

Islam Teaches Personal Deception?

There are two specific verses in the Koran that allow individual Muslims to deceive non-Muslims if the circumstances warrant it. The first verse, 3:28, allows Muslims to pretend to be friends with non-Muslims, even though there are many verses in the Koran prohibiting such friendship. The second verse, 16:106, allows Muslims to publically renounce Islam, even though Muhammad said that anyone leaving Islam should be killed.

Chapter 3, Verse 28

Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Auliya (supporters, helpers) instead of the believers, and whoever does that, will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment), and to Allah is the final return.

The Islamic scholar Ibn Kathir explained this verse and the exception it mentioned:

Allah prohibited His believing servants from becoming supporters of the disbelievers, or to take them as comrades with whom they develop friendships, rather than the believers...except those believers who in some areas or times fear for their safety from the disbelievers. In this case, such believers are allowed to show friendship to the disbelievers outwardly, but never inwardly. For instance, Al-Bukhari recorded that Abu Ad-Darda' said, "We smile in the face of

some people although our hearts curse them." Al-Bukhari said that Al-Hasan said, "The Tuqyah [deception] is allowed until the Day of Resurrection."

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 2, pp. 141-142

The *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn* (pp. 122-124) explained the exception allowed in this verse:

...unless it is dissimulation out of fear of them so that the befriending takes place with the tongue alone and not the heart. This was before Islam became mighty, when Islam had no power in the land.

The *Tafsir Ibn 'Abbas* (p. 68) presented a similar explanation:

...saving yourselves from them by speaking in a friendly way towards them with [sic], while your hearts dislikes [sic] this.

How do our two modern *tafsirs* explain this verse? Here is the *Tafsir as-Sa'di*:

Allah prohibits the believers from entering into friendship with the disbelievers or to have love for them, aid them, or seek their help in any task meant for the Muslims...If you fear for your life, then you can verbally express friendship with them and say things or commit actions in a manner that might save your life.

Tafsir as-Sa'di, Vol. 1, p. 232

The other modern *tafsir*, *Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan*, explained:

In this verse, Allah has strictly forbidden the believers to make friends with disbelievers, because the latter are the enemies of Allah as well as enemies of the believers. Hence, there is no reason to make friends with them. There are many verses in the Qur'an warning believers against making friends with disbelievers, except for reasons of expediency or need or trade. Treaties and pacts of mutual benefit may also be concluded with them...because all these are quite different things and have nothing to do with friendship.

Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan, Vol. 1, p. 290

This modern *tafsir* then explained the exception:

This permission is for those Muslims who live in a non-Muslim state. If they fear repression, they may profess friendship with the non-Muslims verbally.

Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan, Vol. 1, p. 290

Is there a reason for Muslims to generally fear non-Muslims? Yes, because the Koran states that non-Muslims are "open enemies" of the Muslims:

...the disbelievers are ever to you open enemies. (Chapter 4, Verse 101)

So Muslims professing friendship with non-Muslims are not necessarily disregarding 5:51 and the many other such verses in the Koran that prohibit such friendship. These Muslims might be following the exception allowed in 3:28, smiling *in the face of some people although our hearts curse them*. Or they simply might not be devout Muslims at the time.

The same principle is applied in 16:106. Here is that verse:

Chapter 16, Verse 106

Whosoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith; but such as open their breasts to disbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment.

Ibn Kathir explained the meaning of this verse in a section titled *Allah's Wrath against the Apostate, except for the One Who is forced into Disbelief*:

Allah tells us that He is angry with them who willingly disbelieve in Him after clearly believing in Him, who open their hearts to disbelief finding peace in that, because they understood the faith yet they still turned away from it. They will suffer severe punishment in the Hereafter...

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 5, p. 529

Ibn Kathir then explained the phrase *except him who is forced thereto*:

This is an exception in the case of one who utters statements of disbelief and verbally agrees with the Mushrikin [non-Muslims] because he is forced to do so by the beatings and abuse to which he is subjected, but his heart refuses to accept what he is saying, and he is, in reality, at peace with his faith in Allah and His Messenger.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 5, p. 530

The *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn* (p. 583) also acknowledged the exception mentioned in this verse, and then pointed out that this verse was "a severe threat" to those who apostatize.

The modern *Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan* provided a similar explanation:

As Al-Qurtubi said, scholars are unanimous that whoever renounces the faith under duress to save his life, his heart content with the faith, he is not to be considered a disbeliever. The punitive laws relating to heresy...do not apply to him.

Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan, Vol. 3, p. 247

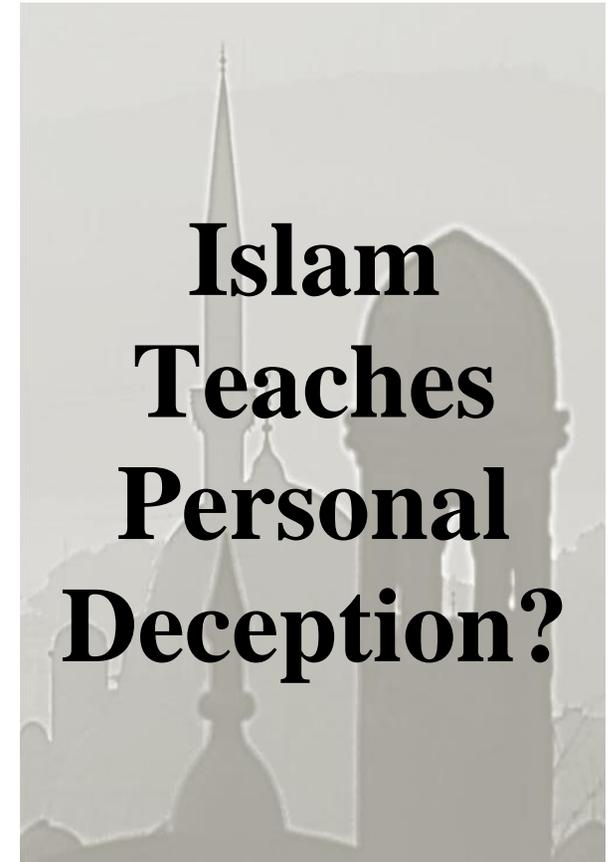
This modern *tafsir* then explained the phrase *on them is wrath from Allah*:

That is the punishment of heresy: Awful doom and the wrath of Allah. A heretic shall be slain. That is his temporal punishment...

Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan, Vol. 3, p. 247

So we can see that Muslims are allowed to deceive non-Muslims in both friendship and religion, because it is authorized by the Koran; the only requirement is that they stay true to Islam in their hearts.

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Part of a series on Islam

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