

Guns and bombs are no option in Islam

Remaining silent about these killings is a crime

The Arabic equivalent of blasphemy is shatm. Blasphemy finds no mention in the dictionary of Islam. It is only an innovated term. According to hadith (saying of the Prophet of Islam), any innovation in the religion of Islam is liable to be rejected. It is a fact that the Pakistani legislature has passed a law that blasphemy is a cognisable offence and one who commits it is liable to capital punishment. But the authentic sources of Islam are only two: the Quran and the hadith. No mufti or legislature has the right to add such a law to the Islamic shariah.

The Prophet of Islam started his mission in AD 610 in Mecca and he died in AD 632 in Medina. During these 22 years there were some people both in Mecca and Medina who used abusive language against the Prophet of Islam. But the Prophet never said they should be killed. He opted for only two kinds of response: either he avoided the issue or he asked some of his companions to meet them and remove their misunderstanding.

Looking at the early history of Islam, I can say that the present Muslims must adopt this Prophetic model. Muslims must either ignore such events or they must respond to them in a peaceful manner, that is, a statement for a statement, a book for a book. There is no third option for Muslims.

According to the Creation Plan of God, everyone is free. Freedom is everyone's birthright, so no one can abolish anyone's freedom. People are free to use their free-

dom as they please. If you disagree with the point of view of your fellow beings, you can express your views in a rational manner; you must try to address their minds. Guns and bombs are no options for a Muslim.

Killing in the name of blasphemy is common, especially in Pakistan. Further, it is strange that no Muslim of repute speaks against this unislamic act. Almost all such Muslims are silent on this issue. This silence is highly objectionable. As an Islamic scholar, I would like to say this so-called blasphemy is not a crime but remaining silent about these killings is no doubt a crime. There is a hadith that if you see an evil and you fail to speak out against it, you are a dumb Satan.

If you take the act of blasphemy as a difference of opinion, then it will be to your advantage. Difference of opinion invites discussion, which gives you a good opportunity to remove the misconceptions. Moreover, according to the Quran, difference gives you an opportunity to turn an enemy into a friend.

Islam emphasises a rational approach. The Quran does not ask others not to use abusive language against Islam; it enjoins Muslims not to use abusive language against other religions. Islam tries to root out the cause of blasphemy rather than command people to kill those who commit blasphemy. Save others from your evil, to be saved from the evils of others.

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