

## Proper Reaction to Misinformation about Islam BS Foad, MD 2012

The recent film attacking Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stirred a lot of reaction in the Arab & Muslim world. Angry demonstrations occurred that unfortunately also involved violence and loss of life, and attacking US embassies in Muslim countries. This reaction occurred before and was predictable. What do we learn from these events and what is the course of action in the future?

- 1- These attacks on Islam, on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and on the Qur'an are going to occur. We have to expect that, and we should be ready for it and have a plan of action
- 2- Our response should be one of patient perseverance, explaining the truth and contrasting it to the lies and false accusations, and not doing wrong
- 3- This is a long road that requires resolve and determination.
- 4- We have to respect freedom of speech. The only way to combat wrong ideas is not by suppressing it, but by contrasting it to the truth
- 5- 5-We need to educate others about Islam, the Qur'an and the noble character and life story of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

### Attacks on Islam are going to occur

﴿ لَتُبْلَوْنَ فِيْ أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعْنَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيْرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴾

Ye shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves; and ye shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship many gods. But if ye persevere patiently, and guard against evil, then that will be a determining factor in all affairs.

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 186

**Similar attacks have occurred in the past.** Salman Rushdie wrote his book attacking the Qur'an as not being a divine revelation but the imagination of Muhammad. A fatwa was issued putting a price on his head. The Danish cartoons depicted the Prophet in evil forms. The reaction was equally predictable. The Florida minister burning the Qur'an and having an "Attack Muhammad day". The Qur'anic verse tells us that there are bad evil people who desire nothing but to harm Muslims and distort the message of Islam. They resort to any activity, lies and distortion to misrepresent Islam, the Qur'an and the Prophet (PBUH). We should not be surprised but be prepared and ready and have plans of action.

**Such a plan of action is emphasized in the Qur'anic verse:**

- 1-Patient perseverance, explaining the truth about our religion
- 2-Not doing wrong in response
- 3-Be committed and have the will and resolve to face these difficulties and understand that it is a long difficult road
- 4-Respect the right of others to their opinions, even if their views are wrong
- 5-Contrast the truth to the fallacies and accusations, and explain the message of Islam in a clear logical way.

We have a wealth of information in the Qur'an and Sunnah to counter these false charges and lies. We can explain the evidence that the Qur'an is indeed a divine revelation from God. We can explain its message of love and peace and guidance to all mankind. We can show how it was preserved in its original form and not altered. We can show the life story of the Prophet (PBUH) and his noble character and how he behaved under similar circumstances.

We must respect the right of others to their opinion, even though we disagree. The Prophet (PBUH) was called a magician, a poet and a sorcerer. The Qur'an describes all these charges:

﴿ وَقَالُوا يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٦﴾ ﴾

They say: "O thou to whom the Message is being revealed! Truly thou art mad (or possessed)!"

Al-Hijr 15: 6

﴿ لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلَكَةِ إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧﴾ ﴾

"Why bringest thou not angels to us if it be that thou hast the Truth?"

Al-Hijr 15: 7

﴿ مَا نُنزِّلُ الْمَلَكَةَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوا إِذًا مُنظَرِينَ ﴿٨﴾ ﴾

We send not the angels down except for just cause: if they came (to the ungodly), behold! No respite would they have!

Al-Hijr 15: 8

And

﴿ فَذَكَرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِبِعَمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ ﴾

Therefore proclaim thou the praises (of thy Lord): for by the Grace of thy Lord, thou art no (vulgar) soothsayer, nor art thou one possessed.

At-Tur 52: 29

﴿ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِءَ رَبِّبِ الْمُنُونِ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾

Or do they say: "A Poet! We await for him some calamity (hatched) by Time!"

At-Tur 52: 30

﴿ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ ﴾

Say thou: "Await ye! I too will wait along with you!"

At-Tur 52: 31

﴿ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَمُهُمْ هَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ ﴾

Is it that their faculties of understanding urge them to this, or are they but a people transgressing beyond bounds?

At-Tur 52: 32

﴿ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ ﴾

Or do they say, "He fabricated the (Message)?" Nay, they have no Faith?

At-Tur 52: 33

﴿ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ﴾

Let them then produce a recital like unto it; if (it be) they speak the Truth!

At-Tur 52: 34

So the Qur'an here explains that they called him a possessed man, and a poet and a priest who fabricated this Qur'an. What is the response? Wait I will wait with you; if you have doubts then bring a book like this Qur'an! The truth is in the Qur'an. Read it and judge for yourself. Any question they bring we will find the answer in the Qur'an:

﴿ وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ ﴾

And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth and the best explanation (thereof).

Al-Furqan 25: 33

## **Patient perseverance and not doing wrong**

Attacking US embassies and destroying buildings and killing people as a reaction is wrong and shows that those Muslims who engage in such attacks are hoodlums and criminals. They are harming their own cause and their religion. Islam never tells us to take our anger on innocent people. Our Islam tells us to respect and safeguard the possessions and rights of others, even when we disagree with them. Yes we should be upset and angry when our religion and our prophet is misrepresented and attacked. But this anger should be controlled and our reaction should be measured and proper.

What these demonstrations have done is to show an angry mob mentality bent on destruction and revenge. Is this how we want to project our Islam to the world, not respecting the rights of others and doing wrong? The Qur'anic verse said: "Be God-conscious". Taqwa here means you do not do something that is wrong in retaliation. Then we are like those who initiated this blasphemy and lies.

## **Respecting freedom of speech**

Our religion tells us that as human beings we need certain things to survive. These in Fiqh are called Daroureyyat. They include:

- 1-The right to be safe about your life
- 2-The right to feel safe about your possessions
- 3-The right to feel safe about expressing yourself
- 4-Your family should be safeguarded
- 5-Your religion and convictions should be safeguarded.

If we want these rights for ourselves, we must be willing to respect and safeguard the rights of others in the same way.

## **Does Islam respect or deny freedom of speech?**

Islam certainly respects and safeguards freedom of speech and freedom of convictions. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(The best of martyrs is a person who stood up to a tyrant and was killed)

The Qur'an guarantees freedom of conviction and forbids Muslims from forcing others to become Muslims against their will

﴿ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا

مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾

If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth!  
Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!

Yunus 10: 99

And

﴿ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ فَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ

أَسْتَمَسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects Evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things.

Al-Baqara 2: 256

**How did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) behave against those who spread lies in Madina attacking his honor and accusing his wife Aesha, the so called Slander incident?** Did he silence them? Did he suppress these rumors? Did he put those in jail? No he waited patiently for weeks till the Qur'an came down exonerating Aesha and declaring her innocence and explaining the obligation of Muslims of standing up against lies:

﴿ لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٢﴾

Why did not the Believers - men and women - when ye heard of the affair, put the best construction on it in their own minds and say, "This (charge) is an obvious lie?"

An-Nur 24: 10

And

﴿ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ

اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

Behold, ye received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths things of which ye had no knowledge; and ye thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allah.

An-Nur 24: 15

﴿ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

And why did ye not when ye heard it, say "It is not right of us to speak of this: glory to Thee (our Lord) this is a most serious slander!"

An-Nur 24: 16

**The Prophet (PBUH) and his family were deeply hurt, but he did not suppress freedom of speech, though it was all lies.**

This film is all lies. It is produced by **extremists who hate Islam**. There are extremists in all religions. They share certain characteristics:

- 1-They have a narrow rigid interpretation of religion
- 2-They are fanatics, not willing to listen to different points of view. Either you are with them or you are against them. They are on the truth, anyone else is wrong
- 3-They only associate with similar mind set, which reinforces their rigid convictions. They isolate themselves and consider those outside their ranks as enemies or misguided and have no rights
- 4-In their eyes whatever they do is justified because they are the only ones following the truth. Killing is justified because others have no rights.

**How to deal with these extremists?** Killing them or putting them in jail does not solve the underlying problem, which is their wrong and twisted ideology. Others will follow in their misguided ways. The only way is to show how wrong their ideas are and to contrast it to the truth. This way others are not fooled by their rhetoric, and they will not have any safe havens. The Qur'an states:

فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً<sup>ط</sup> وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ<sup>ج</sup> كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ

الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿١٧﴾

. For the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth. Thus doth Allah set forth parables.

Ar-Ra'd 13: 17

## **Proper reaction to attacks on Islam**

**BS Foad, MD 2012**

**1-These attacks have occurred in the past and will continue. We should be prepared and have a plan of action**

**2-We should be patient and persevere, not do something wrong but behave properly, and show that the charges are lies and distortions. Many people do not know what Islam stands for, and most people have not read the Qur'an or know its teachings. Most people do not know the noble character or life story of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).**

**3-It is a long difficult road that requires resolve and determination**

**"You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves; and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship multiple gods. But if you persevere patiently, and guard against evil, then that requires resolve and determination" Al-Imran 3: 186**

**4-Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was called names and accused but he patiently persevered**

**"They say: "O you to whom the message is being revealed! Truly you are mad or possessed! Why not bring the angels to us if you are truthful?" Al-Hijr 15: 6 & 7**

**"Or do they say: "A poet! We await for him some calamity by time!" At-Tur 52: 30**

**"Or do they say: "He fabricated it?" No, they have no faith? Let them then produce a recital like it if they are truthful!" At-Tur 52: 33 & 34**

**"No question do they bring to you but We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation thereof" Al-Furqan 25: 33**

**5-Respecting freedom of speech and convictions**

We have to respect the right of every person to his views and convictions, even if we disagree.

Allah gave man a free choice: to believe or reject faith:

**"If it was the will of your Lord, they would all have believed. Will you then compel mankind to believe against their will?" Yunus 10: 99**

**"Let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands clear from error" Al-Baqara 2: 256**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not suppress freedom of expression during the slander incident in Madina, though he and his family suffered greatly. It was weeks before the Qur'an came down declaring the innocence of Aesha and teaching the Muslims a lesson, not to lie or spread rumors, and to stand up against lies and accusations:

**"Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard of the affair, thought well of themselves and say: "This charge is an obvious lie?" An-Nur 24: 10**

**6-There are extremists in all religions:** they are narrow-minded, rigid and consider anyone not sharing their convictions as unbelievers and enemies. They only associate with others of similar mind set and isolate themselves. They have no regard for human life. The only way to combat their evil is by exposing their wrong ideology, and denying them safe havens.

The truth and what benefits mankind will remain, and what is false will disappear:

**"For the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on earth. Thus does Allah set forth parables"**

**Ar-Ra'd (Thunder) 13: 17**