

Question 18: What Is The Purpose of Jizya?

Question: The purpose of the Prophet hood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was to guide the people and show them the right path which is connected to spiritualism, whereas on the other side we see in the Islamic laws that it is not according to the real purpose of Islam (to guide the people on the right path) as it is revealed:

“If Christians and Jews are ready to pay the Jizya, then free them”. Whereas Jizya itself is diverting towards materialism.

Why does Islam give such a permission that they remain on their false religion?

Answer: From the things of pride for Islam is that it doesn't force anyone to accept this religion without having liking and half-heartedness, As Qur'an says:

There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error;¹

The philosophy of this great verse is also clear. As Islam has invited towards itself through logic and proof and it is war against foolish and superstitious things, its only weapon is to explain the truth and express in a general way. Why after having such a strong weapon, which can attract an open mind and logical people, it should force the people?

Basically for real faith some special things are required if a person doesn't acquire them through perception and far sightedness, then it is difficult for them give it a place in the heart and if forcibly faith is thrust upon them. So it is limited to the tongue and would not have taken them with their heart and whenever factors of enforcement are not there, a person may revert to his earlier condition.

Such type of faith is not profitable to Islam. Islam wants to give such training to the people that they should remain attached to the principles of Islam until their death and should not be strayed for a moment also, and such type of faith cannot be achieved without logic, proof and open mindedness.

The purpose of Jihad in Islam defense from enemies is itself a topic, which should be discussed separately, whereas Jizya was a fixed tax was paid by the People of the Book (Ahlul Kitab) every year

to the government. The reason to levy this tax was, as the administration was under the Muslims and the unbelievers were in minority the Islamic government was forced to take care of their protection, their administration and safety.

It was necessary for those who had not accepted Islam, to take a justified tax from them and spend it on their life and safety of their wealth. To protect the life and wealth of people the Islamic government was forced to keep the army on strategic points, which accrued huge expenses. To meet this expense the only way was to acquire money from the people and spend it for their own welfare. Especially when there was war against the enemies, the non-Muslims did not send their men.

We have many historical facts, from which we come to know that this tax, which is generally less, was not to put pressure on the non-Muslims, but its purpose was to give peace and for safety measures. We give some examples for it:

When Ibada bin Samat invited the commanders of Egypt towards Islam, he said to them:

(1) It depends upon your wish that after studying and pondering accept Islam and if you don't want to become Muslim then give the Jizya and live under the protection of the Muslim government. Till we are there and you are there, we will behave with you in such a way that each other will be happy. We promise you that we will protect your lives, wealth, property and land and whoever will cross the border, we will fight against them.

(2) When the Muslims were victorious over the Romans and many parts of Shamata came under their control, the people of Hama accepted to pay the Jizya. Afterwards, the Muslims due to some reasons the treaty, which was signed between them and Christians of Hama after the agreeing of both the sides, cancelled it.

That is why one of the elder people of Muslims addressed the people of Hama in this way: "Whatever we had taken from you, you take it back from us and whatever agreement we had made, make us free from it." The people of Hama answered: "We will never separate from you. Your way and style is much better than the Romans. (If you accept) we will fight against the Roman army by joining the Islamic army.

(3) The quantity of Jizya applied by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for the Christians of Najran clarify our stand, because it was decided that they will give yearly three thousand Hilla (the price of each Hilla was forty dirhams), to be paid in two installments. Two thousand Hilla in the month of Safar and one thousand Hilla in the month of Rajab. In the same way the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had a treaty with the people of Izrah on the condition that they will pay one hundred Dinars every year.

For the safety of the life, wealth and property of the enemies, this tax was nothing for them.

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