٓ أَحْيَا ٱلنَّاسَ ۚ جَمِيعًا ۚ وَلَقَدَ جَآءَتُهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِٱلْبَيْنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُم بَعْدَ ذَالِكَ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ (٣٢)

"Because of that, We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person, not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind..." (Quran 5:32)

Throughout Prophet Muhammad's whole life as a prophet, he struggled against the powerful Makkan Quraysh, the ruling elite family that dominated Makkah. They first opposed him and then persecuted him and his followers for ten years, following which he fought them for ten years till he won, and later, he died. All his wars were in self-defense. Most battles were close to his city-state, Madinah.

Pre-Islamic Makkah – During 'jahiliya'

Prophet Muhammad # made numerous attempts to preach to the people of Makkah. His arch opponents from Quraish, Abu Lahab, and his associate, Abu Jahl, tried extremely hard to sabotage his reform work, but they could never deflect him from his aim. Muhammad stold the Arabs not to burry new-born girls who mistreated enslaved people and women. Instead, he said they should obey Allah, the One and the Unique, the Lord of the universe. He also told them that in His sight, all humans are equal in the view of their Creator, and if they became Muslim, they would all become brothers of each other. Here is a political map of the time of Prophet Muhammad 3.





Asia in 600 CE, showing the Persian and Byzantine Empires

Prophet Muhammad wished to reform Arab society. His new doctrine was based on good deeds instead of lineage, essential to the community's welfare. However, the Arabs practiced the code of pagan customs and conventions; they believed in the basic tribal and kinship structures. For them, lineage was the only basis of social organization and hierarchy. In their perception, if faith could supplant lineage in this equation, it would wreck the whole structure of Arab society.

Prophet Muhammad also called upon the wealthy Arabs to share their wealth with the poor and the underprivileged. Such sharing would guarantee the equitable distribution of wealth in the community. Many of the wealthy Arabs were moneylenders, or rather, they were loan sharks." They had grown prosperous by lending money to the deprived classes at exorbitant interest rates. Low-income people could never repay their debts and were locked in economic frustration for generations.

For the Arabs, all these social reforms for improving society were new and unfamiliar ideas. By preaching equality and justice, Prophet Muhammad # had infuriated the corrupt establishment. Most upsets among them were the Umayyad clan of the Quraysh. Its members were the prominent evil capitalists of Makkah, and they were the high priests of the pagan pantheon. Islam held an appeal for the depressed classes in Makkah. When members of these classes became Muslim, they also became aware that as pagans, they were despised and rejected by Makkah's highly class-conscious and race-conscious aristocracy, but Islam gave them new selfesteem. As Muslims, they found a new pride in themselves.

Most early converts to Islam were poor and weak, while wealthy Muslims, like Hudhayfa bin Utba Arqam bin Abil-Arqam, were wealthy. Some others Abu Bakr (RA) invited into Islam were rich and powerful. These were Uthman (RA), Talha (RA), Zubayr (RA), Abdur Rahman ibn Auf (RA), Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (RA), and Abu Obaidah ibn al-Jarrah (RA) – were also rich and powerful. They were members of the various clans of the Quraysh.

We can assume that at the beginning, the pagan aristocrats of Makkah witnessed the efforts of Islam to win recognition, more with amusement than irritation. Still, hatred and hysteria gripped them a little later. But as the new movement began to gather momentum, they sensed that the ideas that Prophet Muhammad ** was propagating were hazardous for them. They argued that their forefathers had worshipped idols for countless generations. Therefore, idolatry was right, and they could not allow Prophet Muhammad ## to change their mode of worship. But Prophet Muhammad swas not content merely with denouncing idolatry. Far more dangerous and frightening to the all-grasping Quraysh of Makkah were his economic and social justice ideas, which threatened to pull down their privileges, the old structure of authority and hierarchy, and



all the hardened institutions of the past. They made it clear that these privileges were something they were not going to relinquish – at any cost. It was outrageous for the self-selected elite of the Quraysh to be in the company of their slaves, now converted to Islam. They were with the exploited classes as equals, which was unthinkable to them. They lived in conceit and arrogance. The concept of equality and justice for all angered them.

In Prophet Muhammad and Islam's message, they saw a threat to their corrupt social order. The Quraysh, therefore, resolved to maintain the status quo by starting a cruel war against Islam and a relentless opposition to Prophet Muhammad ...

Persecution of early Muslims in Makkah

The torture inflicted was unimaginable. The cruelty had no bounds. Muslims were punished by being placed on hot sand under the blazing sun. Burning stones were put on their chests and dragged through Makkah's streets like dead animals. They were isolated and kept hungry and thirsty. Pregnant women were thrown off camels – their inevitable deaths were considered a sport. Their cruelty reached such heights that the believers were whipped; their limbs were tied to camels and then driven in opposite directions, rendering their bodies apart. The believers were cut into pieces with swords and were pierced by arrows. The body of the Holy Prophet's uncle, Hamza (RA), was cut open, and his liver was eaten raw in cannibal fashion in the Battle of Uhud.

Challenges faced by Prophet Muhammad

The Prophet Muhammad # went through many challenges and difficult times throughout his whole life. In one year, his uncle and his wife, who both supported him emotionally and physically, died. In the same year, he was subjected to physical abuse from the people of Makkah. The following story, as narrated by one of the Prophet's companions, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (RA), tells you how he was treated during this very tough year:

"Seven of the Makkah leaders were gathering next to Al-Kaaba while the Prophet Muhammad # was praying. He elongated his prostration. Abu Jahl, one of those leaders, said,

"Who would bring the innards (intestines) of the camel so-and-so family just slaughtered? We can put it on top of Muhammad # while prostrating!"

'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'ait brought it and put it on the back of the Prophet Muhammad swhile prostrating." The Prophet did not move. Fatimah (RA), the Prophet's young daughter, removed the filth. The Prophet ## then raised his head and started supplicating to Allah against



them all. He was also challenged as a messenger tasked by Allah to convey His message. He was called a liar, a sorcerer, a poet, and a fortuneteller, and people started calling him 'Mudthamam' (dispraise worthy) while his name is Muhammad # (praiseworthy).

His reputation was attacked, and his companions were tortured, so people stopped listening to him. His trip to the neighboring city of Ta'if was just another example of those tough times. He traveled, walking, for over fifty miles to deliver his message to the people of Ta'if and ask for their support. Not only did they mock him, disbelieve in him, and let him down, but they also requested their slaves and youngsters to throw stones at him for a few miles until his sandals turned red from his bleeding. Even after migration to Madinah, his life was not easy. He suffered curses and disrespect from the hypocrites in Madinah. His noble wife, 'Aishah (RA), was subject to an ugly rumor spread in society for days.

Prophet Muhammad pardoned everybody when he succeeded and had power, including his staunchest enemies, when he won back Makkah without any bloodshed.

Battles fought by Prophet Muhammad # - respect for human blood is unmatched.

Almost all battles were imposed on the Prophet Muhammad . He was forced to leave Makkah for Madinah to save his life and avoid his followers' bloodshed. Upon migration to Madinah, battles were imposed on him either on the borders of the city-state Madinah or close to Medina, and he fought in self-defense with limited resources and few soldiers against well-established armies Quraysh.

Dr. Mohammad Hamidullah¹ writes, "The battles fought by Prophet Muhammad #, are characteristic of the man, conspicuous, head and shoulders above many others, past or present. He had fought the enemy, often outnumbered in strengths three times, and on some occasions, even twelve and more times, the number he could himself deploy, and he was practically always victorious. Again, his "domain," which commenced with some of the streets of a small city-state - for not all the town rallied to him at first - expanded at an average rate of over 830 kilometers daily. After ten years of political activity, when he stream breathed his last, he was ruling over some three million square kilometers. As big as Europe minus Russia and inhabited by millions of people at that time, this area was conquered at the cost of fewer than 300 men killed on the battlefields on the enemy side. The loss of Muslims was at the rate of one martyr a month for ten years on average. This respect for human blood is unmatched in human history. Moreover, the firmness of occupation, the mental transformation of the conquered and their complete assimilation, and the production of such trained officers who, in a bare fifteen years after the

¹ Dr. Hamidullah, Muhammad, 'The Battlefields of Prophet Muhammad', Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris, Series No. 3.



leader's death, delivered millions of square kilometers in three continents to be ruled from Medina."

Details of Battles ²										
Imposed on Prophet										
Muhammad 🇯										
No.	Event	Location	Date - Hijri	Date - Gregorian	Persecut ing Force	Non- Muslims killed	Mu slim For ce	Musl ims kille d	Balance of Power	Comment
1	Battle of Badr	Badr - 110 km Southwe st of Madina	17th Ramadan 2 H	18th November 623, Friday	950	70	313	14	313 Muslim men, poorly armed, versus 950 trained Makkan fighters.	This was purely ideological. Makkans wanted to eradicate Islam and destroy Muslims once and for all. This One-Day battle was called "Al-Furqaan" – a criterion determining the Truth.
2	Battle of Uhud	At the Border of Madina	"7th Shauwal 3 H"	24th December 624, Monday	3,000	22	700	70	Poorly armed Muslims consisted of 650 infantry, 50 archers, and four cavalries, while the army of Makkans consisted of 3,000 infantry, 3,000 camels, and 200 cavalries.	The Makkans had a clear purpose: to defeat Muslims, capture Madina, and defeat Islam. Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, and many Muslims were killed. The Prophet was severely injured and rumored to be killed.
3	Battle of Trench	Border of Madina	8-29 Shauwal 5H.	3rd-24th January 627 Saturday to Saturday	12,000	8	3,000	6	As a last resort of defense, Muslims dug a trench (5,5 km in length, 9 m in width, 4,5 m in depth) on the entry point of Madina, which otherwise was open to cavalry attack.	After about twenty days, the Allied forces did not achieve any results and returned.
4	Treaty of Hudaybiyyah	On the way to the pilgrimag e to Makkah	Dhu al-Qi'dah, 6H	March 628		0		0	A treaty of peace – 10 years of no- war pact. The treaty also serves as an example that Islam was not spread with the sword, as Muhammad had an army that could have attacked Mecca, but Muhammad chose to make a treaty instead of attacking. Meccan broke this treaty the very next year.	No soldiers, but over 1,400 Muslims were on pilgrimage to Makkah. To avoid bloodshed, t he Prophet signed a treaty favoring Quraysh against the wishes of his companions.
5	Khaybar	112 km from Madin a	7 H	May/June 628	10,000	93	1,500	15	Residents of Khaybar were willing to spend their wealth in pursuit of stirring agitation from the neighboring Arab tribes to wage war against the Prophet ﷺ.	
6	Mu'tah	East of the Jordan River	1 Jumada al-Awwal 8 A.H.	Septembe r 629	10,000		3,000	13		
7	Conquest of Mecca	Makkah	"21 Ramadan 8 H"	14th December 629, Wednesday	?	13	10,00 0	3	Prophet Muhammad ## emphasized refraining from fighting unless Quresh attacked. He divided the Muslim army into four columns: one to advance through each pass.	In turn, Prophet state declared Abu Sufyan's house a sanctuary because he was the present chief and provided general amnesty to all.
8	Battle of Hunain (Ref. Sealed Nectar, 2014)	Taif near Makkah	10 Shawwal, 8 H	630	20,000	70	12,00 0	4		It is mentioned in Surat at-Tawbah of the Qur'an ((9:25) and is one of the few battles mentioned by name in the Qur'an.
9	Expedition to Tabouk	Tabouk	Rajab 9 H	October 630			12,00 0	12		There was no contest by the Byzantine Empire.
10					Total	276		137		

² Dr. Hamidullah, Muhammad, 'The Battlefields of Prophet Muhammad', Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris, Series No. 3.



The loss of lives in the major battles imposed on Prophet Muhammad

All the significant battles were imposed on Prophet Muhammad , and he fought in self-defense. The loss of lives of non-Muslims was 276, and that of Muslims was 137, as shown in the table below. In each battle, the ill-equipped armies of Prophet Muhammad were grossly outnumbered by opposing well-equipped armies of Quraysh and their coalition forces.

	Details of Battles Imposed on Prophet ³ Muhammad #									
No.	Event	Location	Date - Hijra	Date - Gregorian	Persecuting Force	Non- Muslims killed	Muslim Force	Muslims killed		
1	Battle of Badr	Badr -110 km Southwest of Madinah	17th Ramadan 2 H	18th November 623, Friday	950	70	313	14		
2	Battle of Uhud	At the Border of Madinah	"7th Shauwal 3 H"	24th December 624, Monday	3,000	22	700	70		
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4	Treaty of Hudaybiyyah	On the way to the pilgrimage to Makkah	Dhu al- Qi'dah, 6 H	March 628		0		0		
5	Khaybar	112 Kms from Madinah	7 H	May/June 628	10,000	93	1,500	15		
6	Mu'tah	East of the Jordan River	1 Jumada al- Awwal 8 A.H.	September 629	10,000		3,000	13		
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8	Battle of Hunain (Ref. Sealed Nectar, 2014)	Taif near Makkah	10 Shawwal, 8 H	630	20,000	70	12,000	4		
9	Expedition to Tabouk	Tabouk	Rajab 9 H	October 630			12,000	12		
10					Total	276		137		

90% of these battles were in self-defense and brilliant tactics to achieve victory with minimal loss of lives.

³ Dr. Hamidullah, Muhammad, 'The Battlefields of Prophet Muhammad', Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris, Series No. 3

	Balance of Po	wer and Res	sults from Major Battles Imposed on	Prophet ⁴ Muhammad #
No.	Event	Location	Balance of Power	
1	Battle of Badr	Badr -110 km Southwest of Madinah	313 Muslim men, poorly armed, versus 950 trained Makkan fighters.	This was purely ideological. Makkans wanted to eradicate Islam and destroy Muslims once and for all. This One-Day battle was called "Al- Furqaan." – criterion that determines what the Truth is.
2	Battle of Uhud	At the Border of Madinah	Poorly armed Muslims consisted of 650 infantry, 50 archers, and four cavalry, while the army of Makkans consisted of 3,000 infantry, 3,000 camels, and 200 cavalry.	The Makkans had a clear purpose: to defeat Muslims, capture Madinah, and finish Islam. Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, and many Muslims were killed. The Prophet was severely injured and rumored to be killed.
3	Battle of Trench	Border of Madinah	As a last resort of defense, Muslims dug a trench (5,5 km in length, 9 m in width, 4,5 m in depth) on the entry point of Madinah, which otherwise was open to cavalry attack.	After about twenty days, the Allied forces did not achieve any results and returned.
4	Treaty of Hudaybiyyah	On the way to the pilgrimage to Makkah	A treaty of peace — 10 years of no-war pact. The treaty also serves as an example that Islam was not spread with the sword, as Muhammad # had an army that could have attacked Mecca, but Muhammad # chose to make a treaty instead of attacking. Meccan broke this treaty the very next year.	No soldiers, but over 1,400 Muslims were on Pilgrimage to Makkah. To avoid blood, and they were denied. To prevent bloodshed, the Prophet signed a treaty favoring Quraysh against the wish of his Campanians.
5	Khaybar	112 Kms from Madinah	Residents of Khaybar were willing to spend their wealth in pursuit of stirring agitation from the neighboring Arab tribes to wage war against the Prophet .	
6	Mu'tah	east of the Jordan River		
7	Conquest of Mecca	Makkah	Prophet Muhammad # emphasized refraining from fighting unless Quresh attacked. He divided the Muslim army into four columns: one to advance through each pass.	In turn, the Prophet declared Abu Sufyan's house a sanctuary because he was the present chief and provided general amnesty to all. The Conquest of Makkah was peacefully carried.
8	Battle of Hunain (Ref. Sealed Nectar, 2014)	Taif near Makkah		It is mentioned in Surat at-Tawbah of the Qur'an ((9:25) and is one of the few battles mentioned by name in the Qur'an.
9	Expedition to Tabuk	Tabuk		There was no contest by the Byzantine Empire, and later, the Byzantine Empire fell during Caliph Omar bin Khattab's time without a huge battle.

⁴ IBID



The results were severely grim if we consider the battles of various other times when Muslims were not involved. Throughout history, humanity has always fought for causes such as establishing supremacy and acquiring more power, wealth, and land; in the pursuit of doing so, many more lives were lost with no improvement. Review the last two world wars:

World War II: As one of the worst wars in history, World War II, fought from 1939 to 1945, the Second World War is the deadliest conflict in history, with over 70 million fatalities⁵. Involving all the world's great powers, divided into allied and Axis forces, it is the only war to have used nuclear weapons. The use of atomic weapons served no purpose but to cause catastrophic destruction.

World War I: First of the only two global wars in history, it is also called the Great War. The First World War was fought from 1914 to 1918, claiming 17 million lives. It resulted in Britain, France, and Russia's victory over Germany, Italy, Austria, and Hungary. The League of Nations was formed after the First World War, but it failed to ensure world peace, and eventually, World War II was fought.

	The 5 Bloodiest Battles in History							
	Battl e	Belligerents	Casualties	Casualties Details	Result			
1	The Battle of Stalingrad, 1942-1943	Nazi Germany vs Soviet Union	1,971,000	German 841,000; Soviet Union 1,130,000	Soviet victory			
2	The Battle of Leipzig, 1813	France vs. Austria, Prussia, and Russia	84,000	French 30,000; Allies 54,000	Coalition victory			
3	The first day of the Somme, 1 July 1916	Britain vs Germany	68,000	British 60,000; German 8,000	Indecisive			
4	The Battle of Cannae, 216 BC	Carthage vs Rome	60,000	Carthaginians 10,000; Romans 50,000	Carthaginian victory			
5	Battle of Gettysburg, 1863	Union vs Confederacy	46,000	Unionists 23,000; Confederates 23,000	Union victory			

⁵ 461 https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/5-worst-wars-in-history-of-the-world-249029-2015-04-17

No.	Battle	Year	Conflict	Casualties
1	Battle of Thymbra	547 BC	Lydian-Persian War	Approx. 100,000
2	Battle of Marathon	490 BC	Greco-Persian Wars	
3	Battle of Thermopylae	480 BC	Greco-Persian Wars	22,300–22,500
4	Battle of Plataea	479 BC	Greco-Persian War	51,500–257,000
5	Battle of Chaeronea	338 BC	Rise of Macedon	20,000 or more
6	Battle of the Granicus	334 BC	Wars of Alexander the Great	15,000 or more
7	Battle of Issus	333 BC	Wars of Alexander the Great	50,450
8	Battle of Gaugamela	331 BC	Wars of Alexander the Great	53,500
9	Battle of the Hydaspes	326 BC	Wars of Alexander the Great	23,310
10	Battle of Sentinum	295 BC	Third Samnite War	33,500
11	Battle of Heraclea	280 BC	Pyrrhic War	11,000–26,000
12	Battle of Kalinga	262 BC	Kalinga-Maurya Empire	150,000-200,000



Conclusion

Most of the battles were imposed on Prophet Muhammad ; after driving him from Makkah, at the third attempt to assassinate him, he left Makkah for Madinah in hiding with his close friend, Abu Bakr. Quraysh chased him, and all those wanted a considerable reward to capture him. After he migrated to Madinah, he formed a defenseless and extremely poor *city-state* with few streets and a handful of people. He fought his persecution throughout his life, responded with brilliant tactics, and minimized his followers' and opponents' bloodshed. The sum of the number of casualties in all battles from the Muslim side is below 200. With that, he conquered the entire Arabian Peninsula (7 governments today exist in the same area and over 80 million). The number of casualties from the enemy side is also below

300. Because he made them surrender many times by persuading them, they cannot defeat Muslims.

Islam acknowledges that there is no equality or comparison between good and evil. It requires that evil be repelled with something better, just as an antidote is better than poison. The Holy Quran ordains:

سُوْرَةُ المؤمنون

"Respond to the injustice (done to you) with the better deed. We know best what they attribute to God." (Quran 23: 96)⁶

Before Islam, the world was plunged into intractable wars, bloodshed, ferocity, and hatred. Fighting was endemic in society, with no ethical limits and no rules of conduct whatsoever. As a practiced religion, Islam does not rule out the possibility of war against a nation unwilling to live in peace and has become a threat to a peaceful country. When there is no option, and in the face of persecution, the believers are permitted to defend with vigor and complete preparation, but not ruthlessly. Modern war is always followed by pillage, looting, evil, and a general massacre.

On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad sissued strict orders to the commanders of Muslim armies not to attack women, children, old and sick men, not to cut down fruit-bearing trees and crops, nor to slaughter animals. Places of worship, mosques and churches, synagogues, temples, and other religious areas were protected. Mutilation or disfigurement of the corpses of enemies was prohibited. The dwellings of unresisting citizens were to be left untouched, so also the means of their sustenance.

To that extent, Islam opposes the stubborn yet oft-spoken doctrine: 'All is fair in love and war.' The Quran repudiates the negative narrative that Islam was preached by force. Conversion by compulsion is not allowed. Almighty Allah proclaims:

لَاۤ إِكۡرَاهَ فِى اَلدِّينَۗ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ اَلرُّشُدُ مِنَ ۚ لَٰٓئَا ۗ فَمَن يَكُفُرْ بِٱلطَّـٰغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ اَسْةً سَفْكَ بِٱلْعُرْوَةِ ٱلْوُثْقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَا ۖ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٢٥٦)

⁶ Sahih International

"There is no compulsion in religion. Indeed, right has become distinct from wrong. Whoever rejects the devil and believes in God has firmly taken hold of a strong handle that never breaks. God is Allhearing and knowing (Quran 2:256)⁷.

⁷ Muhammad Sarwar