

# Tug of War

A Confrontation of Two Rights



Salman Tahir



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# Introduction

In this world of ours, there has always been a centuries long “tug of war” between the west and the east, the practical and geographical west and east. More specifically, the eastern hemisphere, and the western hemisphere of the world. The west and east are significantly divided not only because of their geographical and physical contrasts, such as the weather and the people’s natural skin tone. But, the significant division is caused due to their culture, traditions, religion, and customs.

The world has been in constant chaos and unrest due to constant confrontations between these two domains. While over the centuries, both have tried to prove themselves right and both have tried to conquer the significant other in order to be the supreme power. Astonishingly, both claim the reasoning of the chaos, or “back-fire” they have done over the history, was to maintain peace in the world. While the history is witness that this hostility of the west and the east has only caused riots. The question we want an answer for is, that if both the sides strive for peace, then why has there been an unrest since a long time? If the fight continues what could be the ultimate result? How much loss can it cause? Who is the right one in this war? Or more significantly, is there a right one?

# The Problem

Four centuries long crusades, five centuries long inquisitions, countless mongol invasions and horrific events like the 9/11 are just a few to name in terms of “wars in the name of religion”. Even though, out of the 1763 wars that have occurred on the face of earth, only 123 are documented to be because of religious causes. Yet it is evident that some sort of tension has always existed between religious groups.

However, as we continue to track these tensions, history tells us that while some groups like the crusaders were initially created for the sole purpose of religious warfare, they later on, converged to convey cultural purposes. As can be demonstrated by the British’s invasion of several other countries with the belief that their religion was the “superior religion”, which eventually merged with the concept that their culture was the “superior culture”. Furthermore, this is the same pattern that can be said to be followed by the Mughals, where they initially started as a crusade, that is to say that their sole aim was religion, but later it got merged into concepts such as culture and empire.

Now we may say that the proper word to accurately define these groups, can be “nations”, with both religious and cultural properties playing their roles in the formation of ideas and believes. While this does make it easy to work further on the analysis of the problem, it still does not explain the reason of the war to exist in the first place.

It must be understood that no religion or culture teaches their followers, to actually go on and hate any other group. This is obvious without any argument over it. The only argument against it will be done by the opposing power, say the west would agree with this concept in terms of the east, and the same would go from the east's side. However, these tensions do exist and naturally it leads us to two conclusions:

- Misunderstandings have naturally occurred over the time.
- A “third party” has successfully sown the seeds of misconception,

There is a difference between the terms “misconceptions” and “misunderstandings” as used above. The word “misconception” means that the entire concept, say the concept of Islam as a religion of peace and submission, is entirely misunderstood as the religion of terrorism. While “misunderstandings” mean that a small concept, within the entire concept of Islam, for example believing that islam oppresses women, with something like not allowing them to work at all. Perhaps, both the terms, misunderstandings and misconceptions are interlinked.

Even though, till now we have clarified the fact that there is really no such thing as the actual religion's teachings itself, to hate the other, which makes it obvious, that one of the options mentioned above has to be the reason of the war. “Which one?” is perhaps, a difficult question.

# Misunderstandings

To answer this question, we need to repeat the history. It might be difficult to to build a “timeline” of misunderstandings, as these have occurred naturally. However, a common example can give us a good outlook as to how they can occur.

Consider the following verse of the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا

“O you who believe! Do not take the disbelievers as protectors instead of the believers. Do you wish to give God a clear warrant against you?”

The Holy Quran (4:144)

This verse can apparently mislead anyone into thinking that Islam doesn't allow any Muslims to befriend a non-Muslim, thus it would cause him to eventually start hating Islam and the Muslims. And on top of that, there will be several individuals or groups out there who will be looking forward just for an opportunity like this and they will try to make this a problematic issue by either misquoting and/or providing an inaccurate translation, one that will fit their own evil propagandas. Therefore an elaboration is necessary.

Further commentary from “The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary” states\*:

“The concept of protectorship (*walāyah*) was an important social principle in the tribal culture of pre-Islamic Arabia, denoting a bond of complete loyalty and mutual defense. In the Quran, the concept is powerfully invoked to express religious, rather than tribal, association and alliance as well as power and authority. The believers are repeatedly reminded that God is their ultimate Protector (*Walī*), that the Prophet and their fellow believers are their only true protectors (*awliyāʾ*) in the human realm (see, e.g., 2:107, 257; 3:68, 122; 4:45; 5:55; 6:14, 127; 7:196; 8:72; 9:71, 116), while idolaters seek protection vainly from their idols (e.g., 2:257, 13:16) and disbelievers seek protection with Satan and each other (e.g., 7:30; 8:73; 16:100). The believers are repeatedly warned not to seek the protection of those outside their religious community, including Jews and Christians (3:28; 4:89, 144; 5:51, 57), or even their own family members, if they are not believers (9:23).

In the present verse, *those who take disbelievers as protectors instead of believers* are the hypocrites mentioned in the two preceding verses. In seeking strength from those outside the community of believers—that is, with the Jewish clans (R, Z) or with the idolaters (Ṭs)—they violate bonds of loyalty to the religious community of the believers, showing their perfidy and opportunism and manifesting their lack of trust in the sufficiency of God’s protection. The verse mocks the idea of seeking strength or *might* (‘*izzah*) through such alliances of protection, when *might belongs to God altogether*. See 63:8, where *might* (‘*izzah*) belongs to God, the Messenger, and the believers; and 29:41: *The parable of those who take protectors*

*apart from God is that of the spider that makes a house. Truly the frailest of houses is the spider's house, if they but knew."*

The commentary for the two preceding verses where the hypocrites are mentioned is as follow:

"137 Those who believe and then disbelieve, and then believe and then disbelieve, and then increase in disbelief, God will not forgive them nor guide them unto any way.

137 Following upon the articulation of required beliefs in the previous verse, this verse warns those who waver in their belief. By acknowledging the possibility of returning to belief after having apostatized, the verse indicates the possibility of communal (legal) acceptance of a former believer who leaves the community of faith, but then repents and seeks to reenter it. However, the verse also suggests that each time one falls away from belief, the possibility for a full return is diminished, as it leads to an "increase" in disbelief. For those who continue to waver in this way, "increasing" in disbelief, the Quran issues a rare warning that God will not forgive them and that they will be bereft of His Guidance.

Because the act of apostasy is mentioned three times before the warning is issued, some commentators have asserted that the repentance of an apostate from the faith should be accepted only three times. Most, however, argue that repentance is always accepted (Ṭ), even if continued acts of apostasy make full and lasting repentance unlikely, either because of the negative effect of repeated apostasy upon the soul (Z) or because

such wavering indicates that belief was never firmly rooted in such a heart (R). The possibility of forgiveness is thus closed only to one who continues increasing in disbelief until death and dies in that state (R, Ṭ)—the state in which one dies being, for some, the true indicator of faith or lack thereof (R). The latter position is supported by vv. 145–46, where it is said that the hypocrites are in the lowest depths of the Fire . . . save those who repent and make amends. Mu‘tazilites and others argued that God will not . . . guide them meant that they would not be guided in the Hereafter to the paradisaal Garden, that is, after their disbelief had been fully confirmed by their having died in this state (R, Ṭs) or, alternately, that He removes His Guidance from them in this life as a punishment (Ṭs, Ṭū). For Ash‘arites it is simply an assertion that God does not guide disbelievers, even in this life (R). The reference to “increasing” in disbelief is understood by Ash‘arite theologians as supporting their doctrinal assertion that there were degrees of both faith and disbelief (R). Contrary to the Mu‘tazilites, Ash‘arites held that acts of obedience or sin increased one in faith or disbelief, respectively.

Some assert that the verse applies to Jews or Christians who, having believed in their scriptures, then manifest disbelief by refusing to accept prophets and scriptures that come after their own or by compromising their belief in their own scriptures (Ṭ); see 3:72. Early Shiite tafsīr traditions considered this to be a reference to Muslims who manifested belief during the lifetime of the Prophet, but later refused to accept the authority of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib—an authority that, for Shiites, was alluded to in the Quran and openly affirmed by the Prophet before his death (Qm). The most likely



interpretation, however, is that it refers to the hypocrites in the Prophet's community who wavered in their belief (ٲ). It is likelier that it applies to hypocrites, rather than Jews and Christians, since other verses of the Quran assert the possibility of salvation for those who are Jews and Christians (2:62; 5:69); so the failure of individual Jews and Christians to become Muslims would not itself seem to close off the possibility of their eventual salvation. Moreover, this verse is followed immediately by a lengthy discussion of the hypocrites in vv. 138–46, thus making the hypocrites the more likely referent.

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138 Give glad tidings to the hypocrites that for them awaits a painful punishment.

138 Following the assertion of God's lack of forgiveness for those who waver in their belief and ultimately die in disbelief, this verse instructs the Prophet to give glad tidings (bashshir) to such hypocrites of the punishment that awaits them. Glad tidings is usually used to mean the good news of salvation the Prophet brings to the righteous believers, for the Quran elsewhere asserts that on the Day of Judgment, there shall be no glad tidings for the guilty (25:22). But, as here, the Quran occasionally uses this term in an ironic or mocking tone when warning of the fate of disbelievers (see 3:21; 9:3, 34; 31:7; 45:8; 84:24) or when mentioning the fact that, in the pre-Islamic period, the Arabs often reacted to the "glad tidings" of the birth of a daughter with grief and rage; see 16:59; 43:17."

Now this, successfully elaborated how a small misunderstanding can be very dangerous. And so, due to some common misunderstandings like the one mentioned above, inaccurate mindsets were made, causing hatred against the other hemisphere, for basically, no real reason, and causing no benefit to either of them, but just serving as the fuel for the missions of the evil.

Thus, after successfully providing a complete context to the situation it may become clear that the scenario was very well defined. And for someone who is/was in error due to actual misunderstandings, it is a relatively simpler process to explain the entire context and scenario to clear out the misunderstanding. Given that this individual was in an actual error, they will be cooperative.

In the real world however, the chances are far greater that you find people in error who obviously do not see themselves in error. And so they will fight back, defending their point of view. And as natural reflex, one might feel attacked. One might feel that this person is not in a genuine error, rather he is one those who are involved in the intentional misquotation and all other sorts of evil propaganda. This is where it is important to practice patience and try your best to explain to them in the most plausible manner. And remember the command:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ  
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation. And dispute with them in the most virtuous manner. Surely thy Lord is He Who knows best those who stray from His way, and He knows best the rightly guided.”

The Holy Quran (16:125)

One of the reason of quoting the above discussed verse to demonstrate the concept of naturally occurring misunderstandings is that the explanation of this verse is not a typical case of misquotation, where only a part of the verse is quoted, which drops the entire context and may lead to a misunderstanding. Or where just one verse quoted out of context may lead to misunderstandings, which can very easily be cleared up when the verse is read in context, that is with the verses preceding or succeeding it. These patterns are usually found in intentional misquotations, as in the propaganda to misrepresent the religion of islam.

In the case of naturally occurring misunderstandings, the factors that can cause these misunderstandings are rather far more complex. Even so that sometimes the laymen muslims will also have trouble interpreting it. Therefore, not only a translation, not only the context and neither only one *tafsir* is enough to explain the verse. Therefore either a comparative study of *tafasir* will help, or a book like “The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary” in which not only a comparative study of tafasir is done, rather the entire context in terms of the culture and cultural norms of the time and nation is explained.

And thus, on our shoulders, is a far more greater responsibility while trying to explain such a situation to a non-muslim. Therefore we must be careful, precise and often seek help from the scholars or learned men in such matters as the explanation of the Holy Quran is not a matter to be tread lightly.

# Misconceptions

After ruling out naturally occurring misunderstandings we are now left with misconceptions created by an evil party. Religion, is one of the most “sensitive” and “deeply connected” issue to humans, and that is why perhaps it is really easy for an evil third-party to use religion as a trigger.

How bad it is? And can it go worse? These are really important questions, and it is important to elaborate them. It cannot be said exactly how much, but, perhaps we can look back to take heed, look back not in the history of any race, sect, religion, nation or any group, defined by any particular, categorical name, but look back in the history of mankind to learn some valuable lesson. We shall look back in our history to some really dangerous events that caused deaths of hundreds or thousands or rather annihilation of entire nations.

We can reverse-engineer the process, to follow the time line of the “third-party” mentioned above. This will make it easy for us to then analyse what is left behind. To put it simple, we don’t know what misconceptions came naturally and what came by the action of a third party. And while we have analysed the nature of the misunderstandings that occur naturally, for an even more accurate account, we will just analyse that what came from the third-party, as we do have a proper timeline of it, and what is left behind, came up naturally.

As opposed to naturally occurring misunderstandings, intentionally created misconceptions are created to support a certain kind of propaganda and thus they always exhibit some properties like as follow:

- The aim of such misconceptions is always dispute. At any level, these misconceptions will be targeted to create and provoke war, hatred and injustice amongst people.
- As the aim of every divine, true religion, that is to say in its uncorrupted form, its aim will always be to prevail justice and humanity. And as these propagandas aim to provoke war, hatred and injustice amongst the society, it will be noticed that these misconceptions are often against the very original divine religion's preachings.

To sketch an idea of the nature of these misconceptions, consider the often misquoted, "sword verse" :

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ ۚ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayer and give the alms, then let them go their way. Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful."

The Holy Quran (9:5)

For starters, this verse is often only half quoted, only the part “lay the idolaters wheresoever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush” is often seen to convey the sense that this is a categorical command without any context whatsoever. And therefore, to suit the propaganda the part “But if they repent, and perform the prayer and give the alms, then let them go their way. Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful.” Is rarely ever mentioned.

Furthermore, there are quite a few verses preceding and succeeding this verse that give a complete context of the scenario. The verses go as follow:

“ (1) A repudiation from God and His Messenger to those idolaters with whom you made a treaty. (2) So travel freely throughout the land for four months, and know that you cannot thwart God, and that God shall disgrace the disbelievers. (3) And an announcement from God and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater ḥajj: that God and His Messenger have repudiated the idolaters. So, if you repent, it would be better for you. And if you turn away, then know that you cannot thwart God. And give the disbelievers glad tidings of a painful punishment, (4) save for those idolaters with whom you have made a treaty, and who thereafter commit no breach against you, nor support anyone against you. So fulfill the treaty with them for its duration. Truly God loves the reverent. (5) Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayer and give the alms, then

let them go their way. Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful. (6) And if any of the idolaters seek asylum with thee, grant him asylum until he hears the Word of God. Then convey him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who know not. (7) How can the idolaters have a treaty with God and with His Messenger, save for those with whom you made a treaty at the Sacred Mosque? If they remain true to you, remain true to them. Truly God loves the reverent. (8) How, since if they prevail over you, they will not observe any kinship or treaty with you? They please you with their mouths, while their hearts refuse. And most of them are iniquitous.”

The Holy Quran (9:1-8)

Further commentary from “The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary” states:

“1 – 4 The first verse of this sūrah is an announcement of the annulment of a treaty between the Prophet and the idolaters. Repudiation (barā’ah) has the sense of being or becoming unallied, being innocent of, or being disassociated from something. Here it means that the existing truce or treaty has come to an end. Regarding the circumstances and the interpretation of this verse there is what Ibn Kathīr calls “considerable disagreement.” In one account, this verse is said to refer to the breaking of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, a treaty contracted between the Prophet and the Quraysh that had established a ten-year truce (see Sūrah 48). This treaty not only included the Prophet and the Quraysh, but also their respective allies, among whom were the tribes of Banū Khuzā’ah on the side of the



Prophet and Banū Bakr on the side of the Quraysh. Banū Bakr later launched an attack on the Banū Khuzā‘ah, stemming from a vendetta that preexisted the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, and it was reported that the Quraysh assisted the Banū Bakr with arms and a small number of men (Q). The Prophet considered this act to be a breach of the treaty, thereby nullifying the need to observe the truce, and this ultimately led to the final conquest of Makkah by the Prophet and his followers. According to this account, the repudiation of the treaty is addressed to the Makkans.

According to the majority of commentators, however, this verse was revealed after the conquest of Makkah in 8/630, a year after the breach of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah. There is considerable difference of opinion as to which idolaters are addressed and the legal import of both the *repudiation* (v. 1) and the *announcement* (v. 3). One opinion is that if some idolaters had an existing treaty with the Prophet, a treaty whose term had more than four months remaining, it was reduced to four months, and if they had one that was to expire before four months, it would be extended to a period of four months. Others add to this latter group those with whom the Prophet had made no treaty, so that they would be automatically granted a four-month truce. Yet others interpreted this four-month period to apply only to those idolaters who had less than a four-month treaty or none at all, but would not reduce an already existing treaty that was being faithfully observed. And still others believed that this directive applied only to those who had no preexisting treaty at all, and that anyone else with a treaty in hand would be dealt with according to that treaty, regardless of its term (IJ, Q, Ṭ). For example, Ibn ‘Abbās notes that the Muslims had a treaty with

Ḥayy ibn Kinānah that still had nine months left at the time of the *announcement*, and they continued to observe it (R). As for those who interpret this as the rescinding of a treaty with those who had a treaty before, this ruling was considered permissible under certain conditions as outlined in 8:58c, namely, when there is a reasonable expectation that the other side will not fulfill the treaty terms or in cases where they have already in fact violated the treaty (R, Ṭ).

There are also disagreements among commentators as to the precise timing of the *four months* mentioned in v. 2 and the end of the sacred months mentioned in v. 5. If the *announcement* of v. 3 was made on the *day of the greater ḥajj*—interpreted to be either the Day of Sacrifice or the Day of ‘Arafah (Ṭ; see 2:196c)—it would leave fifty days until the ending of sacred months—that is, the remainder of the pilgrimage month of Dhu’l-Ḥijjah (the twelfth month of the calendar) followed by the entire month of Muḥarram (Ṭ). One view understands this passage to mean that v. 3 addresses the idolaters with whom the Prophet and his followers had no existing treaty, while the group with whom they did have a treaty was given the four months mentioned in vv. 1–2. According to another view, this *repudiation* and *announcement* were made to both groups at the same time, so that the treaty-holding idolaters had four months (until the middle of Rabī‘ al-Thānī, which comes four months after Dhu’l-Ḥijjah) while the nontreaty group had until the end of the sacred months (fifty days from the day of the *announcement*) as mentioned above.

According to still another opinion, this *sūrah* was revealed at the start of Shawwāl (the tenth month of the calendar), thus making the end of the four- month period mentioned in v. 2 coincide with the end of the sacred months as described in v. 5. Yet another opinion is that the period of *four months* refers to those with whom the Muslims had a treaty that was set to expire earlier than four months, and the verse commanded that they grant them four months, while *for its duration* refers to those treaties stipulating a period of more than four months, which the Muslims were thus instructed to observe in full. According to this last opinion, the Prophet was commanded to repudiate the treaties only with those idolaters who had broken it already and to maintain all others. Al-Ṭabarī makes it clear that this passage could not possibly mean that after the lapse of the sacred months the believers were free to kill any idolater; see the essay “Conquest and Conversion, War and Peace in the Quran.”

It is important to remember that after the Muslims had conquered Makkah, there were still idolaters in the Arabian Peninsula, and other battles, such as Ḥunayn, remained to be fought (see v. 25). Some idolaters were still coming to the Kaʿbah to perform the pilgrimage rites according to pre-Islamic practices (even though there were no longer any idols to worship). It is reported that, for the first *ḥajj* after the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet sent Abū Bakr to lead the *ḥajj*, and with him sent ʿAlī to announce four matters to those who had assembled in Makkah: only a believing soul shall enter the Garden; no idolater shall approach the Kaʿbah after that year; no one will circumambulate the Kaʿbah naked ever again; and whosoever has a treaty will have that treaty observed according to its terms

(Ṭ). Most commentators note that ‘Alī was chosen to make the announcement of the repudiation, because Arab custom demanded that a treaty be broken either by the contracting party—in this case the Prophet himself—or a near kinsman, and the Prophet wanted the message to be understood unambiguously (Q).

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(5) Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayer and give the alms, then let them go their way. Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful.

(5) There is disagreement over whether the *sacred months* in this verse were those four traditionally considered to be sacred by the Arabs (the seventh, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth) mentioned in v. 36, or whether the word translated here as *sacred*, *ḥurum* (lit. “forbidden”), refers to the fact that the idolaters were given four months of free travel and the believers were forbidden from fighting them (IK).

This passage is significant for debates concerning the use of force. For some, v. 5 of this *sūrah* abrogates all previous treaties and obligations in relation to the idolaters. Other commentators and jurists interpret this to mean that the idolaters are fought by reason of their idolatry and polytheism (Q, R). However, since this passage itself explicitly affirms the validity and propriety of keeping treaties with those idolaters who uphold

their side of the treaty in good faith, a more plausible reading of this passage would not see the very fact that certain persons were idolaters as a reason to fight them; on this question see also 2:256c.

From the perspective of the Muslim community, the years of conflict preceding this announcement created a political environment where the idolaters of Arabia could not be left in a position of power and political strength to menace the Muslim community in the future; treaties were indeed often made, but they were just as often broken by the idolaters and their allies. This concern regarding treaties is made explicit in v. 8, which states that if the idolaters were to come into a position of power over the believers, they would not observe *kinship or treaty*. Rather, the idolaters in Arabia would have continued to form a persistent political alliance against the Prophet and the believers. According to this understanding of the political context, the idolaters' conversion to Islam would not have been the purpose of fighting them, though this conversion (based on the plain sense of v. 5) would be the only way for them to ensure their physical security; that is, they could avoid a state of war by renouncing idolatry and disavowing their previous actions and alliances, but being non-Muslim was not their original crime. See also the essay "Conquest and Conversion, War and Peace in the Quran."

Moreover, v. 13 seems to provide the underlying rationale for why the idolaters were to be treated as hostile: *Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths, and intended to expel the Messenger, and opened [hostility] against you first?* The command of 8:58, establishing the

conditions for rescinding a treaty, is some indication of how precarious such treaties could turn out to be, and most famously the Quraysh and their allied tribe of Banū Bakr violated the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah (mentioned in 9:1–4c), an act that eventually led to the conquest of Makkah by the Prophet and his followers.

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(6) And if any of the idolaters seek asylum with thee, grant him asylum until he hears the Word of God. Then convey him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who know not.

(6) This verse says that idolaters could come and hear the Quran and the teachings of Islam and then be taken to a place of safety (Q) until they reached their own home (Ṭ). Commentators record some disagreement as to whether this verse was abrogated by other verses, such as 47:4, *Free them graciously or hold them for ransom, till war lays down its burdens*, which explicitly mentions the option of freeing or ransoming prisoners. The dominant opinion, however, is that neither 9:6 nor 47:4 was abrogated, and that the Prophet and the believers were given the authority to slay the enemy, take them prisoner, or release them from the very beginning of the years of war, beginning with the Battle of Badr in 2/624 (Q, Ṭ). There is some disagreement as to how much of the Quran this verse requires that such a person be made to hear, some saying it should be the entire Quran, others restricting it to this *sūrah*, since it contains the essence of what idolaters need to hear about their situation (R).

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(7) How can the idolaters have a treaty with God and with His Messenger, save for those with whom you made a treaty at the Sacred Mosque? If they remain true to you, remain true to them. Truly God loves the reverent.

(7) According to some those with whom you made a treaty refers to certain members of Banū Bakr (who had been in alliance with the Quraysh according to the terms of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah) who never violated their treaty with the Prophet even when others did so (R, Q, Ṭ, Th); see 9:1–4c. Other commentators believe that this verse refers to the Banū Khuzāʿah, who were allied with the Prophet, or even to the Quraysh (Ṭ). Al-Ṭabarī believes that this verse could refer only to those members of Banū Bakr who did not violate the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, arguing that at the time these verses were revealed (after the conquest of Makkah) there were no remaining non-Muslim members of Khuzāʿah, and the Quraysh held no treaty, because they had violated it and rendered it null and void. Al-Thaʿlabī records an account that it also refers to certain members of the Quraysh who were given that period of four months to either become Muslims or accept exile in a land of their choosing. Before the period of four months expired, they became Muslims. Al-Thaʿlabī also accepts the opinion that this verse refers to certain members of Banū Bakr, using reasoning similar to that of al-Ṭabarī.

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(8) How, since if they prevail over you, they will not observe any kinship or treaty with you? They please you with their mouths, while their hearts refuse. And most of them are iniquitous.

(8) Kinship renders ill, which can also mean a pact or sworn alliance (ḥilf; Ṭ). Treaty renders dhimmah, referring generally to “that which sets up an obligation” (R), and in this sense ahl al-dhimmah can be rendered “treaty peoples” (Q) or “those to whom one has an obligation.” On the concept of dhimmah, also see 9:29c. Prevail signifies that the disbelievers would come to a position of strength over the Muslims (Q, R, Ṭ).

They please you with their mouths—namely, by speaking sweet words—while their hearts contain the opposite (R). Since all disbelievers are considered to be “iniquitous” (Q, R), most of them are iniquitous is understood to mean that many (though not all) of the disbelievers lie and will fail to uphold their agreements (Q), are faithless even to their own religion (R), and are thus iniquitous in both a general and a specific sense.”

And so, this is the actual homework one must do to understand a proper scenario, a proper meaning of the verse in its original context. This was a very specific war-scenario, and thus a very specific war-command, as strictly pointed above : “Al-Ṭabarī makes it clear that this passage could not possibly mean that after the lapse of the sacred months the believers were free to kill any idolater” This is, or never was a categorical command. And further “Moreover, v. 13 seems to provide the underlying rationale for



why the idolaters were to be treated as hostile: Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths, and intended to expel the Messenger, and opened [hostility] against you first?" Completed the context, that this was a very strict scenario and thus so was the command dealing with the very specific group being discussed only.

Now, one might argue, that if the explanation is such complex and stretched, how will it possibly be an intentional propaganda, instead of a naturally occurring misunderstanding. And the answer is that when the verse is being half-quoted, only the part "slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them" It is obvious that whosoever actually came across this verse, saw it in its entirety, but chose to quote only that part further. Secondly, people do not randomly come across any verse of the Holy Quran. You have to go lengths, study the Quran and pick such verses where that you can misquote.

Now there are however, chances that the person inquiring about some verse however is not straight off some evil person with a propaganda, yet it is more likely that this person is a victim of such propaganda. And as discussed before, they need very precise education regarding their inquiry in the best method possible.

## The Third Party

Now that those who have naturally misunderstood some point, and those who are victim of an evil propaganda, both of these categories are discussed, This brings us down to the actual evil, the creators and propagators of the propaganda itself. And we have to aid ourselves here by actually identifying the evil further. And we don't have to go further to do that, we just have to continue from where we left earlier;

اشْتَرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

They have sold the signs of God for a paltry price, and have turned from His way. Evil indeed is that which they used to do

The Holy Quran (9:9)

Further commentary states:

"(9) The “sale” of God’s signs *for a paltry price* is an object of rebuke in several verses of the Quran, as in 2:174; 3:187; 16:95. In other places, the language of buying and selling is used in a positive manner, as when God asks believers, *Who is it that will lend unto God a goodly loan? He will multiply it for him, and his shall be a generous reward* (57:11; cf. 2:245; 5:12; 57:18; 64:17; 73:20); and 61:10, which speaks of *a commerce that will save you*. Turned from His way can mean, here and in other instances of this verb phrase, both that they turn away from the way of God themselves and that they hinder others from following it."

Here, "that they turn away from the way of God themselves and that they hinder others from following it." Is the answer we are looking for. There is no deny that there are and will always be evil doers in the world, who have gone astray themselves and will do anything to mislead others. The Holy Quran also mentions them as:

"(1) Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, (2) the King of mankind, (3) the God of mankind, (4) from the evil of the stealthy whisperer, (5) who whispers into the breasts of mankind, (6) from jinn and mankind."

The Holy Quran (114:1-6)

For the 6th verse, the commentary states:

"This verse refers to what whispers into the souls of jinn and mankind, or to the jinn who whisper into the souls of people and to people who heed the advice of their own whispering soul rather than the Guidance of God and thus fail to take God as their Lord, King, and God. It can also be seen as a reference to both the jinn and people who whisper into souls (Q, R), since there are said to be satans from among mankind and jinn (6:112). It may also indicate what whispers into the "breasts" of both the jinn and mankind, for although *nās* (here translated mankind) is usually taken as a reference to human beings, there is a ḥadīth stating that there was a "people" (*nās*) among the jinn, in the same way that the word *rijāl*, which usually designates human men, is also used in reference to individuals (*rijāl*) among the jinn in 72:6 (R, Sh). Vv. 5–6 also have the meaning of seeking

refuge from the one who whispers into the breasts of mankind and seeking refuge from the jinn and from mankind (Sh)."

So from the "It can also be seen as a reference to both the jinn and people who whisper into souls (Q, R), since there are said to be satans from among mankind and jinn" there is a hint towards such people amongst humans who continue to be propagators of evil, followed by satan being the primary deceiver. It is however impossible to deny the existence of formal organised groups of evildoers who strategise and plan the propagation of evil on a global scale through several different platforms. No matter how much formalised the act of propagation of evil may become fortunately enough the Myers of defence against it will always be the same therefore to go into further debate about the details of these organisations is of no use for the laymen.

# The Solution

The problem might seem far stretched, this tug of war, the centuries long tension between the west and the east might seem ever lasting with no end to it, but fortunately enough, there is a solution and it is still doable. Our ideas, our ideologies, our cultures, our religions, our lifestyles, are and will always be different, but a perfect harmony can be achieved by understanding and respecting the differences.

The task of forming a perfect harmony is yet to be challenged once again by the formation of the world into a global village. While some may think that this is up to an argument, it most certainly is impossible for a complete ideology of life, such as religion to co-exist with another equivalent. Such delusional promises of a perfect harmony where to complete ideologies can coexist are nothing more than Trojan horses waiting for the inner self to come out, or in this case ending up with either one of the party giving up their identity to merge in this newly formed world that promises this fake harmony.

So while it may not be possible to form a perfect global village, it is very important to realise that it is not necessary to do so, there is no need to shuffle the entire world when the people do not actually need it at all. For example the people of subcontinent were doing just fine before the invasion of the British, and the same can be said about any invasion that ever occurred.

So the only possible solution is to coexist by respecting each other's ideologies in space and once again recall:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالتَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ  
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation. And dispute with them in the most virtuous manner. Surely thy Lord is He Who knows best those who stray from His way, and He knows best the rightly guided.”

The Holy Quran (16:125)

\*Note: In “The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary” the commentary under verse no. 144 states : “This verse repeats the criticism of those who would seek protectors outside the believing community. See 4:139 and commentary.” And thus the commentary given above is under verse 139.

All the translations and commentaries for the verses of the Holy Quran are  
from “The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary”



The letters mentioned in the quoted text from “The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary” refer to the following scholars and the respective book:

IJ        Abu’l-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201),  
Zād al-masīr fī ‘ilm al-tafsīr

IK        ‘Imād al-Dīn Abu’l-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar ibn Kathīr (d.  
774/1373), *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘aẓīm*

Q        Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d.  
671/1272), *al-Jāmi‘ li-aḥkām al-Qur’ān*

Qm       ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 328/939), *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*

R        Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, also  
known as *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*

Sh        Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Shawkānī (d. 1250–55/1834–39), *Fath  
al-qadīr*

Ṭ        Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Jāmi‘ al-bayān ‘an  
ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*

- Ṭs      Abū ‘Alī al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī (or al-Ṭabarsī; d. 548/1153–54), *Majma‘ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*
- Ṭū      Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*
- Z      Abu’l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), *al-Kashshāf ‘an ghawāmiḍ ḥaqā’iq al-tanzīl wa ‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta’wīl*

In this world of ours, there has always been a centuries long “tug-of-war” between the west and east, the practical and geographical west and east. The west and east are significantly divided not only because of their geographical and physical contrasts, such as the weather and the people’s natural skin tone. But, the significant division is caused due to their culture, traditions, religion, and customs. We can perhaps use a broader word for all these, altogether, “mind-sets”. The world has been in constant chaos and unrest due to constant confrontations between these two domains. While over the centuries, both have tried to prove themselves right and both have tried to conquer the significant other in order to be the supreme power. Astonishingly, both claim the reasoning of the chaos, or “back-fire” they have done over the history, was to maintain peace in the world. While the history is witness that this hostility of the west and the east has only caused riots. The question we are in for an answer is, Who is the right one in this war? Or more significantly, is there one?

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