

The Conflict between Islam and the West as viewed by Global Jihad

Preface

It is no secret that the western countries enjoy a clear economic, technological and military superiority over Muslim societies in the modern post-colonial age. This advantage has spurred (since the end of the 19th century), and still spurs many Muslims, to examine ways for improving the balance of power, to ponder over the reasons for the illness of Muslim society and to provide an appropriate response, that will lead to a complete rehabilitation of Islam's power.

The Islamists, whom we are discussing here, believe that renewed adherence to primal Islam, is the key to the rehabilitation of the power of Muslim society. According to them, the modernization process, secularism and the import of western ideology constitute a principal and significant cause of the decline of Muslim societies and in the deterioration in the power of Islam. Furthermore, they view existing Muslim governments as corrupt and as agents of the West, who do not hesitate to harm those loyal to Islam if it serves their interests.

At present, this view is accompanied by the additional feeling of rage and discontentment amongst the Muslims, especially immigrant Muslims, in view of the wave of rising Islamophobia in the European continent. Comments made by European politicians on the threat to the European continent, stemming from the endless stream of Muslim immigrants, expressing fear of losing its Christian identity in view of the shift in the demographic balance in the Continent, due to a significant increase in the Muslim population, significantly fuels these feelings. These fears and admonitions find their way to the media and to political and

social circles which Muslims are also exposed to, and are never off the agenda.¹ If that is not enough, intentional or unintentional injuries to the Muslim's religious feelings – as in September 2005 when the Prophet Muhammad was ridiculed due to the caricature affair in Denmark, or in March 2008 with the publication of the Dutch movie "Fitna", depicting the Quran as a radical militant book – all of these continue to feed the feelings of alienation and rage amongst the Muslim population and promote the perception that the West is waging a covert and overt war against the Islamic religion.

Background

Following this atmosphere and in response to these trends, we are today witnessing the publication of articles in the Arab and Muslim papers, and not only in Islamic papers, on the persistent struggle the West is waging against the Islamic religion in various ways.²

The Iraqi journalist, Zaydan 'Isam, for example, wished to discuss it in an article he published titled: "The Injury to the Holy Things to Islam is the West's Way and its Coping Strategy (with Islam)". This article was printed in August 2009, in the Islamic "Al-Bayan" journal, published in London.³ The article contains severe criticism of the western governments allegedly exploiting items holy to Islam, in order to attack them as a means for weakening the strength of the Islamic religion. The solution, as he sees it, lies in the cooperation between the Arabic

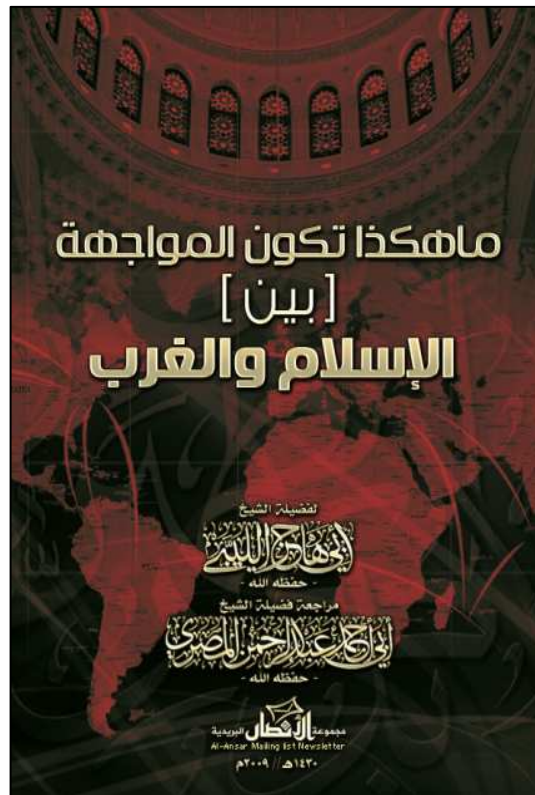
¹ Bat Ye'or's book (the author's pen-name) should be mentioned in this regard, constituting an excellent example of the criticism of the obsequiousness of the European governments in face of the Muslims, both in the country and outside and on the Islamic danger knocking on Europe's gates. See: Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: the Euro-Arab axis*, Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005.

² Recently, a newspaper called "Akhbar Denmark" (Denmark News) is being published, containing heated discussions on the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Europe in general and in Denmark in particular. See: <http://www.akhbar.dk/ar>

³ Zaydan 'Isam, "The Injury to the Holy Things to Islam is the West's Way and its Coping Strategy (with Islam)", "Al-Bayan", August 2009, issue 214. <http://www.albayan-magazine.net/ArticleView.aspx?ar=546>

governments and in forming a united front on the diplomatic level against the recurrence of such events.

In the Jihadi forums, we are also witness to many publications focusing on the strained atmosphere in the relationships between the western cultures and Islam. At the beginning of November 2009 a booklet was published, containing a manifesto titled: "This is the way the conflict between Islam and the West should be conducted".



This booklet was published in response to the above mentioned article by the Iraqi journalist, Zaydan `Isam. Although the booklet agrees with the first part of the article, that is the existence of an anti-Islamic Western campaign, it disagrees completely with the solution proposed by `Isam, that is, Arabic governments joining together to exert diplomatic pressure on the West, to halt its anti-Islamic campaign. In the eyes of the booklet's author, this reservation is

completely justified, as the Arab governments are considered to be a more dangerous enemy, in view of their internal oppression policy towards the Mujahideen and in view of their pretense as protectors of Islam.

The booklet's author is Abu Hajir Al-Libi, and it was edited by Abu Ahmad Abd Al-Rahman Al-Misri. The exact identity of these two is unknown, but they are credited with many pro-Jihadi and anti-Western publications.⁴

The contents of the book

A review of the article at the Al-Bayan journal

The booklet focuses at first on the main points of 'Isam's article and summarizes his thesis in the following manner:

1. Attacking everything holy to Islam.
2. Western interests and exploitation of immigrant publicists' writings.
3. An ongoing attack on the honor of Islam.

According to Zaydan, the West strives to achieve several goals in its policy to attack things sacred to Islam:

1. Checking the pulse of the Arab Islamic street.
2. Constantly attacking things sacred to Islam.
3. Creating a western public opinion hostile to Islam.
4. Instilling fear in face of an Islamic resurrection.
5. Depicting Islam as a puritanical religion compared with other religions.

⁴ For example, one can mention a paper titled "Jihad: Between the General Duty and the Personal Duty" by Abu Ahmad Abd Al-Rahman Al-Misri, published in 2009, and a paper titled "The Meaning of Tawhid: Between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jihadi Salafia" published by Abu Hajir Al-Libi on October 2009.
<http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/showthread.php?t=11662>.

Later on in the article Zaydan expresses his opinion regarding the response strategy used against the above mentioned Western policy, via two main axes:

- a. Estimating the existing conflict. According to the author, the current conflict has succeeded in awakening popular action, as well as exerting pressure on the official institutions to send a firm message to the West by way of an economic boycott. However, he asserts that there are several drawbacks such as displays of violence, which miss the target and do not succeed in deterring the West from continuing its abovementioned policy.
- b. A proposed strategy, that will include three axes:
 - "A Management Conflict" by use of boycotts.
 - "A Defensive Conflict" by teaching the Islamic religion, knowing its sacred words and its Prophet Muhammad in sessions, lectures and by any other means. All this in coordination with the organizations operating in defense of the Prophet's honor, and by strengthening the exile communities in the West, so that they can cope with this type of attack due to their closeness to Western thinking.
 - "A Strategic Conflict", which will occur on two axes:
 - Encouraging the international echelon to legislate laws prohibiting the attack of any religion by ingoing pressure on the official internal institutions, so that this program will be adopted on the international level.
 - "Leaving the stage of united defense to an organized ideological attack against western values, comparing them to the values of Islam, so that their value will be elevated and the backwardness of the western values is clarified."

In response to the article in Al-Bayan

Upon completing the presentation of 'Isam's main points in the article, the booklet provides Abu Hajir Al-Libi's response. The response is divided into four sections:

1. According to Abu Hajir Al-Libi, Zaydan 'Isam is mistaken in the very claim and belief, that it is the role of the secular institutions to run the coping strategy against the anti-Islamic policy of the West. In his view, the secular institutions do not refer to this issue seriously, as they themselves directly or indirectly attack the honor of Islam:⁵

"They defend in their country the freedom of heresy. Furthermore, they celebrate it and encourage it by awarding rewards, jobs and decorations. All the media is displayed before them."

Abu Hajir Al-Libi goes on to point to the hypocrisy of the secular governments, their institutions and their media, who continue to incessantly attack the honor of Islam. For example, he mentions a series of Muslim intellectuals such as Noel Al-Sa'adawi, who dared come out against the Sharia and depict Islam in a negative light. According to him, these personalities receive protection and praise from the authorities.

In the same breath, he mentions several secular Arab governments such as Tunisia, whose laws harm the principles of Islam and contradict the Sharia, such as the abolition of the Friday Prayer or the comments made by the Tunisian Foreign Minister against the wearing of veils.

⁵ Page 4.

In the same manner, he negatively mentions Morocco, in view of its alleged policy to push aside religious demonstrations and hide the religion's place in social life. The author states, as an example, that several years ago the Moroccan authorities ordered the destruction of hundreds of mosques in the country, which they claimed were built without a permit. According to him, the media in Morocco reported the destruction of over 500 mosques. According to him, the Moroccan media also participates in the negative depiction of Islam. To this he adds the arrest of hundreds of Islamists, by the Moroccan authorities, Jordan, Syria and the Gulf countries, where there is a secular government and Saudi Arabia, which is deviating from the righteous path in view of the conferences it organizes for bringing closer the religions, which are, according to him, encourage heresy and lawlessness.⁶

"These are the same governments the author asks to legislate international laws in order to protect against the injury to the sacred things [...] Dear Sir, these are the governments denying the Sharia of their sovereign."

2. Abu Hajir Al-Libi criticizes the obsequiousness in face of the international laws and asks cynically if the Sharia should be subjugated to international law, are the heretic western world and the secular Arab governments expected to punish someone cursing Islam, Allah and his Prophet, or anyone attacking the things sacred to Islam?! Are the Muslims willing to accept laws that were not given by the heavens?!

⁶ Pages 5-6.

3. In order to clarify what is the law regarding someone disgracing the honor of Islam and its Prophet, Abu Hajir Al-Libi refers to the rulings of the 13th century scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah. According to him, Ibn Taymiyyah has ruled that the death penalty should be imposed on any Muslim and infidel who dares curse the Prophet.
4. According to Abu Hajir Al-Libi, some movements pretend to cloak themselves in Islamic garb. They speak in Islamic terminology and use slogans such as "The Quran is our constitution". However, in fact, all of these are just sweet talk and deception. All they wish to protect is secularism and adopt western ideology such as democracy and nationalism etc. He states, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood movement, whom he calls "the Non-Muslim Brotherhood", as an explicit expression of this false culture. According to him, "the Non-Muslim Brotherhood" sinned when they butchered the Mujahideen in Gaza. In his view, there is a trend to fight "movements, calling themselves Salafi" in every way.

At the end of the booklet, Abu Hajir Al-Libi enumerates several points to be implemented titled "milestones", referencing Sayyid Qutb's book title:

1. The expectation that the "Muslim" governments will help defend the things sacred to Islam is a fiction and an illusion.
2. One should not expect any real help from the oppressed people unless they are educated and directed towards the right truth, that is, Islam.
3. The Sharia must be implemented and the Caliphates must be established, just as the Mujahideen did in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Somalia, Iraq etc.

To that end, the author states that it is imperative that the following steps be taken:

1. Help the Mujahideen as much as possible.
2. Clarify that the way of the Mujahideen is the true way of the Sunnis, and defend their honor against the media defamation campaign against them.
3. Expose the true face of all those [the Muslim rulers and their aids] wishing to mislead the Muslim nation and the need to refute their false claims.
4. Publicize Fatwas of religious clerics and preachers advocating the bloodshed of any one wishing to harm the Prophet's honor and the honor of Islam.

Summary

The contents of the booklet highly reflect the place held by secular Arab countries (including that of Saudi Arabia,) in the perception of the Salafi-Jihadists. In their eyes, these countries should be viewed with the West as one, with a joint agenda, according to which Islam should be marginalized and its political power should be diminished. Morocco, Tunisia and other Arab countries are no different than western countries, as their policy is characterized by anti-Islamic manifestations, such as the closing down of mosques, the arrest of Islamists etc. That is why the author completely refutes the thesis raised by the Iraqi journalist, 'Isam, as well as the perception that the Arab countries should be given a central and important part in warding off the West's attempts at attacking, whether overtly or covertly, the power of Islam, as their anti-Islamic policies are similar to those of the West.

Another important point mentioned in the book is the need to open your eyes and notice that not every Islamic movement is indeed loyal to the principles of Islam.

The Muslim Brotherhood movement, for example, is accused of being a movement pretending to be merely Islamic, with no real affiliation or adherence to the principles of the Islamic religion, witness the recent massacre carried out by the Hamas against their brothers in the Gaza Strip. Therefore, Islamic movements, who are not loyal to the principles of Islam, should also be included in the list of the enemies of Islam.

The salvation for the rehabilitation of the power of Islam, according to the author, lies on the one hand in strengthening the propaganda for the Mujahideen, and not only for them, and on the other hand - on a propaganda campaign against those discrediting and sullyng the Islamic religion. Furthermore, such a person, whether he is a Muslim or not, is not protected anymore.