



Refuting Misconceptions about Islam





In the Name of Allah,
the Most Gracious,
the Most Merciful



Effectiveness of the Contemporary Onslaught against Islam

The production of a vaccine to ensure immunity against a particular disease requires some preliminary measures that help to determine the nature of the disease, its causes and how it spreads. The same applies to

intellectual and social phenomena. It is not right to deal with any such problem unless one understands its nature and causes. The main purpose of this book is to present a methodology to protect oneself with, and to deal with intellectual doubts, citing the main questions and problems with relevant answers to all these. However, it is better at the outset to describe the contemporary onslaught that raises doubts about Islam, outline its features and discuss how effective it is. When we have done this, we will, Allah willing, delve into our purpose.



Features of the contemporary onslaught:

One: This onslaught is, in the main part, destructive and not constructive, disorderly and unmethodical. It presents problems and cites objections but does not present an alternative, coherent view or idea. This is reflected in various ways. For example, when we look at how atheism is presented, we find most of it steering away from

presenting a basic atheist concept that denies the existence of a creator. The focus is mainly on criticising religion, particularly Islam, and overlooking the major flaws in the very concept of atheism. We note that atheists pay little attention to answering substantive questions about their own belief system, while they are always ready to ridicule those hadiths that refer to camels' urine and the report of Aishah's age at the time of her marriage to the Prophet. If they try to be a little more reasonable, they speak about the punishment for apostasy or the stoning punishment of married adulterers. All this shows the destructive nature in their discourse which pays little attention to methodology and construction.

In a debate, the well-known advocate of atheism Richard Dawkins asked Mahdi Hasan if he actually believed that Muhammad ascended to heaven riding a horse with wings. He asked the question mockingly which, in turn, earned him the applause of his supporters. In a different programme, Dawkins was himself asked about the essence of his atheism, yet the shallow answer that ensued was a disappointment to his own atheistic camp. Essentially, he was asked about the origin of life and his answer was that at some point in time, somewhere in the universe, a civilisation evolved, most probably according to Darwin's theory, and produced a certain type of life which was then planted in our universe. When he discussed the origin of the universe and its fine laws with

Steven Weinberg, an atheist physicist, he suggested that it might have been the result of the existence of a multiverse that ultimately led to the evolution of our universe. Weinberg replied saying that the number of universes required for such purpose would be 10^{120} . He added: 'In fact, this is disturbing'.



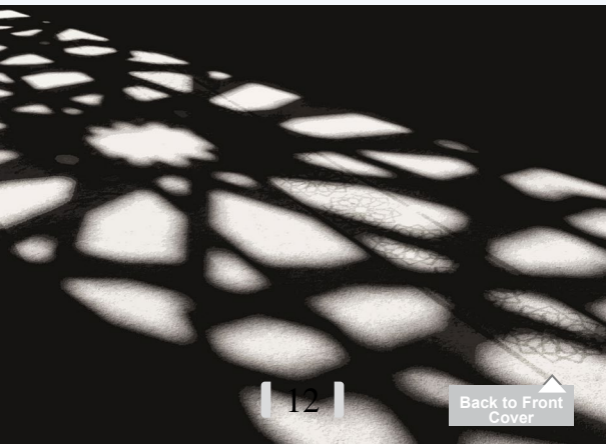
Thus, we see that the main issues are blurred, having no firm basis, in the minds of these atheist advocates. Rather than concentrating on proving the validity of their ideas, they confine themselves to criticising religions and seeking to undermine them.

Another approach that is destructive and unmethodical is that of Dr Adnan Ibraheem, which has had widespread influence in recent years as several websites carry his lectures and views. Some people have benefited from his ideas at the religious and intellectual levels, but he does not present a coherent and constructive vision, while there is much methodological confusion in his approach, which, in turn, is transmitted to his audience. Basically, his viewers cannot formulate

a clear concept of several highly important issues he frequently discusses, such as his attitude towards the sunnah, i.e. the Prophet's traditions and statements. At times, he praises al-Bukhari's Sahih, which is the most authentic anthology, particularly when he cites some hadiths in support of the idea he is presenting. At other times, he severely criticises the anthology and its author because the hadiths it includes run against his ideas. He employs some very harsh words to express his horror at what the anthology presents, leaving viewers with the impression that al-Bukhari was no more than someone who sells cakes or tends horses, rather than a scholar with few peers in history.

A person who follows Adnan Ibraheem is likely to acquire an aggressive attitude towards fundamental principles, without having the necessary methodological approach and with no regard for proper debate and scholarly differences. As a result, such a person may deal with religious texts according to his own intellectual portal, which he may consider as clear logic. This may lead him to accept such texts as fit with his own understanding and reject what seems to him unsuitable. I am writing this to make clear that I reject reform that is based on confused methodologies and destructive vision. I support reform when it is based on a constructive vision or fair and methodological criticism. Disorder can never be a way to rid us of our backward status in

science, knowledge and thought. Disorder can only increase our backwardness and make it more complex. I have seen cases where people acknowledge that their first step towards disbelief was by following Adnan Ibraheem. They then sank further to follow Muhammad Shahroor and ultimately sank into deism or outright atheism. I do not think that this is the outcome we aspire to achieve through reform.





Two: This new onslaught is loaded with open-ended questions. No issue or question is excluded, whether related to Allah Himself, His actions, Islamic legislation, the prophets, or ideological issues such as the universe and whether it is created or ever-existing, etc. Such questions require psychological and scholarly preparation by specialists so that they can provide the relevant answers.



Three: The present attack raises general slogans that have superficial attraction, but they are neither clear in their import nor well designed nor scholarly based so as to protect those who repeat them from ambiguity or contradiction. We frequently hear slogans like 'mind liberation; critical approach to heritage; rejection of imposition; freedom; etc.' Such slogans are not totally false. They need to be

clarified so that the wrong ideas advocated by those who raise doubts about Islam and its fundamentals through such slogans can be identified. The right ideas in such slogans would also be identified and separated from those that are wrong or false. Only in this way can we ensure that these slogans are not used to serve false concepts. For example, some people reject the sunnah totally under the banner of taking a 'critical approach to heritage'. This is faulty usage because the slogans are so general and their employ is arbitrary, serving personal ideas.



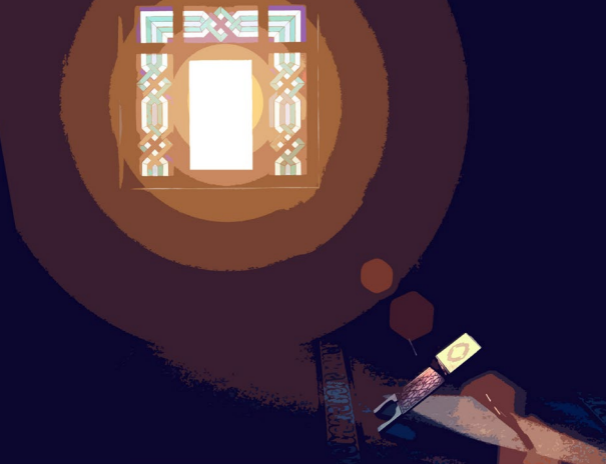
Four: The impact of this attack on our society is at a level in between openness and concealment, but it is closer to the latter. This makes it difficult to measure the impact of the attack and its spread among the population. At the same time, concealment is a cause of worry for parents and educators.



Five: The main battlefield for this onslaught, up to the present moment, is social media. It is there that it is aimed, received and making its impact. This gives it an ever-expanding dimension that is unaffected by the social means of resistance, such as the mosque, school or family. Indeed, the impact may equally affect those who frequent mosques, and those who are raised by devout parents. I noted this

in various discussions with some who were influenced by it. One woman told me frankly, on the telephone, that she disbelieves in Islam, and then started to discuss certain issues. She then abruptly hung up. Later, she phoned again, apologising for cutting me off, but had done so because her father was very religious and she feared he might overhear her.





Six: The present onslaught is particularly dangerous because it is aimed at the very essence of Islam and the unanimously accepted and fundamental principles of Islamic law. The case would have been different if it was aimed, for example, at one of the schools of Fiqh or a particular scholar, without encroaching on the essentials and fundamentals of Islam. The gravity of the matter becomes clearer when

we consider the status of those who are influenced by it. When a person loses faith in Islam, that person becomes a disbeliever who incurs Allah's punishment in the life to come. Moreover, abandoning the essential and fundamental Islamic principles means a loss of identity and direction, as well as negligence of Islamic duties. It is indeed more than that, because denying some essentials makes a person a disbeliever. All this puts the problem at a level that cannot be ignored or looked at with complacency.



Seven: What adds to the seriousness of this attack is that the majority of those influenced by it are youth and young adult men and women. This means that its negative effects on society will be at its fullest level in the near future when these young people are working in different fields, including education and social guidance. Hence, it is most important to tackle the problem wisely and with the means suited for the present stage.

Eight: Those who are impacted by the current onslaught of doubts may be classified into two categories:

The foolish who are using these doubts as a means to pursue their personal desires, and they are numerous.

Those who have been genuinely influenced by these doubts, leading them to adopt new ideas and concepts that involve violating Islamic principles.

This means that we must not make generalisations. Indeed, we must stop levelling generalised accusations and partial portrayals of the problems. We need to look for varied means to face these problems, each to suit the different scenario.



Nine: Those who raise these various contemporary misconceptions have different aims. Some want to divert people away from Islam, so that they may abandon it, and all religions. These include the neo-atheists, deists and those who stand to gain politically from the loss of the Muslim community's power and influence.

Some of those who raise some misconceptions do not wish to destroy

Islam or undermine it. Indeed, they may raise their banners with good intentions, hoping to improve the image of Islam, showing it to be consistent with contemporary ideals. Yet serving this purpose may lead such people to deny some essential Islamic principles, or interpret them in a way that aims to allay the fears of non-Muslims. When I speak of essential Islamic principles, I refer to rulings and texts that Sunni Muslims consider to be true and valid, such as considering the sunnah, i.e. the Prophet's traditions, a main source of religious rulings and information. The limits set by the Islamic faith provide another type of such Islamic principle.



Ten: This onslaught consists of a number of objections and reservations relating to Allah, His existence and perfection, as well as prophethood and Islamic law. We often find the same questions raised by those who are impacted by this attack, despite their widely different ages and resident domiciles. This is not the result of any independent thought or reasoning that has led them to raise such questions and objections. It is rather the result of the

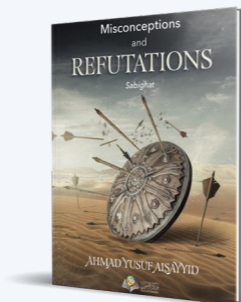
circulation of such information on the internet which has managed to bring the world together around one table. I shall mention in this book a number of these questions and objections. Several books have highlighted the main problems, either generally or in devoted chapters, such as the encyclopaedia known as Bayan al-Islam; and Tanzih al-Qur'an al-Karim an Daawa al-Ta'inin. One of the best works on this subject is Sultan al-Umayri's Ph.D. thesis entitled *Zahirat Naqd al-Din fi al-Falsafah al-Hadithah*, or Criticism of Religion in Modern Philosophy.

I conclude my discussion of the features of the contemporary onslaught by mentioning a book that provides a fine description of neo-atheism. It is Militia al-Ilhad, or Atheism's Militia, by Abdullah al-Ujayri.

This is an excerpt
of a larger book titled
**“Misconceptions and
Refutations (Sabighat)”**

by Abd Ar-Rahman
bin Abd Al-Kareem Ash-Sheha.

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