

## The right way to preach Islam the Albanian Case

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**Abstract** – Religion can be defined as a set of rules and principles sent by God to guide mankind to happiness in this world and the next. Religion enables people to apply high values that are hidden in their nature in order to experience a unique enlightenment.

Ideas that do not conform to religion in some ways are obviously one-dimensional and reduce the capacity to explain existence as a whole. A religion, on the other hand, that does not produce results that enable man to become smarter leads to the loss of life values rather than the desired goal, namely the opening and overcoming of people's horizons.<sup>1</sup>

According to the well-known Islamic scholar Imam Ash-Shatibij<sup>2</sup>, the basic pillar of the religion is the benefit of this life and the next. Therefore, the preservation of faith, life, wealth, offspring and mind are the main objectives of religion.<sup>3</sup> With the advent of mass media and transportation, the world has become a large "village". In such an environment, it is done easy to influence people, relying on the power and importance of the media. Given this fact, unfortunately, in many parts of the world, there have recently been attempts to portray Islam as a religion of terror. So, in the face of such a situation it is the duty of every Muslim preacher to communicate the truth and inform his audience (congregation) about the truths of Islam.

*Keywords – Islam, Religion, Faith*

### **The meaning and characteristics of Islam**

The word "Islam" is derived from the word "silm", which means reconciliation, peace, submission and salvation. Islam is a religion of unity. It should be noted that Islam is a religion

based on belief only in God Almighty and All-Merciful. Unity, as a term based on the worldview in the perspective of life and in the social system, presupposes the union of people brothers and sisters, equality in fundamental rights and the

<sup>1</sup> Ergyn Çapan, *An Islamic Perspective on Terror and Suicide Attacks*, Prizmi, Tirana, 2006, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> He passed away in 790.

<sup>3</sup> Ergyn Çapan, *An Islamic Perspective on Terror and Suicide Attacks*, Prizmi, Tirana, 2006, p. 45.

elimination of discrimination on the basis of language, color, race or family and kinship. Islam has abolished everything that belonged to the period of ignorance, all its characteristics in the pre-Islamic periods such as: selfishness, brutality, oppression and injustice, it uprooted them widely. In accordance with Islam, the principle "the big fish eats the small" was replaced by "love your neighbor"; "Life is not a war, but a process of cooperation"; the principle "others should work while I stay" with the word "help", "oppression" was replaced by "justice", "lack of humanity" gave way to "mercy"; the principle that people are born free and equal and that people have the right to integrate into society was established; the principle of injustice according to which "right is with the strong" was uprooted and the principle "power is with the right", "the righteous is the strongest" was gradually established and society believed in the truth and justice that belong to it. Creators and not in the random and personal laws of a victorious minority or of temporary dictators.

Islam has always stated that people enjoy respect without being subjected to socio-political, material-spiritual, cultural-racial discrimination of any other kind and has honored them with such a status above all creatures. The Qur'an states: "*And certainly We have honored the children of Adam.*"<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, according to Islam, even if one is an unbeliever, his / her wealth, life and honor cannot

be violated. Physical and mental health, as well as the right to form a family are the undeniable rights of every individual. In the same way, no other right can be violated. Even in a state of war, women, children and the elderly, who are unable to fight, are not affected. In accordance with the Holy Qur'an and the justice that comes from it, it is made known that the killer of a single man is a hated killer, as if he were the killer of all mankind. "*Therefore, We commanded the children of Israel, 'Whoever kills a person who has not killed anyone or caused any disorder on the earth, it is as if he had killed all the people.' And if one saves a life, it is as if he has saved the lives of all people ....*"<sup>5</sup> From the Islamic point of view, human rights cannot be violated even if it is in the best interest of the community. A person's rights are as sacred as the rights of other people.

### **Islamic representation and communication**

Islam regards man as the most revered creature, who is endowed with conscience and will, and calls freedom of belief as an undeniable right. Islam works to eliminate the barriers that stand between God and human intellect, conscience and will as fundamental principles. It should be noted that when Islam is properly understood, anyone can follow the line called "representation and communication", the line of Islamic practice and communication in the best possible way. For example, many Qur'anic verses state that there is no

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<sup>4</sup> Quran; Surah el- Isra, 17/76.

<sup>5</sup> Quran; Surah Maide, 5/32.

duty other than what is entrusted to the Prophet of Islam and other prophets, which is the clear communication of the religion.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, GOD addresses the Prophet by warning him to be careful, reminding him that he was not sent to exert pressure on people: *Therefore advise (people o Muhammad), that you are only a counselor; and you are not obliged to force them!* <sup>7</sup> *"There is no violence in religion."*<sup>8</sup>

Guaranteeing freedom of religion and conscience, possessing the right to live as one wishes, and institutionalizing justice in such a way that everyone can benefit, are norms that can benefit not only Muslims, but also non-Muslims. As a basic principle, the existence of more than one belief and living defines the general framework of pluralism. God does not want all people to be exactly the same in terms of faith and living, as if they had come out of the same mold. There are mental differences between people which allow us to discern which community is better than the others.

### **Legitimate goals, legitimate methods and soft words**

Islam lays down the need to achieve a legitimate goal through lawful methods and means. He therefore does not in any way accept violence, torture, anarchy, or terror as methods. Moreover, he calls for people to address the tyrants with gentle

words, like Pharaoh when it comes to communicating religion. The Qur'an narrates the command given to Moses and Aaron as follows: *"Go to Pharaoh! He, indeed, has transgressed all bounds! Speak soft words to him, that he may remember or be afraid!"*<sup>9</sup>

In two of the verses, which define how relations should be with Christians and Jews, it is stated:

*"Discuss with the followers of the Book only the best way, but not with the other wrongdoers. And say: We believe in what has been revealed to us and in what has been revealed to you. "Our Lord and your Lord is One - and we submit to Him as Muslims."*<sup>10</sup> *Say: O followers of the Book, let us come to a common word between you and us: that we will worship Allah alone, that we will not associate anything with Him (in worship), and that we will not worship Him. we hold each other as gods, instead of Allah! ..."*<sup>11</sup>

It would be appropriate to mention another verse, which is used to determine the way religion communicates to all people, including the followers of the Book (Christians and Jews). *"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and discuss with them in the best way!"*<sup>12</sup>

Another verse, which speaks of the gentle behavior that the Prophet and his followers should

<sup>6</sup> Quran; Surah Nahl 16/35, 82; Surah Ali Imran 3/20; Surah Maide 5/92, 99; Surah Rra'd 13/40; Surah Ibrahim 14/52.

<sup>7</sup> Quran; Surah Ghashiyah, 88 / 21-22.

<sup>8</sup> Qur'an, Surah Bekare, 2/256

<sup>9</sup> Quran; Surah Taha, 43-44.

<sup>10</sup> Quran; Surah Ankabut, 29:46

<sup>11</sup> Quran; Surah Al Imran, 3:64

<sup>12</sup> Quran; Surah Nahl, 16: 125

have towards people as a "mercy from God" and reminds them that they should be patient even if their closest people abandon them, says: "

*By the mercy of Allah, be kind to them (O Muhammad). "If you were harsh and rude, they would leave you."*<sup>13</sup>

### **The meanings of the word "irhab" in the Qur'an**

As is known by Muslims, words of praise in the Qur'an occupy a considerable place. Especially the words, which are used only in the context of praise and reverence have a very special meaning. The word irhab is an example of such words is the following:

*You do not know them, but Allah knows them. Whatever you spend in the way of Allah, you will be rewarded and you will not be wronged.*<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, those who believe in the Qur'an and have it as a point of reference, should adhere to this word with the respect and dignity it requires. The literary meaning of the word irhab mentioned in the verses is "intimidation". Yet this is a natural fear, which manifests itself against the possibility of harm and which causes a form of restraint and it is not self-harm.<sup>15</sup>

The commentators of the Qur'an have interpreted the word "irhab" emphasized in the above verse in the sense of being equipped with the necessary weapons (such as war horses) against the enemy in order to create a restraining force in according to the circumstances of the case.<sup>16</sup>

Rashid Rida emphasizes that the word irhab does not mean to declare war, but rather, to prevent war; therefore, it means the protection of society and not its destruction. He also interprets the above verse as "*preparing the weapons of war to the highest degree possible in order to prevent enemies (known or not) from declaring war or attacking.*"<sup>17</sup>

In the hadiths, irhab means *restraint*<sup>18</sup>, content and in the commentaries of the hadiths it is interpreted as such<sup>19</sup>. Scholars of Islamic Legislation also use the word irhab in the sense of restraint.<sup>20</sup>

As a result, when we study the structure of the word irhab, its use as well as the meaning given to it in the books of hadith, in the commentaries in the books of Islamic Legislation and in various dictionaries, the following facts come to light:

1. The word irhab which is mentioned in the Qur'an is related to the issue of *idad*; it is a word that means being ready to defend one's sacred values. It is based on preventing transgressions, tackling

<sup>13</sup> Quran; Surah Al Imran, 3: 159

<sup>14</sup> Quran; Surah Anfal, 8:60

<sup>15</sup> Ibn el Mendhur, Lisan el arab, *rhb*: Ragib, Mufredat, *rhb*: Zabidi, Taxh el Arus, *rhb*.

<sup>16</sup> Taberi, Xhami el Bejan, 6/42: Razi, Mefatih, 15/192: Alusi. 10/26: Yazir, Hak Dini Quran Qur'an.

<sup>17</sup> Rashid Ridha, *Tafsir el Mener*, 10/66.

<sup>18</sup> Bazzar, Mesned, 6/30; Ahmed bin , 3/493

<sup>19</sup> Azim Abadi, *Aun el Me'bud*, 8/159

<sup>20</sup> Sarahsi, *mabsut*, 10/42: Ibn el Kudama, el Kafi; Bahuti, *Kesh'shaf el Gina*, 3/65; Abu Ishaq, ash Shirazi, *Muhedh-dheb*, 2/231; Ibn el Abidin, 6/305.

tyranny and warning those who have criminal tendencies. This issue is recognized and accepted by societies and does not conflict with human values.

2. Muslim scholars use the word *irhab* in their works to mean "discouraging the enemy before or during war" to demoralize them spiritually and psychologically.

Apart from these two forms quoted in the Qur'an, there is no other meaning of the word *irhab* in both the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and no one can be found in other written works, which originate from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, it would not be correct for the word *irhab* mentioned in the Qur'an to be interpreted as the killing of innocent people in public places, in planting bombs on the body, in bloodshed, in arson, causing damage to homes or property, in spreading fear in order to establish chaos in a certain society. It would not be correct, either, to use the Qur'an as an argument in support of these acts.

Adding here a significant fact, which must be taken into account: All classical Arabic dictionaries contain only the word *ihafa* (intimidation) as a definition of the word *irhab*. However, it has been noticed that in some dictionaries compiled in the second half of the century. XX, definition of the word *irhab* has been changed and modified. Intentionally or not,

especially in dictionaries prepared by non-Muslims, the word *irhab* has been defined as "terrorism".<sup>21</sup>

The issue of extremism and radicalism is more current than ever. The picture of the world today clearly dictates the need to treat this topic from different angles and with all its dimensions, proposing practical solutions, which maintain compatibility with reality.

An important role in preventing extremism and radicalism is played by religious leaders with their sermons on shrines and the various activities woven around the messages conveyed in the various religious teachings.

Relevant institutions have played an important role in creating such an atmosphere between different members of society. But, as the activity of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) dictates to us, the ideal solution is reached when every member of the various communities has a very clear attitude towards the social phenomena that compel him to react.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion we say that Islam considers man as the most honorable creature, which is endowed with conscience and will, and calls freedom of religion as an undeniable right. Islam works to eliminate the barriers that stand between God and human intellect, conscience and will as

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<sup>21</sup> Oxford Wordpower, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999; Hans Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic,

Beirut, 1960; English Arabic Glossary, Encyclopedia Britanica, 11 / 650-651.

fundamental principles. And this is certainly achieved through a multidimensional education and training on religious principles and provisions. It should be noted that when Islam is properly understood, anyone can follow the line called "representation and communication", the line of Islamic practice and communication in the best possible way, which would consequently lead to a living in harmony and peace with everyone around us.

It is the professional and moral responsibility of every preacher of Islam (mufti, imam, waiz, muezzin, etc.) to explain the religion to the people around him in the best possible way without being detached from the two main sources which are the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition and of course combining these teachings with a methodology appropriate to his audience.

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