

## **Solving the Seeming Contradiction between the Sword and the Rejection of Duress Verses and its Effect on the Freedom of Religion**

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### **Abstract**

One of the main discussions in the Islamic jurisprudence and the interpretation of the noble Qur'ān is the freedom of religion from the viewpoint of Islam. According to the Rejection of Duress verses, anyone is free to choose his religion, and according to the appearance of the Sword verses, people are not free to choose their religion. Then, there can be four relationships between the Sword and the Rejection of Duress verses: 1) the Sword verses abrogate the Rejection of Duress verses and so, with the revelation of these verses, the ruling for the freedom of religion has been abrogated; 2) the Rejection of Duress verses have abrogated the coercion to choose religion; 3) the Sword verses specify the generality of the Rejection of Duress verses, i.e. people are free to choose their religion except for the cases mentioned in the Sword verses; 4) the Sword verses regard the external duress and the Rejection of Duress verses concern the internal duress. Therefore, people are free internally rather than externally to choose their religion. Due to the revelation of the verse 29 of the Repentance chapter (which conditions the freedom of the People of the Book to maintain their religion to paying jizya), the first possibility is rejected, because it requires the Sword verses to be abrogated after their abrogation of other verses. The second possibility, too, requires the antecedence of the abrogating over the abrogated. In this article, the accuracy of the third possibility is argued for based on a novel method and new arguments.

### **Keywords**

Freedom of religion, Sword verses, People of the Book, Jizya, Rejection of duress.

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## **Introduction**

The wrong interpretation of the Sword verse<sup>1</sup> and the Rejection of Duress verses might be misused by the malevolent opponents of the pure religion of Islam (which considers the utmost respect to the sacred domain of human freedom) to try to ruin the angelic appearance of this pure religion. The enemies of Islam pretend that Islam let people free to choose or not choose Islam when it did not have power and cried out “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (Qur’ān 2:256) and “Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs” (Qur’ān 88:22), but when it got powerful, the verse “Seize them and slay them wherever ye find them” (Qur’ān 4:89) was revealed. This wrong claim has had negative effects on Muslims’ beliefs in recent decades, and a scientific, clear, and robust defense against it is undeniably the best way to deal with this enmity.

This article is a jurisprudential-interpretive discussion in which efforts are made to use the qur’ānic verses to achieve the desirable outcome, one which is acceptable to all Islamic denominations. Therefore, this argumentation style and the ensuing results cannot be found in other jurisprudential and interpretive resources. In this article, all imaginable possibilities for the relationship between the Sword verse and the Rejection of Duress verses are enumerated, and a clear language is adopted to prove the best possibility. The article answers these questions:

- Is the Islamic government approach is to impose religion onto others?
- Is there any duress for the acceptance of Islam from the viewpoint of the Qur’ān?
- Have the qur’ānic verses on freedom been abrogated?

### **The examination of the possible relationships between the two verses**

There can be conceived four possible relationships between the Sword verse and similar verses such as the Qur’ān 9:29, 36, and 123, and the Rejection of Duress verses such as “Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error” (Qur’ān 2:256) and “Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs” (Qur’ān 88:22), as follows.

1. The abrogation of the Rejection of Duress verses by the Sword verse;
2. The abrogation of the Sword verse by the Rejection of Duress verses;

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1. But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful (Qur’ān 9:5).

3. Compromising the two groups of verses by taking the Rejection of Duress verses as implying internal duress and the Sword verses as implying the external duress.
4. The specification of the Rejection of Duress verses by the Sword verses.

### **Examination of the first possibility**

This interpretation of the relationship between the two groups of verses (which were explained in the introduction) is a mistake that has been exploited by the opponents of Islam in order to represent Islam as the religion of sword and duress, and it can be rejected using robust and definite reasons.

First reason: Never in the Qur'ān has it happened that an abrogating verse is abrogated itself after a while; neither a researcher of the Qur'ānic sciences nor any non-Muslim Qur'ān researcher has made such a claim.

Following this introductory point, if the verse "Fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them..." (Qur'ān 9:5) abrogates the noble verse "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Qur'ān 2:256), it should be claimed that the abrogating verse is abrogated itself, because in this same Repentance chapter, God soon has verified the freedom of the People of the Book to maintain their religion where He says:

"Fight those who believe not in Allāh nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allāh and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (Qur'ān 9:29).

Undoubtedly this verse deems it permissible for the People of the Book to continue practicing their religion provided that they pay jizya to Muslims, and no one has claimed for the abrogation of this verse. Therefore, it can be said that the Sword verse does not contradict the Rejection of Duress verse.

In other words, the last verse mentioned above clearly proves that the Sword verse does not abrogate the Rejection of Duress verses, because if it did so, it was meaningless to announce the freedom of the People of the Book to maintain their religion (provided that they pay jizya).

Second reason: The common belief is that no verse of the Table Spread chapter (Qur'ān 5) is abrogated (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 5: 191). In this noble chapter, God invites his noble Prophet to forgive the mistakes and misdeeds of the People of the Book, and says:

"...Nor wilt thou cease to find them- barring a few - ever bent on (new) deceits: but forgive them, and overlook (their misdeeds)" (Qur'ān 5:13).

Moreover, it invites them to implement the divine limits mentioned in the true Gospel and Torah, as it says: now that they don't want to accept Islam, at least observe the decrees of your religion. This chapter of the Qur'ān says:

“Let the people of the Gospel judge by what Allāh hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allāh hath revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel” (Qur'ān 5:47).

Moreover, it states:

“Say: ‘O People of the Book! ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord’” (Qur'ān 5:68).

It is emphasized in this verse that if the People of the Book do not implement the decrees of Gospel and Torah, they have no worth for God. Or conversely, if they put the true decrees of their sacred Scriptures into practice, they will be different for God from those People of the Book who do not care for those decrees, i.e. they will have a higher status (although they will not be accepted and saved without Islam).

How can we say after witnessing these clear verses which have all been revealed after the Sword verses that the Sword verse has abrogated the freedom of religion decree? The noble Prophet of Islam (s) not only did not force the People of the Book to accept Islam after the revelation of the Sword verse, but rather tolerated their aggravations and misdeeds because God has ordered him to do so. In this verse, God invited the People of the Book to at least observe the decrees of their own sacred Scriptures.

Third reason: The governmental practices of the Prophet (s) and Imām ‘Alī (a) is another evidence. This was noted in the previous reason, too. They never forced any of the People of the Book to accept Islam, and treated them with dignity, kindness, and mercy. Besides, it should be noted that the verses about treating the People of the Book with leniency and mercy were revealed when the Prophet (s) was at the pinnacle of his power, and even the Roman army had retreated against Muslim army in Tabūk battle, while the Jews were at the time at the nadir of inability, abjection, and submission. There are not ambiguities or doubts in history about the veracity of these facts.

Fourth reason: Numerous narrations state that Imām Mahdī (may God hasten his reappearance) will let the People of the Book free to maintain their religion. It is worthwhile to mention some of these narrations here.

1. The Support of Muḥammad's Family (may God hasten his reappearance) will judge among the People of Torah with Torah and among the People of Gospel with Gospel (Majlisī, 1983, vol. 52: 381). This narration evidently supports and confirms the foregoing claim.

2. In his answer to the question “What does the Owner of Divine Command do with the dhimmīs (i.e. Jews and Christians)?” Imām Ṣādiq (a) said: Similar to the noble Prophet (s), he will compromise with them, and they will give jizya in complete abjection (ibid).

3. In other narrations, it has been emphasized that the Support of Muḥammad’s Family (may God hasten his reappearance) will not ask the People of the Book for jizya. Of course, some have taken this to mean that he will not accept their religion, while others have interpreted it to mean that Imām will not ask for jizya because his government will not need it and he will treat the People of the Book with kindness and leniency. Unlike the first reading, the second interpretation agrees with the common and generally accepted narrations, the Prophetic practice, and the qur’ānic decrees.

Although there are other narrations which oppose the foregoing ones and seemingly are in conflict with their implications, it should be noted that the narrations implying the freedom of religion and lack of duress are the most sound and frequent, and agree with the Qur’ān and the practices of the Infallibles (a). Moreover, the verses that imply the compulsion of people to accept Islam during the reign of Imām Maḥdī (my God hasten his reappearance) have weak chain of transmission and it is not difficult to interpret them in line with the first group narrations.

‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’ī writes in *Al-Mīzān*:

“Islam has considered Jihād (holy struggle) a foundation so as to enliven the right and defend monotheism as the most precious innate asset. However, after monotheism is spread among people and everyone accepts it, although others’ religion is not Islam and is Judaism or Christianity, Islam will not allow any Muslim to quarrel with any other monotheist (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1996, vol. 2: 344).

He then states that the verse “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (Qur’ān 2:256) has not been abrogated by a verse that makes Jihād and fighting obligatory. The evidence for this is an argument in this verse that reads “Truth stands out clear from Error”. If this verse has been abrogated, this phrase should also have been abrogated, while it is evident that the clear distinction between the right path and the wrong path is fixed and cannot be abrogated (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1996, vol. 2: 342).

In his *Jawāmi‘ al-jāmi‘*, Ṭabrisī has only narrated the sentence on the abrogation and has passed by it without confirming or rejecting it (Ṭabrisī, 1998, vol. 1: 333).

Ibn ‘Arabī has written in his *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* that the generality of rejection in the Rejection of Duress verse regards the rejection of the coercion for the wrong (and not the coercion for the right religion).

However, the coercion for the right religion comes from the same right religion. Moreover, he asks, isn't the pagan killed because of religion? As the Prophet of God (s) said, "I have been ordered to fight people up to the time they say 'There is no god but God'" (Ibn 'Arabī, n.d., vol. 1: 233).

It should be said in response that first, the claim that the generality of the rejection of duress pertains to the rejection of duress on the wrong is a claim that is strongly rejected by the appearance of the verse and is the baseless determination of the verse meaning.

Second, if the coercion of people to follow Islam is a religious duty, why didn't the noble Prophet of Islam (s) did force Jews to accept Islam when he was at the height of his power and rather just received jizya from them and treated them with kindness and lenience? Which decree of the Qur'ān states that a disbeliever (such as a Jew, Christian, etc.) should be killed because he/she is a Jew or a Christian? Which of the Caliphs after the Prophet of Allāh (s) and his Companions undertook this practice?

Third, the narration used by Ibn 'Arabī as evidence is related to polytheism, that is to say, the Prophet (s) fought for monotheism, but not every monotheist is a Muslim and the Muslim jurisprudents – following the Qur'ān – have not taken the People of the Book as part of the polytheists and have not ruled for treating them with the decrees related to polytheists.

This reveals another problem in his assertion where he says: "Truly this verse is an evidence for the stance that disbelief is a reason for murder, because the Sublime God says 'So that there is no fitna' and so specifies that the purpose of fighting is the disappearance of disbelief and states that the cause for murder and the license for war is verily disbelief" (Ibid: 109).

The previous reasons we provided reveal the erroneousness of this claim. Moreover, the concept and signification of fitna is not disbelief and not everyone who brings about fitna is a disbeliever, as not every disbeliever is counted as a fitna-maker.

However, the question that rises is that why didn't the Prophet (s) kill Jews and Christians some months after the revelation of the Sword verses, but rather, the issuer of the Sword verses (i.e. God) asked him to treat the People of the Book with lenience in His last revealed verses? Why didn't any of the Caliphs after the Prophet (s) and his Companions have the foregoing opinion? What is the existential reason for getting jizya from the People of the Book (as mentioned in Qur'ān 9:29)?!

The author of *Al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* has quoted Zajāj's claim which intends that the meaning of the Rejection of Duress verse is to do not count under duress a person who has converted to Islam by force (because there is no compulsion in accepting a religion)! (Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, 1999, vol. 2:

616). It seems that Zajāj takes the verse to mean that even forcing people to accept Islam is not considered duress, because God has stated that there is no duress in accepting the religion.

If we accept this stance, then we will have no choice but to consider it permissible to interpret the Qur'ānic verses based on the meanings that do not exist in the Arabic language. For example, we should name forcing people to accept the religion (which is called *Ikrāh* in Arabic) as *Ikhtiyār* (freedom)! In this case, will there remain any way to attain the external meanings of the Qur'ān? Isn't it that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the Arabic language and God has said, "We sent not a messenger except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people"? (Qur'ān 14:4).

Another evidence for the rejection of this assertion is a narration quoted by Suyūṭī from Sa'īd b. Jubayr, one of the trustworthy and famous Successors to the Companions. He narrates that it was customary among the Helpers to pledge to give the child of a woman who couldn't get pregnant or whose children died early to the Jews so that the child could live long. At the migration time of the Banī Naḍīr tribe, the Helpers told the Prophet "Oh Prophet of Allāh! Some of our children and brothers are among them." In the meantime, the Rejection of Duress verse was revealed and the Prophet of Allāh (s) said, "Let them choose. If they choose your religion, they will be with you, and if they accepted them [the Jews], they will be with them; [then] let them go with them!" (Suyūṭī, 1984, vol. 1: 329).

Zamakhsharī says in his *Kashshāf* that "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Qur'ān 2:256) means that God has not made faith compulsory; rather, he has set it as something free (Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 1: 303).

### **The examination of the second possibility (i.e. to consider the Rejection of Duress verses as abrogating the Sword verses)**

There is an absolute consensus that this possibility is incorrect, because the whole Islamic researchers believe that the Sword verses have been revealed after the Rejection of Duress verses, and it is impossible for the abrogating to precede and the abrogated to come later.

### **The examination of the third possibility**

In this possibility, some exegetes believe that there is in fact no contradiction between the two verses, because the Rejection of Duress verses regard the impossibility of internal coercion to accept a religion. That is to say, faith cannot be forced into the heart of anyone. However, the Sword verses are related to the coercion of the external faith, notwithstanding the fact that the person does not have faith in it internally.

The author of *Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī* says: “Coercion to accept a religion cannot be imagined [i.e. is not possible] ... therefore, this sentence is a declarative sentence due to the real consideration ... and it can also be an exclamatory sentence (which expresses prohibition); in this case, it is either a general abrogation ... or is particular to the People of the Book” (Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 2: 140). In this statement, Ālūsī just expresses doubts on the different possible relationships between the two verses and does not prefer one over the other.

‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā‘ī has expressed in *Al-Mīzān* that the sentence “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (Qur’ān 2:256) rejects the compulsory religion, because religion is a set of theoretical knowledge which leads to practical knowledge. All those knowledge is contained within one universal term, i.e. beliefs, and belief and faith are among internal matters that are not affected by duress and force, because duress can be used only with regard to external actions (Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1996, vol. 2: 343).

It is mentioned in Ṣadr al-Muta‘allihīn’s commentary: “Religion is in fact submission and satisfaction that is acquired due to absolute beliefs, and those beliefs enter a confident heart due to the divine effusion ... Understanding the theoretical knowledge and divine knowledge is similar to the situation in which understanding is acquired – without any force – upon the entrance of a priori knowledge to heart ... this indicates that religion is an internal matter and no one other than God has dominance over the inward” (Ṣadr al-Muta‘allihīn, 1987, vol. 4: 191).

This theme is provided as the interpretation of the foregoing verse in *Tafsīr nimūna* (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995, vol. 2: 279), *Manhaj al-ṣādiqīn* (Kāshānī, 1961, vol. 2: 97), *Tafsīr nūr* (Qarā‘atī, 2004, vol. 1: 413), and *Makhzan al-‘irfān* (Amīn, 1982, vol. 2: 389).

Conclusion: The essence of this discussion is that the appearance of the Rejection of Duress verse might be exclamatory, that is, this verse regards the rejection of forcing others to accept a religion. If this is the case, it will consequently mean the rejection of duress on the acceptance of Islam. On the other hand, the appearance of the verse might be declarative. If this is the case, it might mean the impossibility of duress, and consequently, it should be taken to regard internal duress.

Maybe someone claims that the requirement for the generality of the verse is that it should regard both meanings, that is to say, the internal duress is not possible, and the coercion to accept a religion externally is prohibited. In other words, this stance takes the sentence as both declarative and exclamatory. The problem with this interpretation is that we should accept one statement as implying two different meanings. However, due to the stronger claim (Muḥaffar, 2008: 52), it is impossible for a unique statement

to imply two disagreeing meaning (with each one covering the whole statement).

Nonetheless, if we interpret the Rejection of Duress verse to be about the internal duress, the external duress will be specifically out of its generality. Of course, there are some narrations that imply this meaning, including what follows.

It is narrated in *Al-Dur al-manthūr* from Ibn Abī Shayba, Aḥmad, ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nisā’ī, Ibn Māja, Ibn Jarīr, and Ḥākim (some of the great Sunnī narrations transmitters) that the Prophet of Allāh (s) said I am commissioned to fight people up to the time they say “There is no god except Allāh” (Qur’ān 37:35), when they say this sentence, their property and blood will be safe and respected by me and I will not get any property unjustly from them and will not shed [their] blood, no matter if their expression of “There is no god except Allāh” is articulated based on internal belief or is just a verbal articulation, it is upon Allāh to address this issue. Then his majesty recited this verse, “Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs” (Qur’ān 88: 21-22) (Suyūfī, 1984, vol. 6: 343).

In the foregoing narration, the verse “Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs” has been interpreted as the rejection of internal duress and has been compromised with the coercion of people to say “There is no god except Allāh” (i.e. external duress). This is taken to show that there is no disagreement between the two verses. However, there are two points here.

First, the coercion to accept monotheism is more general than the coercion to accept Islam, because according to this narration, the People of the Book who are considered as part of the monotheists will not be targeted by this coercion. Rather, only the polytheists are involved in it.

Second, the point that coercion is applicable only to the polytheists is known through some ways.

1. The appearance of the narration determines the goal of Jihād to be confession to monotheism.
2. The verses revealed after the Sword verse have allowed the People of the Book to maintain their religions if they pay jizya. There are numerous narrations in this regard.
3. The practice of the Prophet (s) and Imām ‘Alī (a) – and even the practice of other Caliphs – who refrained from coercing the non-polytheists to accept Islam and got jizya from them also attests this stance.

All this said, it seems that the best interpretation for the relationship between the two verses is this viewpoint.

However, it cannot be concluded that with this interpretation, the Rejection of Duress verses do not disagree with the coercion of people to accept Islam, because there are evidences other than the Rejection of Duress verses in the Qur'ān and sunna which indicate that it is not permissible to coerce non-Muslims to accept Islam. In other words, although it is true that the Rejection of Duress verses cannot challenge the Sword verses and do not prevent the accomplishment of the external duty in them – i.e. coercing polytheists to accept Islam – our stance on the prohibition of coercing people to accept a religion has definite evidences other than the Rejection of Duress verses which have been referred to in brief. It is suitable to present all evidences completely here.

1. The Qur'ān 9:29 which is revealed after the 6<sup>th</sup> verse of this chapter (i.e. the Sword verse) and has announced the right of the People of the Book to maintain their religion if they pay jizya.

2. The verses of the Table Spread (Qur'ān 5) chapter which were revealed after Repentance chapter (Qur'ān 9) and toward the end of the life of the noble Prophet of Islam (s) in which no sign is seen on the coercion of the believers of other religion to Islam; rather, these verses invited the Prophet (s) (who was at the height of his power at the time) to show patience and forgiveness in response to the misdeeds and transgressions of the People of the Book.

3. Although it is true that coercing a person to say “There is no god except Allāh” and accept Islam externally is not impossible, all Islamic scholars agree that accepting Islam should be based on the volition and will of the person (which results from his internal belief). Accepting Islam without the element of free will has no value and such an acceptance is worthless from the judicial viewpoint of Islamic denominations; it also does not make the rules related to Muslims applicable to such a person. Accordingly, although the external coercion of a person to announce his acceptance of Islam is possible, no legal effect originates from such an acceptance; similarly, the acts of worship which are done based on duress (such as forced prayers and fasting) will not be valid and effective.

It might be asked that if this is so, then why polytheists are coerced to abandon their religion and convert to Islam based on the appearance of the Sword verse?

This question can be answered with a two-fold response.

First, abandoning one's religion and announcing it does not need the intention to attain the proximity of God. Similarly, saying the sentence “There is no god except Allāh” without the internal belief will not bring about any benefit for the one who says it. However, it will cleanse the

appearance of the society from polytheism and help remove this contagious disease from among people.

Second, according to this verse, the polytheists are not forced to accept Islam; rather, they are bound to abandon polytheism. This way, there will be a third path, which is adopting another religion such as Christianity, Judaism, etc. in which there is no polytheism and the followers of which agree with Muslims in the sentence “There is no god but God”. Hence, even the Sword verse does not imply the compulsory acceptance of Islam; rather, the utmost implication it provides is the coercion of polytheists to abandon polytheism, which is legally and intellectually a volitional and possible act.

It might be asserted that the implication following the 11<sup>th</sup> verse of the Repentance chapter prevents the acknowledgment of the foregoing stance and the verse seems to indicate the coercion of the polytheists to accept Islam where it says, “But (even so), if they repent, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, they are your brethren in Faith ...” (Qur’ān 9:11).

The answer to this doubt is that the verse says if they “Establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, they are your brethren in Faith”, and this does not imply at all that if they didn’t do so, you should kill them.

If the verse had conditioned the most extreme decree to the establishment of prayers and payment of regular charity, and had said that “Kill them ... up until they establish prayers and pay regular charity”, it would have meant that the decree for the murder of the polytheists is nullified only by their acceptance of Islam. However, the appearance of the verse is totally different from such an interpretation, because the foregoing statement is descriptive and it is commonly known that description does not have meaning, and those who believe in the meaning for the description have been unable to present a cogent evidence to prove the authoritativeness of the description. Therefore, the ultimate possible implication of the verse is that if the *mahdūr al-dam* (unprotected) polytheists repent, establish prayers, and pay regular charity, Muslims should not ill-treat them. We might say that the reason for this has been that some Muslims murdered the people who seemed to be Muslims with the excuse that they were insincere. Here, the Qur’ān prohibits them from this action and says, “Do not accuse anyone who claims himself to be a Muslim of disbelief” (Qur’ān 4:94).

The next question is that what is the decree for a polytheist who converts to Christianity? The end of the foregoing verse does not discuss such a person. However, due to the decree mentioned at the beginning of the verse, he has left polytheism and no one has the right to harass him. Moreover, in

the light of the decree on the People of the Book's freedom of religion, no obligation and duress should be afflicted onto him.

This is the implication of the outer appearance of the verses. However, some narrations related to this discussion cannot be interpreted this way at all and they reject the foregoing interpretation. One of these is the second narration in the fifth volume of the book *Wasā'il al-Shī'a* (entitled Al-Jihād) in which different types of sword are described. It is stated in this narration: "... But there are three famous swords: sword against the polytheist Arabs about whom the sublime God said: 'slay the Pagans wherever ye find them ... But (even so), if they repent, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, they are your brethren in Faith ... they are the ones who either should be killed or should convert to Islam'" (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1988, vol. 15: 25). Later in this same tradition, he says about the People of the Book: "... So, if some of them were in the Muslim society, nothing but paying jizya or being murdered is accepted from them..." and then takes the verse 29 of the Repentance chapter as evidence. This way, there remains no way but one of the two following ones:

1. To question the chain of transmission of the narration and insist on the basis of our discussion.

2. To acknowledge the fourth form by accepting the narration, i.e. there is no duress in religion unless against the polytheists, but the People of the Book have the right to live in the Islamic government territory provided that they pay jizya. However, an inspection of the chain of transmission of the narration shows that it is a weak one, and so the narration cannot be used to oppose the foregoing strong evidences. In fact, the whole chain of transmission of this narration originates from Qāsim b. Muḥammad and 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qāsānī (Qāshānī) who are both weak transmitters from the viewpoint of the Rijāl scholars (Ṭūsī, 1994: 388).

#### **The examination of the fourth possibility**

The fourth possibility for the relationship between the Rejection of Duress verses and the Sword verse is that we specify the generality of the Rejection of Duress verses by the Sword verses; that is to say, no disbeliever is coerced to accept Islam but polytheists.

This form derives from the viewpoint in which the Rejection of Duress verses are taken as exclamatory and as evidence for the decree. In other words, in case we say that the Rejection of Duress verses have prohibited coercing the disbelievers into accepting Islam, this general decree has been specified by the Sword verse, and the polytheists are taken out of its scope. This way, there will be no conflict between the two sets of verses.

However, if we interpret the Rejection of Duress verses as declarative, the Sword verses are specifically out of its scope and there would be no conflict – even the initial one – between them. Although this stance does not have any problem and entails no prohibition, it seems that the third possibility is better than this due to the following reasons.

1. The specification of the Rejection of Duress verses with the fifth verse of the Repentance chapter (i.e. the Sword verse) requires deeming permissible the coercion of the polytheists into Islam. However, the previous discussions make it clear that two things prevent such a perception:

A) It was said that the Sword verse does not indicate anything more than coercing the polytheists to abandon their polytheism. However, with regard to the question that which religion they can adopt after abandoning polytheism, it seems – based on the external evidences – that they are free in this regard. However, if we take the Sword verse as specifying the Rejection of Duress verses, this will mean the permissibility (or obligation) of coercing the polytheists to Islam. Nonetheless, it was noted that the verse does not have such an implication and so, it cannot be taken as specifying the generality of the Rejection of Duress verses.

B) Another point is that the inherent condition for having faith in Islam is internal belief, and the person can announce this faith by his free will to accept Islam. In other words, volition is one of the legal conditions for the acceptance of Islam. This is similar to the acts of worship such as prayer that will not meet the condition for correctness if the person does it under duress. In this case, although the coercion of a person to announce his belief in Islam is not intellectually impossible, it suffers from legal impossibility. Then, how can the Sword verse specify the Rejection of Duress verses?

2. The sentence “Truth stands out clear from Error” (Qur’ān 2:256) after the sentence “Let there be no compulsion in religion” strongly indicates that the Rejection of Duress means rejecting the internal duress, because the overall content of the verse signifies that one who has adopted disbelief has done so based on understanding rather than ignorance and misconception, and so, we cannot convince him to change his stance by the removal of the misunderstanding. Therefore, there is no other way to make such a person accept Islam (other than duress, which is legally impermissible).

Point: If we take the Rejection of Duress verses to be about the internal duress, there is no need to refer to the Rejection of Duress verses to prove the external duress, because there are numerous evidences – mentioned above – which prove that it is prohibited to coerce people to accept Islam.

This said, to prove the impermissibility of coercing non-Muslims to accept Islam, there is no need to the implication of the Rejection of Duress

verses at all, although the reference to these verses has been a longstanding formal and nominal tradition among Muslim jurists and interpreters.

### **The practice of the Global Government of Islam from the viewpoint of the related qur'ānic verses and Islamic narrations**

The Shī'a and the Sunnī believe that one day Islam will be accepted globally and both agree that the Mahdī of the Muslim nation from the lineage of Lady Fāṭima (s) will be one day the undisputed ruler of the world and the cause for the reign of the righteous till the Resurrection Day in this world. They consider this as one of the necessary permissions mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and both agree that the divine ruler from the lineage of the noble Prophet (s) does not deviate a bit from the Islamic orders and what happens in the time of his and his successors' reign is totally based on the divine decrees.

With this image in mind, proving the way the Support of Muḥammad's Family (may God hasten his reappearance) will treat the disbelievers is an important reason that can be used in clarifying the point if the acceptance of Islam is free or compulsory.

Some narrations from Ahl al-Bayt (a) exist in this regard which were referred to in the previous sections. Therefore, we focus more on the qur'ānic verses in this part of the article.

1. "Behold! Allāh said: 'O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection...'" (Qur'ān 3:55).

Interpreting this verse, 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī (may God have mercy on him) (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 3: 208) writes that this noble verse tells us that the Jews will remain to the Resurrection Day under the control of those who consider it necessary to follow Jesus (a). This sentence clearly indicates that Jews continue to exist to the Resurrection Day, and this cannot be fulfilled unless there is freedom of religion.

Although this same verse can be used to assert that the Christians also continue to exist to the Resurrection Day, it is not necessary to prove this meaning because of the various interpretations given by the exegetes and the previous attainment of the favorite proposition (i.e. it was proved that the Jews and other classes of non-Muslims continue to exist to the Resurrection Day).

2. "Say: 'O People of the Book! ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord'" (Qur'ān 5:68).

In this verse, God invites the People of the Book to execute the Divine limits which exist in their own Scripture. It is evident that without having access to the original book, this invitation cannot be fulfilled. Therefore, the following points can be achieved from this verse.

A) If we say that during the reign of Imām Mahdī (may God hasten his reappearance), Jews and Christians no longer exist, we should accept that the time for the use of this verse and some hundred other verses which address the two groups will be over then and they will be of no use; however, the reality is that no verse of the Qur’ān is going to be useless.

B) Since all original divine Scriptures are maintained by Imām Mahdī (may God hasten his reappearance), he will give the Scripture of each religion to its followers, and as mentioned in the narrations, he will judge among them based on their own Scripture. It is in such conditions that the fulfillment of the content of the foregoing verse becomes possible for the Jews and the Christians, and they will have no worth for God if they do not put into practice the divine orders.

C) If looked from the opposite direction, the verse intends that the People of the Book will be taken into account by God if they put into practice the real orders of their religion, although they will not get otherworldly salvation if they do not accept Islam.

3. “Behold! thy Lord did declare that He would send against them, to the Day of Judgment, those who would afflict them with grievous penalty ...” (Qur’ān 7:167).

It is clearly stated in this verse that Judaism will remain up to the Resurrection Day, and God’s Law about them is to continually let some dominate and bother them.

4. There are many other verses in the Qur’ān that address the People of the Book, such as “Let the people of the Gospel judge by what Allāh hath revealed therein” (Qur’ān 5:47) and “Say: “O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allāh” (Qur’ān 3:64), as well as the verses which address the disbelievers and prohibit them from continuing their disbelief and corruption.

If we come to believe that there will be no non-Muslim in the Imām Mahdī’s (may God hasten his reappearance) era, all these verses will lose their targets and so, their usefulness time will come to the end. However, according to numerous narrations, the noble Qur’ān is fresh and flowing to the Resurrection Day like the movement of the Moon and the Sun, and its verses do not lose their credit and use.

5. The Divine Law on the freedom of faith is expressed and can also be seen throughout the Qur’ān. These Laws, including the testing law and the

volition of the human in choosing his path, are not going to be changed during the reign of the righteous. In the same manner, during the Imām era, the Divine Punishments are not changed or aborted; rather, they will be executed, and it is natural that when there is no criminal, no punishment is executed, and where there is no volition and testing, violation is meaningless.

A question is raised here that in their classification of Jihād types, the Shī'a jurists have included offensive Jihād, too. The meaning of this type of Jihād is that the Muslim ruler (who should be an Infallible Imām) will undertake Jihād during his reign in order to promote and expand Islam when the disbelievers do not want a war with Islam. This way, the problem will go back to the first place.

The answer to this question will be given in several parts. The claim made in the question should come from the Qur'ān, Islamic narrations, or the practice of the Prophet (s) and Imām 'Alī (a). However, none of these convey such a stance.

A) Qur'ān: What was mentioned in the previous discussions of this article about the permanence of divine religions based on the qur'ānic evidences is the best reason for the rejection of the foregoing claim. These qur'ānic evidences include verses that permit the People of the Book to maintain their religion provided that they pay jizya, and the verses that attest the People of the Book will continue to exist to the Resurrection Day. The verses related to the reign of Islam do not express more than the rule of the righteous and the global dominance of Islam over other religions throughout the world. Therefore, the foregoing claim cannot be proved using the qur'ānic verses, because there are evidences in the Qur'ān that reject it instead of proving it.

B) Narrations: Even the narrations that are used as evidence for the offensive Jihād attest the freedom of the People of the Book to maintain their religion. For example, have a look at the following narration from the Al-Jihād volume of the book *Wasā'il al-Shī'a* as one of the strongest narrations in this regard, one which has been used as the evidence for offensive Jihād. It is noted in this narration, "... So when they accept to pay jizya, it is prohibited for us to capture them and take their properties ..." (Hurr 'Āmilī, 1988, vol. 15: 25).

This narration, which strongly appears to rule for offensive Jihād by the Prophet (s) and the Infallibles (a), is considered a weak narration and most of its transmission chain goes back to Qāsim b. Muḥammad (who is a weak transmitter of Ḥadīth). Therefore, the foregoing narration does not have the conditions of soundness, is considered a weak narration, and cannot resist

what we quoted from the Qur'ān and sunna. Moreover, in this narration, the use of power is discussed only against the existence of polytheism (which was not rejected in this article), and Jihād against the People of the Book in this narration is not because of religion, but it is due to their refraining from submission. If they submit and pay jizya, the fight will be over and they will have the right to maintain their religion under certain conditions; this fact has been mentioned in the verse 29 of the Repentance chapter. This verse does not condition the end of the war with the People of the Book to their acceptance of Islam; rather, it has conditioned it to their payment of jizya with feeling themselves subdued. Therefore, the text and chain of transmission of the foregoing narration does not conflict with what we said above.

Therefore, offensive Jihād is only used against polytheism.

C) Sunna: The way the noble Prophet of Islam (s) treated the followers of other divine religions at the height of his power is very clear and is the best evidence for the rejection of the claim that Islam coerces the followers of other religions to accept it. Moreover, the practice of the Companions of the Prophet (s) and the Caliphs (who acted upon the procedure taken by the Prophet in this regard, especially the Commander of the Faithful (a)) has also been nothing but this. It was stated that based on the narrations about the Reappearance era, the practice of Imām Mahdī (may God hasten his reappearance) will not be other than this.

The liberating Jihād as a movement led by a just Imām to save a nation enslaved and oppressed by tyrant rulers is a totally different issue which has nothing to do with religion. This fact is emphasized in the noble Qur'ān where it says, "And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allāh and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? Men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help!" (Qur'ān 4:75).

What we said indicates that the verses and narrations that absolutely imply the obligation of Jihād against disbelievers are taken to refer to a limited group (i.e. polytheists); otherwise, there would be a conflict between the verses and narrations, and it is evident that the conflict between the absolute and limited can be resolved if the absolute is taken to mean the limited. An example is the noble verse, "O ye who believe! fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allāh is with those who fear Him" (Qur'ān 9:123).

In addition, there is a narration that reads, "Jihād has four types. Two types of Jihād are obligatory ... one of these two obligatory types is fighting

against one's carnal soul in order to prevent it from committing sins against the Sublime Allāh. This is the biggest Jihād. The second obligatory type of Jihād is fighting against disbelievers near you ...” (Hurr ‘Āmilī, 1988, vol. 15: 23).

The examination of the decisive narrations and verses as well as the decisive and true practice of the Prophet (a) and Imām ‘Alī (a) indicates that the term disbeliever here means polytheists, as the linguistic context of these verses and their revelation atmosphere testify this meaning. Never do these verses imply the coercion of the disbelievers to accept of Islam.

Of course, some have translated this as “O’ People of the Book! You don’t rely on a robust base that can be used to establish the Divine Orders in the Torah and the Gospel.” However, as the word “ḥattā” (even) is used in this verse to indicate the ultimate end, there could be no ultimate end in this translation and this interpretation of the verse would be then untrue. In order to clarify the case, we should say that when the imperfective verb after the word “ḥattā” is interpreted as an infinitive because of the accusative implied “an”, the overall meaning will be “Lastum ‘alā shay’ ḥattā iqāmatikum al-Tawrāt wa al-Injīl.” With our intended translation, even the ultimate end is something for the past, and the meaning of the verse will be “You have no worth before you establish the Divine Orders (i.e. your worthlessness will end when you establish the Divine Orders and God will consider you a position if you execute His orders)”. However, with the other translations, there would be no ultimate end, while the word “ḥattā” in this combination indicates the existence of an ultimate end.

### **Conclusion**

The enemies of Islam always wait for an opportunity to represent the beautiful face of Islam as ugly and detestable (especially in the present era when the Western colonizers deem Islam as the biggest threat against its oppressive interests and dominance) and greatly try to make people fearful of Islam. In this fitna which sometimes afflicts Muslims as well, it is upon every researcher and thinker to defend the boundaries of Islam with robust reasons, argument, and argumentation. Sometimes the mistakes of some exegetes and pseudo-exegetes in the translation and interpretation of the Qur’ān and narrations load the barrel of the enemies’ gun (e.g. the claim on the abrogation of the Rejection of Duress verses by the Sword verses). At a time when many people in the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world have come to recognize the rightfulness and greatness of Islam and turn to it in large groups, the enemies’ most damaging weapon against Islam is representing this kind religion as brutal. Then, one of the substantial duties

of researchers is to defend this reality, and the present study was done with such a viewpoint.

The examination of the qur'ānic verses and the valid narrations of Ahl al-Bayt (a) indicates that Islam never orders the coercion of people to accept Islam and has never issued the order to murder or imprison a person simply because of his disbelief. The Rejection of Duress verses have never been abrogated in Islam and the practice of the noble Prophet of Islam (s) and Ahl al-Bayt (a), especially the Commander of the Faithful (a), during their reign as well as the practice of the Companions of the Prophet (s) who had seen his treatment of the followers of other religions have never been this way. What is observed in some commentaries is merely the personal inference and perception of some exegetes from the outer appearance of some verses.

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