

It is not hidden from any sincere Muslim that Islam is under vicious attack on many fronts in many ways. Muslims are being abused psychologically and emotionally under severe pressure from non-Muslim friends and foes alike. This is making more and more Muslims defensive and apologetic. Even mainstream organizations have lost confidence and are trying to “prove” they are harmless, peaceful, moderate and tolerable. This is a very dangerous trend that bodes ill for both Islam and Muslims.

On the psychological and emotional level, two of the methods of attack are the following:

From time to time, deliberate actions are taken to attack Muslim sensitivities usually by desecrating the sanctities held in esteem by Muslims. Such acts of desecration are promoted in such a way that Muslims are forced to react. In the reaction, somewhere, someone does something unpleasant. Even if someone does not, Muslim groups are infiltrated and implanted people are used to cause an unpleasant incident. Then that unpleasant incident is used to vile Islam for days through headlines and “expert” interviews. An example of this is the recent cartoon fiasco.

Alternatively, the Muslim world is constantly monitored for any incident that can be exploited for the same purpose. As soon as something is noted somewhere in some far away corner of the world, it instantly becomes the most significant news all over the world, dwarfing and relegating to the background all the viciousness, violence, massacres and persecutions perpetrated on multitudes of Muslims by other religious communities. Usually in an unknown township, in a far away wilderness, in some local court, someone is prescribed a capital punishment. It suddenly becomes the fault of Islam and propagated all over the world as such. The interesting thing is that for all those cases, after all the sinister hoopla and vicious bashing of Islam, not a single person has ever been executed, mostly because the Islamic scholars or superior courts were already in the process of setting the matters right.

The most interesting thing in this respect is that the people who speak up in favour of such “poor victims” are those who are themselves swimming in the blood of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi and Afghani women and children.

Even more interesting is that the moment the news breaks, all the friends and foes of Muslims in the West start demanding the Muslims of their countries to condemn and apologize for that “crime” that is supposedly “committed” or is “about to be committed” in that other corner of the world.

But I am not writing to complain about any of the above people – neither the blood-drenched murderers nor the so called peace activists who expect us, Muslims living in the West, to apologize for the crimes of the world as if we are the Jesus Christ of the day who allegedly carried the sins of the whole world.

My complaint is to the fellow Muslims and the Muslim organizations that jump obediently to

apologize on our behalf and on behalf of our beloved Deen – Islam. And while trying to apologetically appease the attackers on Islam, they end up defining the teachings of Islam according to the paradigms of the attackers. I want to tell them:

- We do not have to comment or express opinion on every event in the world involving Muslims just as no Christians or Jews are expected to do so;
- Even if a wrong is actually committed by a Muslim in another part of the world, we do not need to condemn it or apologize for it just as no Jew, Christian, Sikh or Hindu is expected to apologize, condemn or comment on the crimes of other Jews, Christians, Sikhs or Hindus.
- For all those who expect you to do so, you should politely ask them first to set an example by apologizing, condemning and actively working to stop the crimes perpetrated by their own communities.
- As long as we remain defensive, we will be rubbed more and more into the dirt. We must stand up and start holding other faith communities answerable for the crimes committed by their communities. They must be ashamed of and, in the words of Jesus, peace be upon him, remove their huge logs before asking us to apologize for the specks in our eyes.
- If our non-Muslim friends do not like an Islamic teaching, we must not try to twist our tongues to make it palatable to them. We must educate them by providing proper context and perspective instead of twisting or denying the said teaching. We must remember:

Never will the Jews or the Christians be pleased with you until you fully adopt their paradigms. Say: Surely Allaah's guidance (Islam) is the only guidance. And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no protector from Allaah, nor any helper. Al-Baqarah 2:120

That brings me to the Islamic law for apostasy for which currently some prominent Muslims and major Muslim Organizations are taking a compromising stance.

As most of those who have issued a statement on this topic have used the famous verse of Soorah Al- Baqarah (2:256) that says, “There is no compulsion regarding Deen”, I will concentrate on providing the proper message and perspective for this verse.

So what is the message and perspective of the verse 2:256?

Anyone who sincerely reflects on the functioning of this universe finds that everything is bound by the laws of nature that are all being consistently followed without any exception or deviation. These laws of nature are the commands of Allaah that have been pre-programmed in the nature of everything from a sub-atomic particle to the greatest galaxy. In addition, every living thing has also been pre-programmed through instincts. They are all forced to follow their natural

behaviour consistently and perfectly because of their being pre-programmed though laws of nature and instincts. The reason we are able to utilize those creations of Allaah SWT for our benefit is because of their consistency in their functions and behaviour thus programmed in their nature. In fact, it is this pre-programmed behaviour of the universe that sustains life on the earth; maintains the ecology in a state of balance and equilibrium; and makes all natural systems function harmoniously. Thus, we can say that the laws of nature and instincts are commands of Allaah which are obeyed by all creations and it results in balance, equilibrium and sustainability of the universe. In Islamic terminology we can say that the whole universe follows Islam (Submission) and is Muslim (Obedient) to Allaah because it has been pre-programmed to be that way through laws of nature and instincts promulgated by Allaah SWT. The fruit of Islam is peace, harmony and justice.

However, in addition to their being bound by the laws of nature and instincts, Allaah decided to give human beings free will and freedom to make choices and means to execute those choices. Because freedom can be used properly or abused, while giving people freedom to act, Allaah also prescribed Islam for them so that they can establish a just, peaceful, caring and loving society voluntarily while exercising their freedom of choice. This has been stated in the Qur-aan as follows:

Is it then other than Allaah's Deen^{footnote}Allaah's Deen means a lifestyle paradigm and system mandated by Allaah

^{/footnote} that they seek while everything else in the universe submits to Him as a Muslim, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him shall they be returned?

Aali-'Imraan 3:83

Although Allaah could have forced all people to become Muslim by pre-programming them like He did all other creatures in the universe, that is not what He wanted. He wanted to give people the opportunity to prove themselves if they voluntarily choose to submit to the Creator through Islam and as a result establish peace, justice and goodness on the earth or if they opt to rebel by following non-Islamic ways (ways of Taaghoot) and thus spreading injustice, exploitation, waste, animosity, hatred and bloodshed in the world. The following verse describes the decision of Allaah of not using His authority and power to force people to follow Islam, but rather let them use their intellect to come voluntarily to Islam:

There is no compulsion regarding Deen. The reality is that the right way has become distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Taaghoot and believes in Allaah, he indeed has grasped the most trustworthy handle that never breaks. And Allaah is Hearing, Knowing. Al-Baqarah 2:256

Now that Allaah SWT has not compelled people through pre-programming to live by the Deen of Islam, it is up to people to use their common sense and rational power to believe in Allaah and thus benefit from the strong support of the truth and Allaah's guidance that will lead them to the eternal success without breaking. If people choose not to believe in the realities about Allaah, they will not be forced because that will defeat the purpose for which they have been given freedom by Allaah. That is a simple, straightforward message of this verse.

Some people take this verse out of context and misinterpret it to mean that the rules of Islam cannot be enforced. They think that if a person claims to be a Muslim but violates the teachings of Islam, he should not be pressured to follow them. Nothing can be more ridiculous than this claim.

The fact that Allaah does not force people to become Muslims does not mean that those who choose to become Muslims should not be expected to follow its rules and regulations. Those who voluntarily accept Islam must follow its teachings or stop claiming to be Muslims. This is simple and straightforward logic. People are free to join or not to join an army. But once they join, they have no choice but to strictly follow the rules and commands. If they violate those rules, they will be punished and forced to obey. People are free to join or not to join a law school or medical college, but if they decide to join they must follow the curriculum and all other regulations to qualify and practice their profession. They cannot be allowed to do whatever they want. The same way, Allaah does not want to compel anyone to become a Muslim, but if one does become a Muslim, he has no choice but to live by its rules and practices.

This freedom is so important that Allaah SWT wants people to think clearly and rationally before calling themselves Muslims or converting to Islam. As such, Islam is the only religion that abhors blind faith. It wants people to have a rational faith that makes sense to them and that their intellect is fully satisfied with. Even those born in Muslim homes must make a conscious choice when they come of age. Before coming of age, they are not accountable. But once they come of age and make a conscious choice to accept Islam as their way of life, that is when they are held accountable for their deeds.

Then, once a person has made a choice, there is no going back. Allaah wants people to take their time, think hard and not accept Islam until it makes sense to them. However, once a decision is made on the basis of a rational thought process and a person declares to be a Muslim, there is no way out. In Islam, faith is a serious matter. One does not change it as a person changes clothes. One cannot play games with it. No one is forced to become a Muslim, but once he does, he cannot go back. This is crucial considering that many enemies of Islam played games with it to discredit it. These games were alluded to in the following verse:
A faction from the People of the Book say: "Believe in the morning what is sent down to the believers, then reject it at the end of the day; perhaps they go back on their religion. Aali-'Imraan 3:72

This refers to a game that was played by the Jews of Madeenah to discredit the Prophet and Islam. They prepared a corpse of volunteers who would come to the Prophet, pretend to accept Islam and announce their acceptance so that it was well known. Then later on, they would renounce it, quoting some pre-determined excuses and accusations on the Prophet and Islam. The Jews could play this game more effectively than others because they were already known in the society for their knowledge of the Book and God. The purpose of this game was that it gave them an opportunity to get to know the fresh new Muslims who did not have a chance to properly understand Islam and get to know the Prophet, and then encourage them to renounce Islam by creating doubts in their minds. It also gave them ammunition to discourage anyone who was contemplating to become Muslim from accepting Islam by pointing out their own disappointments.

Considering these devious plans of the enemies of Islam, the Prophet made it a law that turning back from Islam should be treated as an act of treason -- a capital crime. Although he did not have to use it, it prevented the games of the enemies. As well, it ensured that only the sincere people who had done their homework and were fully convinced of the truth of Islam converted to Islam.

This law is still valid. It is an Islamic law applicable to those who, by reciting Shahaadah, have taken an oath accepting the whole Islam as a complete way of life, but then want to break their oath of allegiance. The verse about no compulsion regarding Deen applies to bringing people into faith, but cannot and does not nullify the punishment for an act of treason or for breaking a solemn oath. The law about apostasy is not overruled by this verse, if the faith was not forced upon someone against one's will or oath of Shahaadah was not taken under coercion. All those Muslims who are quoting it to prove otherwise are misquoting a verse of the Qur-aan -- improperly and without relevance.

As far as the recent case in Afghanistan is concerned, it should be discussed in the light of many other factors that are relevant to the current state of the affairs of the Ummah and the specific circumstances of the case, instead of being apologetic about a legitimate law or quoting a verse out of context.

March 29, 2006

Part 2: Some Points for Reflection

Point 1

Personally I believe that all the discussion about apostasy and its punishment is purely academic, theoretical, and useless discussion because nowhere in the world do we have an Islamic state to implement a complete Islamic system, including the Islamic penal system. As an Ummah we should not be spending any time or energies on topics that do not have immediate practical value. This kind of indulgence in non-practical discussions is one reason of our ineffectiveness as an Ummah. The Islamic way and the Sunnah of the prophet is to concentrate on those matters that are in our power and that we can do something about. For all Muslims in the West, we must concentrate on the following three objectives:

1. Improving the Quality of Muslims – ensuring that as an Ummah we become the best in ethics, attitudes, dealings and conduct.
2. Increasing the number of Muslims -- promoting true Islam and inviting people to willingly accept it (Da'wah) so that we become the majority to democratically develop an excellent, just, ethical and loving society.
3. Converting the Islamophobic society into an Islam-friendly environment.

Once we have succeeded in the achieving these goals, then we will worry about what is Islamic law and what is not. Until then, we should not waste time and energies on anything that does not lead to the attainment of the abovementioned goals.

Point 2

When anti-Islamic elements create situations to attack Islam, we do not need to respond to their agenda and be distracted in useless discussion and infighting. Unfortunately, the Muslim leaders feel pressure from their non-Muslim friends and foes and immediately start issuing apologetic statements in their efforts to appease Western media and activists. In reaction to their apologetic statements, other Muslims then react and try to put forth the right Islamic perspective and set the record straight. This starts endless discussions wasting Muslim time and energies and creating discontent and discord in the Muslim ranks.

We as an Ummah in the West must break this cycle and these big distractions from our objectives. We must urge our leaders and scholars to resist issuing opinions on whatever the media throws in front us with their sinister designs. Why do we have to comment on what a judge does in an unknown place in some faraway land? Why can we not decline comments with an appropriate and polite refrain?

Point 3

The only reason I wrote about the verse 2:256 was because every North American “scholar” who spoke on the subject quoted that verse and used it inappropriately. The fact remains that verse 2:256 is a statement informing us about Allaah SWT not forcing people to adopt His Deen. It has nothing to do with the Islamic law for those who want to exit after adopting it. What I wrote is fully supported by the works of renowned scholars such as Syed Maudoodi and Ameen Islaahi.

Point 4

The North American leaders keep referring to all those verses which indicate that no one is to be coerced to come to Islam. No one is arguing against it. That issue is beyond doubt. But what they forget is the issue is not whether someone can be forced to come to Islam or not. The issue is that how should a person be treated who has come to Islam on his free will, without being pressured or forced, but then he decides to break his oath and revert back? Should

people be allowed to play games with faith or should it be made clear that do your homework and perform due diligence before you step forward because playing games is not appreciated in Islam? Let us not obfuscate the two distinct issues just as anti-Islamic elements tried to confuse the issue of the cartoons with freedom of expression.

Another verse being abused, out of context, in this respect is verse 4:137 which is clearly about hypocrites but is being quoted here for someone who openly declares to be an apostate. The verse describes their condition where they keep oscillating back and forth between Eeman and Kufr. They keep claiming to be Muslims and adopting some Islamic practices but they also continue indulging in anti-Islamic activities behind the scenes thus practically committing Kufr. This has nothing to do with apostasy. The difference between the two is that a hypocrite keeps publicly claiming to be a Muslim and praising Islam in words while privately practicing disbelief and hurting its cause stealthily. An apostate openly declares his disbelief and works against Islamic cause. The two are different characters and thus the verses about hypocrites cannot be generalized to apostates. Yes, a hypocrite can be more dangerous, and that is why Allaah has warned them of the severest punishment.

Some people argue that because the Qur-aan warns apostates of the punishment in the hereafter, there cannot be any punishment in this world. This is not right. The Qur-aanic mention of punishment in the hereafter for any crime, does not mean that there can be no punishment in this world. For example, those who commit theft and zinaa are warned of the punishment in the hereafter but the worldly punishment is also prescribed for those crimes. The same is the case with the punishment mentioned in 5:33 for those who wage war against Allaah and His Messenger.

Point 5

What I have shown is that any arguments used by the said leaders do not support their claim that there is no punishment for apostasy. Only one statement they have made is true. There is no such punishment explicitly mentioned in the Qur-aan.

Now the question takes a different form. The punishment of apostasy is mentioned in Hadeeth. Those who want to prove that there is no punishment for apostasy need to answer the following questions:

- Are the commands of the Prophet or the words of the Prophet a source of Islamic law or not?
- If they are, are the Ahaadeeth reported in this respect authentic or not?
- If these Ahaadeeth are authentic, are there any Hadeeth after these in which the Prophet overruled his earlier instructions?
- If not, who gives such proponents the authority to contradict the Prophet and quote the verses of the Qur-aan that are not even relevant to the subject matter? By quoting these verses,

are they suggesting that the Prophet did not know them, or understand them?

While answering the above questions, consider the following Ahaadeeth:

Allah's Apostle said, The blood of a Muslim, who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims. Sahih Bukhari Vol. 9, book 83, number 17, narrated via Abdullah

Narrated 'Ikrima: 'Ali burnt some people and this news reached ibn 'Abbas, who said, "Had I been in his place I would not have burnt them, as the Prophet said, 'Don't punish (anybody) with Allah's Punishment.' No doubt, I would have killed them, for the Prophet said, 'If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him.'" Volume 4, Book 52, Chapter 149, Number 260. p. 160-161

Narrated 'Ikrima: Some Zanadiqa (atheists) were brought to 'Ali and he burnt them. The news of this event, reached Ibn 'Abbas who said, "If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah's Apostle forbade it, saying, 'Do not punish anybody with Allah's punishment (fire).' I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah's Apostle, 'Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him.'" Volume 9, Book 84, Chapter 2, Number 57, page 45

Narrated Abu Burda: Abu Musa said, "I came to the Prophet along with two men (from the tribe) of Ash'ariyin, one on my right and the other on my left, while Allah's Apostle was brushing his teeth (with a Siwak), and both men asked him for some employment. The Prophet said, 'O Abu Musa (O 'Abdullah bin Qais!).' I said, 'By Him Who sent you with the Truth, these two men did not tell me what was in their hearts and I did not feel (realize) that they were seeking employment.' As if I were looking now at his Siwak being drawn to a corner under his lips, and he said, 'We never (or, we do not) appoint for our affairs anyone who seeks to be employed. But O Abu Musa! (or 'Abdullah bin Qais!) Go to Yemen.'" The Prophet then sent Mu'adh bin Jabal after him and when Mu'adh reached him, he spread out a cushion for him and requested him to get down (and sit on the cushion). Behold: There was a fettered man beside Abu Musa. Mu'adh asked, "Who is this (man)?" Abu Muisa said, "He was a Jew and became a Muslim and then reverted back to Judaism." Then Abu Musa requested Mu'adh to sit down but Mu'adh said, "I will not sit down till he has been killed. This is the judgment of Allah and His Apostle (for such cases) and repeated it thrice. Then Abu Musa ordered that the man be killed, and he was killed. Abu Musa added, "Then we discussed the night prayers and one of us said, 'I pray and sleep, and I hope that Allah will reward me for my sleep as well as for my prayers.'" Volume 9, Book 84, Chapter 2, Number 58, p. 45-46

Narrated Abu Musa: A man embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism. Mu'adh bin

Jabal came and saw the man with Abu Musa. Mu'adh asked, "What is wrong with this (man)?" Abu Musa replied, "He embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism." Mu'adh said, "I will not sit down unless you kill him (as it is) the verdict of Allah and His Apostle. Volume 9, Book 89, Chapter 12, Number 271, p. 201

Whoever changes his religion shall be killed Abu Dawood

It is not lawful to kill a man who is a Muslim except for one of the three reasons: Kufr (disbelief) after accepting Islam, fornication after marriage, or wrongfully killing someone, for which he may be killed Abu Dawood

These Ahaadeeth indicate the verdict of the Prophet as well as actions of the Companions in that respect.

People have also said that punishment is not for apostasy alone but only when apostasy is accompanied with high treason and waging war. The words of the Ahaadeeth are clear in this respect. They talk only about apostasy without adding any condition to it. There is no mention of waging a war. The fact is that punishment for those who wage war against Allaah and His Messenger is given in verse 5:33, which is a lot severer than simple capital punishment for apostasy.

Some people have quoted an example to prove that this verdict was not acted upon: There was a case at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) where a man came to him in three consecutive days and told him that he wanted to apostate. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) never took any action against him, and when the man finally left Madina, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) never sent anyone to arrest him, let alone kill him. This hadith appears in more than one version in Sahih Muslim and is authentic.

There are two problems with accepting this as an abrogation of the previous set of Ahaadeeth. Firstly, the man expressed what was going through his mind to the Prophet but he had not expressly repudiated Deen as yet. Secondly, it was never the Prophet's way to seek to unearth what people do and it was not his way to hunt people down who leave his territory. He acted to punish people only when a case was brought to him.

Another example is that of Abdullah bin Sa'd. He was one of the few persons appointed by the Prophet to write the revealed verses. After spending a while with the Muslims in Madeenah, he renounced Islam and returned to the religion of Quraysh. When Muslims entered Makkah victoriously, Prophet pardoned the people of Quraysh excluding few individuals from this general pardon, whom he ordered to be killed if captured, including Abdullah bin Sa'd. However, he was pardoned after 'Uthmaan bin 'Affaan pleaded on his behalf.

The Prophet's explicitly excluding him from the pardon clearly indicates that his decree for killing of the apostate was still in force. Pardoning him on the pleading of 'Uthmaan does not negate the fact that his killing was ordered according to the law about apostasy.

Concluding Point

It is clear that the Hadeeth prescribes a punishment for the crime of apostasy. However, like all other Islamic laws, it can be enforced only by an Islamic state (not to be confused with a Muslim country) only in its own territory as a part of the complete Islamic system that is built upon the same principles and through the same process as the Islamic state of Madeenah was. In addition, the newly created Islamic state will be Islamic if it implements the complete Islamic system of peace and justice gradually, evolving in the prescribed order of progression as indicated by the current order of commands in the Qur-aan and supported by Sunnah of the Prophet in that regard. In recent past, in order to neutralize genuine Islamic movements in their countries, some dictators have tried to put the cart before the horse by implementing Islamic penal code without establishing a Madeenah-like society first. That is counter-productive and harmful.

That is one of the reasons that I suggested in my first article on this subject that:

As far as the recent case in Afghanistan is concerned, it should be discussed in the light of many other factors that are relevant to the current state of the affairs of the Ummah and the specific circumstances of the case, instead of being apologetic about a legitimate law or quoting a verse out of context.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that this discussion about Islamic law is only a theoretical exercise until there is an Islamic state. Once Muslims have established an Islamic state, the scholars of the state will determine when will be the best time, process and mechanism to implement this command of the Prophet. Until that time, we are wasting our time discussing it. I have written this just to set the record straight. I will not respond to any questions or discussion in this respect any further.

April 2, 2006

The following is my Letter to Br. Jamal Badawi (April 16, 2006) on his public statements and writings on Apostasy My first major issue in principle

Allaah SWT put the verses and Soorahs of the Qur-aan in a certain order that was different from the order of their revelation. According to some eminent scholars, one of the wisdoms in that order was to provide proper context to the verses of the Qur-aan so that verses and the soorahs of the Qur-aan could be understood in that context. Thus, while deriving the meaning of the verses of the Qur-aan, their context must be considered.

While living in Canada for 29 years, I have seen people taking the verses of the Qur-aan out of context and fitting them wherever they like. When a learned person does that, his conclusion might still be correct while quoting the wrong verse. But it opens the door for a big Fitnah where the verses of the Qur-aan are abused and wrong conclusions are drawn. But some times a big

scholar may also fall into that trap and draw wrong conclusions.

Although I have no standing when it comes to scholarship, sticking with this contextual principle has helped me many times to identify a Fitnah much earlier than many scholars realized. A case in point is the Fitnah of the number 19 initiated by Rashad Khalifa. While many scholars were promoting his theories and quoting verses in support, I was pointing out how the presumed meanings of those verses did not fit the context and rules of Arabic grammar. I was summarily disregarded by those scholars except for Dr. Anis Ahmad of MSA /ISNA (now in Islamabad).

The reason I have given this long background is because I feel that you are also violating this principle of the context.

First Example

For example, verse 4:137 is a verse about hypocrisy; you are quoting it as if it is for apostasy. Just look at the very next verse 138 and then all the subsequent verses - what does it tell you? As I wrote under my point 4 of what I had sent you earlier, this verse indicates the oscillation of hypocrites between the acts of faith and practices of disbelief. This is their condition in terms of their activities that later on has been described in terms of their wavering mental condition ('tazabzub' in verse 143).

To indicate what I mean by context, here is an excerpt about this set of verses that I wrote more than a year ago in my teachings of the Qur-aan series on Soorah An-Nisaa:

Those who claim to be believers but do not practice justice in their dealings or do not dedicate their time, energies and resources to practise and implement the Islamic system of justice as a complete way of life are being invited to become true believers in the next verse:

136 O believers, believe in Allaah and His Messenger and the Book which He has gradually revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before; and whoever disbelieves in Allaah and His angels and His messengers and the last day, he indeed has strayed off far astray.

Accordingly, even if a person claims to believe in all articles of faith, but his practice or lifestyle is not according to the Islamic teachings and is not geared to Islamic objectives, he will be considered by Allaah a rejecter or denier of faith and extremely misguided.

As for those people who practice Islam only partially, they are considered hypocrites in the following verses, just as they have been identified in that manner previously. They are those who follow Islamic teachings when they conform to their opinions but ignore or reject them when they do not. When something of Islam appeals to them, they suddenly become active and

practising; but when some setback is faced, they abandon all practice. When they see benefit, they are seen among Muslims and in the masjid; when it is not beneficial, they disappear. This kind of attitude over time takes them farther and farther away from the true faith and hardens them in their un-Islamic behaviour. They even try to promote such attitudes of “looking after your interest” to others and create barriers in the way of the Islamic mission. Such hypocrites think they have a very effective and successful strategy, but in reality they are destroying their future in the hereafter; hence, they are sarcastically being given “good news” of painful punishment.

137 Verily, those who believe, then reject faith, then believe, then reject faith, and keep on increasing in disbelief, Allaah will not forgive them nor guide them to the right way. 138 Give “good news” to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful punishment – 139 Those who befriend the disbelievers rather than the believers. Do they seek honour from them? Then surely honour rests entirely with Allaah. 140 They continue to befriend them even when He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allaah’s revelations rejected and derided, do not sit with them until they engage in some other conversation; otherwise you would surely be like them. Allaah will gather hypocrites and disbelievers, all together, into hell indeed. 141 They are those who wait and watch about you: If you have a victory from Allaah they say, “Were we not with you?” But if it becomes disbelievers’ share, they say, “Did we not cover you up and protect you from the believers?” So Allaah shall judge between you on the Day of Judgment, and Allaah will by no means give the disbelievers a way against the believers.

These hypocrites are usually worshipers of their worldly interests and for those expediencies they tend to worship the “rising sun”. When they see that the anti-Islamic forces are more powerful and established, they think that their worldly interests are best served by keeping a “good relationship” with them. On the other hand, they are considered a part of the Muslim community, which either they cannot get rid of, or they do not want to abandon because it is in their interest to keep that identity. Mostly it is because of their so-called “Muslim” identity that anti-Islam forces use them for subversive and fifth-columnist activities. Their hypocrisy is shown by four aspects of their behaviour:

- They befriend anti-Islam forces at the expense of Muslims; both of the parties supporting, promoting and advocating for each other. They become a mouthpiece for the anti-Islam forces defending their vicious behaviour and making excuses for their subversive activities. In turn, if any Muslim exposes their hypocrisy, all the anti-Islam propaganda machinery starts a campaign in their defence.

- They think that the honour, prestige, glory, power and influence come from loyalty to and serving the interests of the anti-Islam forces. Thus, they become slaves of taaghoot (anti-Islam forces or party of shaytaan) instead of trusting Allaah who really owns all the power, glory, honour and prestige.

- When anti-Islam forces reject and criticize Islamic teachings or deride, ridicule or poke fun at them, they tolerate such activities and continue keeping company with them. Those who mock Islamic teachings, make cartoons, write books or make movies criticizing or rejecting the teachings of the Qur-aan and Sunnah, they are without doubt open enemies of Islam. But even tolerating such an activity or remaining at a location where such an activity is taking place indicates that the person is a hypocrite. Defending such a perpetrator, justifying his or her actions, showing respect for such an entity and continuing affiliation with such a group is

considered being part of that group by Allaah SWT.

- The fourth indication of their hypocrisy is that when something good happens to Muslims, they celebrate with them and want to claim a big share of the success; but when the enemies of Islam have the upper hand, they go out of their way trying to show them how their subversive, fifth-columnist activities helped anti-Islam forces achieve their objective.

Their hypocritical condition has been further exposed in the following verses:

142 Verily, the hypocrites think they are deceiving Allaah, but it is He Who is deceiving them: When they stand up for Ṣalaah, they stand up lazily only to be seen by people, hardly remembering Allaah; 143 wavering between this and that; neither for these nor for those. And whomsoever Allaah lets astray, you shall not find a way for him. 144 O believers, do not befriend the disbelievers in place of believers. Do you wish to give Allaah a clear evidence against you? 145 Certainly the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire, and you shall not find a helper for them. 146 Except for those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allaah and dedicate their deen solely for Allaah. Those, therefore, are with the believers, and soon Allaah will grant the believers an immense reward. 147 What would Allaah gain by punishing you, if you are grateful and believe? In fact, Allaah is ever Appreciative, Knowing.

Despite their so-called belief in Islam, they would be given the severest and the most painful punishment in hell because of their duplicitous and injurious behaviour.

The last two verses encourage them to repent, reform their behaviour and follow Islamic teachings wholly, solely, entirely and purely. If they do so, then Allaah SWT will accept them back in the fold of Muslims. He will also accept their repentance and their actions that show clear gratitude towards Allaah for His gift of Islam. The essence of faith is being grateful to Allaah for His guidance and His bounties. This gratitude is a condition of heart that actually leads a person to faith in Islam and then shows itself in words of praise and thanks for Allaah and in actions of the person in obedience to Allaah. In turn, Allaah accepts the person back as His obedient slave -- that is Allaah's appreciation for human gratitude.

Second Example

Similarly, your claim that Qur-aan rejects "any compulsion in matters of faith [2:256]" cannot be deduced from this verse alone. The verse 2:256 talks only about the matter of Takween, not the matters of Tashree'. This is a statement of Allaah's approach to guidance of people, not about the law of the Islamic state about apostasy. The context of this verse is that it follows the description of faith in Aayatul-Kursiy and as I had quoted in my article that I sent you:

This is the truth about Allaah SWT that all messengers believed and preached, but

unfortunately many people deviate from it. Allaah could have forced them to believe in this truth by pre-programming them like all other creations, thus depriving them from freedom to choose. But instead of compelling them to do so by depriving them from freedom, He has chosen to provide clear guidance through many signs in the universe, within human surroundings and their own existence as well as through clear teachings of the Messenger and the Qur-aan so that the sensible people can discover the truth rationally and adopt it voluntarily.

256 There is no compulsion regarding Deen. The reality is that the right way has become distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Taaghoot and believes in Allaah, he indeed has grasped the most trustworthy handle that never breaks. And Allaah is Hearing, Knowing.

Here Deen refers to Islamic faith and lifestyle that is firmly grounded in the attributes of Allaah as described above in verse of the Throne (255). Taaghoot is any ideology, system, person or clique that rebels from the obedience to Allaah, causes others to disobey Allaah and/or demands people's loyalty and obedience to itself in place of Allaah.

Now that Allaah SWT has not compelled people through pre-programming to live by the Deen of Islam, it is up to people to use their common sense and rational power to believe in Allaah and thus benefit from the strong support of the truth and Allaah's guidance that will lead them to the eternal success without breaking. If people choose not to believe in the realities about Allaah, they will not be forced because that will defeat the purpose for which they have been given freedom by Allaah. That is a simple, straightforward meaning that fits in the context. Some people take this verse out of context and misinterpret it to mean that the rule of Islam cannot be enforced. They think if a person claims to be a Muslim but violates the teachings of Islam, he should not be pressured to follow them. Nothing can be more ridiculous than this claim. The fact that Allaah does not force people to become Muslims does not mean that those who choose to become Muslims should not be expected to follow its rules and regulations. Those who voluntarily accept Islam must follow its teachings or stop claiming to be Muslims. That is simple and straightforward logic. People are free to join and not join an army. But once they join, they have no choice but to strictly follow the rules and commands. If they violate, they will be punished and forced to obey. The same way, Allaah does not want to compel any one to become a Muslim, but if one does become a Muslim, he has no choice but to live by its rules and practices.

Once a person comes out of the darkness of all the confusions and misguidances created by Taaghoot and takes a rational approach to faith, his mind is illuminated with the truth of Islam and guidance of Allaah. Then the straight path to the eternal success remains bright and clear for him. On the other hand, those who follow Taaghoot continue to grope deeper and deeper into the darkness of misguidance, confusion and misunderstandings. They continue wasting their time and life on wrong paths without seeing the dreadful end to which they are heading.

My second major issue in principle

My biggest issue with learned people like you is about the need to comment on the issues like

these brought up by non-Muslims. The following are the problems caused by taking up such issues:

- These are pure academic issues that do not mean anything. Even if we all agree that an apostate must be given capital punishment, it is an exercise in futility because we do not have an Islamic state to enforce it anywhere. Even if we all agree that there is no punishment, the exercise still remains futile. When an Islamic state is going to discuss these matters in an appropriate manner through due process of shooora, they are not going to care what any of us thought or wrote. So why is Muslim time and energy being wasted on these issues that do not have any current relevance? Have we run out of important things to do for the achievement of Islamic objectives? Was it the way of the Prophet to engage himself and Şahaabah into the issues that were not relevant to the current stage of Islamic movement? Just imagine the time and energy wasted because scholars like you decided to react to the enemies of Islam on an irrelevant matter and start a debate.

- When issues are discussed theoretically, people tend to look at them from the perspective of the current environment they are in. That may not be the right perspective and may lead to the wrong conclusions. When an Islamic movement succeeds and starts establishing Islam in the society, there will be a natural progression of implementing Islamic laws as it was during the time of the Prophet SAAWS. By the time Hudood are implemented, hopefully all the issues such as intellectual apostasy would have been property dealt with. The Shoora at that time will be able to judge properly the appropriate response to the challenges of time, rather than us speculating in view of the current state of Ummah and the attacks of enemies.

- By reacting, we are dancing to their agenda. We will never be effective in achieving our goals if we just keep reacting to their agenda instead of having our own planned strategy and agenda for achieving objectives of the Deen.

I will highly appreciate your thoughts on the two major issues that I have raised.

Note: Br. Jamal Badawi did not care to respond.