

Robert Spencer on Prophet of Islam: An appraisal of "The Truth about Muhammad"

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Abstract

Opposition to Islam and the Prophet of Islam is widespread in Western scholars and orientalists. One of the prominent persons in this list is Robert Spencer, a renowned anti-Islam American author and blogger. Spencer has studied the life and teachings of Muhammad (ﷺ) with aggressive criticism and religious prejudice. This paper evaluates some of the objections raised by Robert Spencer in his book "The Truth about Muhammad." The themes of the book have been refined and security scrutinized carefully in maintaining the sanctity of Islam and respecting the rights of the Prophet of Islam. After a thorough analysis this paper finds that Robert Spence's views are not based on objective study of the relevant sources.

Keywords: Robert Spence, views, Muhammad, prejudice

Introduction

Robert Bruce Spencer is an American anti-Islamic writer. He was born on February 27, 1962 and has a background in Catholic Christianity, having long been baptized as a Greek Orthodox believer. He became known to

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many because of his harsh criticism and contempt for Islam which is the hold and reference of Muslims as a whole. His research on Islam, Quran, Holy Prophet, human rights, terrorism and jihad is gaining media coverage, where he is also a director of a website run by Jihad Watch. He was often invited as a speaker and frequently wrote as a columnist in various magazines and articles in America. "The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion" is a book among other controversial works written by Robert Spencer. This paper uses qualitative, descriptive methods and text studies in which library and original text studies are used. This involves the use of primary reference sources as primary references namely Quran and Robert Spencer's book. Among the secondary materials that are the reference for this paper are books, academic journals and articles related to themes of the book. This article suggests that more analysis be made on various books written by Robert Spencer and other Western scholars. This book that traces the biography of Holy Prophet was written as an assessment of some aspects of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that were found problematic and disliked by Spencer such as the issue of the Prophet's marriage, Islamic law which is considered cruel, the issue of jihad, preferring men over women and others. The book consists of ten chapters and each chapter contains sub-chapters that explain the story of the Prophet Muhammad according to Spencer's understanding and argumentation. The author assigns a quotation as a title of every chapter. Unfortunately, the quotations taken by the author are incomplete and they are only taken in accordance with Spencer's intention in expressing the Prophet Muhammad as a tyranny figure who glorified war, aggression and

unkindness. In the following article main themes of his book will be discussed in the light of authentic sources.

Purpose of the book

In the first part of the book Robert Spencer explains the purpose of this book and the reasons why he was previously reluctant to write this book, which Spencer linked to the problem of caricatures that insulted the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Denmark. So, according to Spencer, he carries a big risk in writing this book. He writes: "However, which is why this book had to be written. Freedom to get information and talk, living the truth, not to be silenced by intimidation harsh or receive half-truths and propaganda that is intended to reduce the enemies of truth. One thing is certain: if no one is willing to take such risks, freedom of speech will slowly become a relic of history."² Spencer argues that a biography of the Prophet Muhammad is relevant today because Muslims continue to revere and follow him: it is necessary to know what Muhammad "really" taught so that Westerners can "plan public policy accordingly."¹⁰⁸ Rather than writing a comprehensive biography, Spencer states that his aim is to examine the "problematic" aspects of Muhammad's life that Muslims use to justify violence and other human rights violations. But in reality the aim of the author is 'to distort the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and to portray the religion of Islam in a negative way'.³

² Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 16

³ Gabriel Keresztes and Muatassim Al Humaidi, *The Main Sources of Seerah and the Correct Way of Approaching Them: An Exposition of the Faulty Orientalist and Missionary Approach Towards Seerah and its Sources*.

Sources of the Book

According to Spencer the present work is based on reliable Muslim sources. However, the source quotation taken by Spencer is only a fragment of incomplete quotations that can mislead the reader. Apart from that, the source of quotations from the Holy Quran taken by Spencer is based on the English translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Mohammed Marmaduka Pickthall. According to him, the numbering order of Quran is not standard. He writes "Qur'ānic verse numeration is not standard; therefore, if you are using a translation other than Ali's Pitckthall's, please be aware that a verse I am citing may be several verses away from the location I specify for it".⁴ But his views are not based on fact as there is no difference in the numbering of the Al-Qur'an in the book, apart from that each book translated into the Koran either from Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Mohammed Marmaduka Pickthall, there is also no distinct numbering. Because there is no difference, both in the content and numbering of the Qur'an from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the Qur'an that we hold today, and it has been guaranteed by Allah, and is mentioned in the Qur'ānic Surah Al-An'ām verse 115 "The sentence of your Lord (the Qur'an, as a true and fair sentence, has been perfected. Nothing can change His sentences and He is the Hearing, Knowing)" and in Surah Al-Hijr verse 9: "Indeed, We are the ones who sent down the Qur'an, and in fact, We really take care of it. So it can be seen from the start, that Spencer has started his book with a mockery of the contents of

https://www.muslimlibrary.com/dl/books/English_The_Main_Sources_of_See_rah_and_the_Correct_Way_of_Approaching_.pdf

⁴Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 16-17

the Qur'an whose contents and numbering are definitely the same wherever they are. So that the Ḥadīth and *Sīrah* which have many versions and translations will be more different and not in accordance with what is in the hands of the Muslims in the world .In fact the sources he used were not standard and wrong from the start. In the book the author uses anonymous English translations of Qur'ānic verses. Spencer seems to be utilizing the N.J. Dawood Quran translation as a basis, but never clearly indicates which translation he uses.⁵ Spencer overwhelmingly uses *Ibn Ulliaq's* biography of the Prophet, which is well known to contain all the stories he had heard about the Prophet the correct and the fabricated ones without discrimination as per *Ibn Ishāq* himself- who admitted that "only Allah knows which one is correct."⁶

Historical record of The Muhammad (PBUH)

Spencer describes the historical search for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which Spencer discovered through Qur'an, Hadith and *Sīrah* of the Prophet. Spencer reveals that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not widely known by non-Muslim Westerners, while Jesus and Buddha Gautama were better known to them. He further claims that there are differences regarding the historical reality and Muslim beliefs in the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). All of these sources are improperly quoted by Spencer, wherein the Qur'an and Hadith are incorrectly quoted, that is, only the parts are taken which are confusing if the reader does not

⁵ Andrea Elizabeth Cluck, "Islamophobia in the Post -9/11 United States: Causes, Manifestations, and Solutions," (Master's thesis, The University of Georgia, August 2012), 240.

⁶ Zayed ,The Lies about Muhammad, 17

understand them properly. Such as verses about the of the Prophet and his wife *Hafsah*, verse about Gharānīq, verses about Ghazwa-e-Badr, and various other excerpts. Unfortunately Spencer himself did not see the historical reality that Western orientalists have been waging a 'war of thought' since several hundred years ago as a legacy of the Crusades and the colonization alias they launched. With this war of thought they covered the various histories of the glories of Muslims against Muslims themselves, so that many Muslims did not really know the greatness of Islamic civilization in the past. So that Muslims themselves find it difficult to obtain correct historical knowledge about civilization, so it is clear that Western non-Muslims will be less aware of the truth of Islamic history and the story of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). But it is very apt to quote the words of W. Montgomery Watt to refute the allegations of the author who writes, "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is without a doubt one of the most maligned historical figure in the world."⁷

Sources of the Quran

Regarding the explanation of the source of the Quran, Spencer only quotes a few verses, including Sūrah At-Taḥrīm⁸ verses 1-5, which are verses often used by orientalists and enemies of Islam to slander Islam and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Spencer even more emphatically states that this verse is unclear and difficult to understand. He writes: "It is impossible to tell from this passage what has forbidden that Allah has made lawful for him, or how he tried to please his consorts, or under what circumstances Allah permits oaths to be broken or what secret the consort

⁷W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, (Oxford University, 1981), 324.

⁸ At-Taḥrīm 66:1-5.

told that Allah later told Muhammad (PBUH) , or even which two consorts are being admonished, warned to repent and not to band together against Muhammad (PBUH), and threatened with divorce ".⁹

‘Āysha said: "The Prophet had drunk honey at *Zainab Bint Jahsh's* house. Then I and Ḥafsah agreed to tell the Prophet whoever of us was visited by the Prophet to say the words." You have eaten maghaafir (tree sap which tastes sweet, but smells bad), actually I smell maghafir from you. When Prophet came to one of the two, she said that. Then Prophet replied: "no, but I drank honey at the house of *Zainab bint Jahsh*, but I will not drink it again, I swear, so do not tell this to others."¹⁰

There is also a similarity regarding *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* from the interpretation of *ayāt* according to *al-Marāghī*, where there is an addition that Ḥafsah and ‘Āysha have worked together and helped among the other wives of the Prophet, a secret that was conveyed by Ḥafsah to ‘Āysha regarding the prohibition of honey that she liked by her side. Zainab, and the secret that Ayesha told Ḥafsah, regarding the affairs of the Caliphate which Ḥafsah and Aisyah would hold after his death.¹¹ So it can be seen clearly that, what is forbidden in the verse is the prohibition of honey which He liked on Zainab's side. With regard to Ḥadīth, Spencer explained about the various traditions that were narrated, both authentic and unauthentic traditions, and about a brief explanation of the traditions of Bukhārī and Muslim. But still interspersed with arguments that question the historical

⁹ Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 21-22.

¹⁰Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 6691

¹¹Ahmad Mustofa Al-marāghī, *Al Maraghi Translated Interpretation* (Semarang: Toha Putra, 1989), 28: 262-263.

truth of the Prophet's life, where Spencer mentions "this make the question of what the historical of Muhammad (PBUH) actually said and did well-nigh insoluble".¹² And in the explanation of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in this book, Spencer did not use the Muslim Bukhārī hadith, because if he used it, of course he would be able to clearly answer the truth of the Surah At-Tahrīm verses 1-5 which have been explained in the Bukhārī Ḥadīth.¹³

Biographies of the Prophet

Spencer again mentions false information about the Sirah of the Prophet "the first full-length biography of prophet of Islam did not appear until 150 years after his death".¹⁴ In fact, there has been a hadith narrator namely Sahal Ibn Hatsmah who wrote his biography in His life time. And there are still sixty one other narrators about the life of Rosullulah who are written sequentially based on his birth years.¹⁵ Actually Robert Spencer is unaware of the fact that, "the first step in dealing with the Seerah is to study to Quran, to understand it's chapters and verses that deal with the life of the prophet, with his struggle, the issues that he had in his daily life,

¹²Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 25

¹³ Ibn Kathīr, Tafseer Ibn Kathīr Sūrah Taḥrīm , verses 1-5.

<https://alquranmulia.wordpress.com/2013/09/23/tafsir-ibnu-katsir-surah-at-tahrim-1/>

¹⁴Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 27

¹⁵ Mahdi Rizkullah Ahmad, Biograi Rosullulah as an Analytical Study Based on Authentic Sources, trans. Yessi HM Basyaruddin (Jakarta: Qisthi: 2005), 16.

the call that he was calling to day and night, the morals that he was teaching, the socio-economic platform that he was laying."¹⁶

Life of Muhammad (ﷺ) as a Prophet

The author discusses the events of the Prophet before and after the Prophethood. Spencer explains about the state of Arabia before the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the early life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the story of Khadija and the first visit of Jibrīl. Spencer refuted the Christian history which revealed that the news about the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the Prophet had been expected by Christians, "it should be noted, as a matter of history, that there is no record of Christians expecting a prophet in Arabia 540 years after the death of Jesus; nor is there any record of any Christian book with signs marking out an Arabian prophet (unless one includes the time St. Paul spent Arabia after his conversion and return to Damascus)"¹⁷ This denial is something that Christians can do, as stated by *Al Hamid* as follows: "People of the books generally deny this truth, because the Bibles in circulation today do not mention any signs that indicate the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is easy to understand because these books have undergone repeated changes and changes. done by human hands "¹⁸ Robert Spencer claims that there are some quotes about the Prophet's words that are not found in other Prophet's sirahs such as: "He is supposed to have declined to take up farming with the words" I have been

¹⁶ Moustafa Zayed ,The Lies about Muhammad (unknown,2010),4.

¹⁷Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 38.

¹⁸ Al Hamid Al Husaini, *Life History of Nabis Besar Muhammad* (Bandung: Pusataka Hidayah, 1997), 227.

raised for jihad and I am not raised for tillage.”¹⁹ According to Spencer, in the Islamic tradition, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a farmer, he planted gardens, and did not like his job, because he already believed that he was had to fight from the start, even though in almost all books about the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it is stated that he was a goat herder.

Revelation and Their Sources

According to Spencer, the sources of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s revelations were Judaism, ancient stories, Christianity, and other borrowed sources such as the Zoroastrian writings of Persia, the Zoroastrian Scriptures and Hinduism. In his discussion, Spencer considers that various stories about the previous Prophets, as well as various stories about the Jews and Christians in the Qur'an, are the result of plagiarism. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) got these stories originating from Jews, Christians and other nations when he was still a trader. Spencer's writes: “Muhammad (PBUH) no doubt had extensive contact as a young merchant, as well as later as a fledgling prophet, with the powerful Jewish tribes in around Mecca. Muhammad (ﷺ) respect them and sought their approval of his prophetic mission.”²⁰

But in reality his argument did not match the facts. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a goat herder and his job as a trader was only a side job. Since his youth, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) herded his family's goats and the goats of the people of Mecca.²¹ It was only at the age of twenty five that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) carried out the trade of Khadījah at

¹⁹Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 38.

²⁰ Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 47-48.

²¹Zayed ,*The Lies about Muhammad*, 38

the request of his uncle Abū Tālib. And after marrying Khadījah, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) lived a life of fulfillment. In such an atmosphere of a very sufficient life, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was more diligent in contemplating and studying the realm of existence and everything in it and thinking about all the secrets that lie behind the real world.²² Abdul hamīd Siddiqī writes in his book: "The entire hadith narration never talks about that the Prophet expected prophethood and that he was chosen by Allah to carry out this noble mission".²³ There has never been a narration of hadith which reveals that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had guessed that he would become a Prophet and even approached and respected the Jews in order to get their approval to become a Prophet. Because of this, it is very odd that Spencer would then reveal this as a fact about the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Encounter with Quraysh

Spencer explains in his book the difficulties of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in facing the Quraysh and the evolution of the teachings of the Quran regarding warfare against unbelievers. Spencer mentioned the murder committed by the Prophet's companion, Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqās and the Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ)'s attack against them was a threat, "the killing committed by Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqās, and as Muhammad (ﷺ) began to attack them and their gods with increasing vehicles, they began to see Islam and prophet as a threat"²⁴

²²Al Husaini, *Life History of Nabī Besar Muhammad*, 278

²³Abdul Ḥamīd Siddiqī, *The Greatness of Muhammad: Rosullulah as an Example*, trans. Munir(Bandung: M, Arja, 2001), 89-90.

²⁴Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*,. 76

Actually Quraysh attacked and oppressed the Muslims insistently, and there was no murder committed by Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas but Robert Spencer, "Sa'ad smoked a polytheist with the jawbone of a camel and wounded him. This was the first blood to be shed in Islam ".²⁵ Ibn Ishaq does not mention any killing at all, and after that incident, Ibn Ishaq tells about the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who began preaching openly was then protected by Abu Talib.²⁶ But according to Islamic authentic resources, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas was the first Muslim who first fired arrows to defend Allah's religion in war and was the first to be hit by arrows. And his prayer was very strong, where he once prayed for a Quraysh disbeliever who insulted Ali, Talaa and Zubair, and warned the person, while that person refused, so Sa'd then prayed for him, and soon there was a camel that went berserk and got inside crowds of people and looked for the man and lunged and trampled him to death.²⁷

Meanwhile, the murders and atrocities committed by the Quraysh against Muslims such as Bilal, Amar bin Yasir, his mother and father and other slaves and other Muslims were not told at all by Spencer. Even Sumayyah, Ammar's mother, was the first martyr in Islam whose heart

²⁵ Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 75

²⁶ Ibne Ishaq,118 e-book: <http://www.justislam.co.uk/images/Ibn%20Ishaq%20-%20Sirat%20Rasul%20Allah.pdf>

²⁷Khalid Muh Khalid, Characteristics of Life of 60 Friends of Rosullulah, trans. Mahyuddin Syaf(Bandung: Dipeonogoro, 2001),139-140.

was pierced by Abu Jahl. As for Yāssir, his father had already died as a result of the torture he suffered.²⁸

Then Spencer explains about war in Islam, he emphasizes that Islam is based on the Surah Al-Baqarah verse 193 where it gives three options to non-Muslims namely repent to Islam, submit to Islamic law, or war. But his opinion is totally contrary to the truth as it is clear in the verse that there is no war for people who are not hostile to Islam²⁹ and Allah clearly states in the Quran that there is no compulsion to enter Islam;³⁰ actually the right path is clear rather than the wrong way.

Events after Hijra

Robert Spencer narrates the agreement between the Muslims and the Jews, the Nakhla' raid, split with the Jews and the change in qibla according to his subjective approach in the book.

Spencer does not explain much about the events of Iqrār Aqabah, the Hijrah and the Medina charter, because these events show the essence of Islamic truth and the nobility and glory of the attitudes of Muslims brotherhood and its attitude, namely prioritizing other people who belonged to the Muslims at that time, where the Ansār were willing to share their assets and houses for the Muhājirīn who had migrated and did not have anything, this is found in the Quran: "And they give priority to (Muhājirīn people) over themselves, even though they are in distress." ³¹

²⁸Shaykh Abu Bakar Jabir Al-Jazairi, My Beloved Prophet Exemplary of All Time, trans. Iman Firdaus (Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2008), 132.

²⁹ Al-Baqarah 2:193.

³⁰ Al- Baqarah2 :256.

³¹ Al Hasyr59: 9.

This attitude is almost never found in the history of any religion in the world, where a group of people is willing and able to share their homes and assets with a group of other people, even though they themselves are in shortage. That is the glory of Islam, only humans who really know the nature of truth of life in seeking the pleasure of Allah are able to do this.

Muslim Prayer

Robert Spencer slanders the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by saying that he composed a short prayer for Muslims "Muhammad composed for the Muslim a brief prayer, known as the *fātiḥa* (opening)"³² Then he continued with his argument as follows: "even this has a status among Muslims analogous to the centrality of the Lord's Prayer for Christians, has a polemical edge. Traditionally Muslims divines have identified those who have earned Allah's anger with the Jews and those who have gone astray with the Christian ".³³ Spencer realizes that there are similarities between this *Sūrah Al-Fātiḥa* and Christian prayers and Christians are people who are lost and are inflicted with the wrath of Allah. At the end of the page, the author brings about the translation of the *Fatiha* and ends it amazingly with the reference, Holy Quran 1:1-7. Meaning, that he acknowledges that it is a part of the Holy Quran, which is so puzzling that on the same page the author claims it is a prayer composed by Muhammad and ends the page with quoting it as a chapter of the Holy Quran.³⁴

Views about Nakhla's attack

³²Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 95

³³ Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 96.

³⁴Zayed ,The Lies about Muhammad, 150

Spencer again writes that Prophet's attack in Abwa was with economic motives and he issued a decision to allow the killing of polytheist women and children.³⁵ Meanwhile, according to Sīrah books there was no attack in Abwa, even there were peace talks between Muhammad (ﷺ) and Banī Dhamrah.³⁶

As for the Nakhla' attack carried out by Abdullah Ibn Jahs even being criticized by Holy Prophet, because it was carried out in the haram month, and he just let the caravan and the prisoners of war be left and did not want to take it, he was disappointed with the attacking troops. Finally Allah sent down verse which explains that fighting in the haram month is a big matter, but kufr against Allah and His Messenger and various other crimes committed by the Quraysh infidels are more sinful.³⁷

Jihad

Another main theme of the book is jihad. In this section, Spencer tells about The Battle of Badr as the greatest victory of the first Islamic jihad, the theological explanation of the Badr war, the Qainuqa Jews, problems with Christians and Jews, and the deportation of the Banī Nadīr. He writes the battle of Badr was the first practical example of what became known as the doctrine of Islamic Jihad. According to him, the concept of jihad in Islam is that killing the enemies of Allah will help to manifest Islam³⁸. Whereas jihad in Islam has a general meaning which includes struggles in all forms: armed war, preaching war, political war, economic war, social

³⁵ Spencer, The Truth about Muhammad, 97-98

³⁶ Shaykh Abu Bakar Jabir, My Beloved Prophet, 246-247.

³⁷ Al-Baqarah 2:217.

³⁸ Spencer, The Truth about Muhammad, 111

war, diplomatic war and so on.³⁹ And the meaning of jihad itself is sacrificing all energy with all available capabilities to achieve a purpose which can be translated by the word struggle.⁴⁰

In writing about the war of Badr, he exaggerates the description where he writes that the wars were very cruel, there were massacres and killings by the Muslims of the Quraish. Even though in fact the war was not balanced, where around 313-317 Muslims fought around 1000 Quraysh. Muslims should have lost in numbers. But this battle was helped by Allah through his Angel, where Abdul Hamid writes: "The hadith reports clearly state the fact that angels did appear on that day and they fought on the side of the Muslims".⁴¹

Views about the captives of war and Booty

Like other orientalist the author of the book misrepresents these themes. Abdul Hamid states: "In Islam, not every war is called jihad. Only a noble goal justifies a Muslim to take up arms against the tyrants and exploiters of mankind."⁴² All the other prisoners were treated with kindness and care. "No debt was inflicted on the prisoners, of the 72 prisoners only 2 were sentenced to death who were famous for their constant hostility towards the Prophet"⁴³

View about Gazwa-e- Khandaq

³⁹ A. Hasjmy, Prophet Muhammad as a warlord (Jakarta: pearl of widya's source. 1983), 32.

⁴⁰ Hasjmy, Prophet Muhammad, 32

⁴¹ Siddiqi, The Greatness of Muhammad, 248.

⁴² Siddiqi, The Greatness of Muhammad, 220-221.

⁴³ Siddiqi, The Greatness of Muhammad, 251.

In general, this part of the book discusses the trench war (Khandak), the betrayal of the Banū Qurayyah, the Hudaibiya agreement, the attack on Khaybar and the spoils of Khaybar's war. Regarding the Khandaq war, Spencer mentions that the peace negotiations conducted by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were for the Quraysh and were canceled due to a warning by Sa'd Ibn Mu'ad regarding the status of exalted Muslims and not to give idol worshipers wealth but only swords (war)⁴⁴. This is very different from the explanation of the Muslim scholars who states ^{45 46} that the negotiations were conducted with the leader of Ghathafān, and before signing the agreement, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sent letters to Sa'd Ibn Mu'ad and Sa'd Ibn Ubādah asking for their considerations. So the statement from Sa'd Ibn Mu'ad was his consideration of the letter from the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to him.

Banū Qurayyah Punishment

Banū Qurayyah betrayal and punishment the death given to their men became Spencer's powerful weapon to discredit Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), then he said that Muslim scientists were only looking for excuses for a massacre "finding excuses for a massacre."⁴⁷ But in reality this punishment was in accordance with the laws of war in force in the Sharia of the Children of Israel, this is contained in the Torah, the book of repetitions of article 20 verses 10-14. Muslim scholar Al Husaini justifies the punishment: "It is true that the murder of Jews is a very

⁴⁴Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 126-127

⁴⁵ Shaykh Abu Bakar Jabir, My Beloved Prophet ,369

⁴⁶ Al Husaini, Life History of Nabis Besar Muhammad ,645.

⁴⁷Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 132.

violent act, but it is not the only event that has happened in the history of religions. Moreover, such actions are legal in the view of the Muslims. After this incident, Arab and Jewish tribes were forced to think several times before they betrayed or trampled on the agreement. With this incident they know what bad consequences will befall them. They saw for themselves that Muhammad (ﷺ) was capable of doing what he wanted."⁴⁸

Gazwa-e-Khaybar and the story of Banū Kinānah

In the book Spencer only tells a few things that happened and does not tell the miracles of the war, where Ali Bin Abī Tālib was able to conquer the fortress of Qumush which was previously unable to be conquered by Abu Bakr and Umar, even though previously Hazrat Alī was having an eye sore, and he was immediately healed by Allah. Hazrat Alī's actions were so amazing that he was able to open the door to the fort alone.⁴⁹

Spencer only mentions the story of Kinānah hiding the treasure of the Banū Nadhīr, Spencer writes that he died because of the torture of the Muslims on him which was carried out by the order of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "*Muhammad gave order concerning Kinānah: "Torture him until you extract"*".⁵⁰ According to Muslim sources Kinānah was killed for his lies and false oaths he uttered over and over again.⁵¹ From the various wars that occurred between the Muslims and the Jews, it can be seen that the Jews are a people who cannot be trusted, and are full of tricks. Apart from

⁴⁸ Al Husaini, Life History of Nabī Besar Muhammad , 655-658.

⁴⁹ Abu Ali al-Fadhīl ibn Hasan ibn al-Fadhīl At Thabrisi, Know the Truth from the Experts (Jakarta: Lentera, 1985), 172-173.

⁵⁰ Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 140

⁵¹ Al Husaini, Life History of Nabī Besar Muhammad , 696-697.

that, the Jews who previously had an agreement with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), namely the Banū Qurayzah, violated his agreement.

The Conquest of Mecca

At the events of the conquest of Mecca, Spencer tells only part of the story about the letter sent Hātib Ibn Abī Balta to the Qurash who could be thwarted by Ali bin Abī Tālib, then he presents the story of Abu Sufyān who embraced Islam and the murder of some infidels. Spencer does not tell the full story, because at this event there were many wisdoms and virtues of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the event of this conquest of Mecca. Karen Armstrong writes about the events in her book: "Eventually in 630, when the Quraysh violated the treaty by attacking one of the Prophet's tribal allies, Muhammad (PBUH) marched upon Mecca with an army of ten thousand men. Faced with this overwhelming force and, as pragmatists, realizing what it signified, the Quraysh conceded defeat, opened the city gates, and Muhammad (PBUH) took Mecca without shedding a drop of blood."⁵²

Prophet Muhammad gave amnesty (sorry) to almost all Quraysh people, except thirteen people and finally only four people were sentenced to death.⁵³ This fact is very different from the following Spencer statement: "there were several others in Mecca who were on the list of those to be killed immediately."⁵⁴ The author never mentions that only four people were killed from the list. In addition, he tells the event about the murder

⁵² Karen Armstrong, *Islam a Short History*, (Washington: Random House, 2002), 23.

⁵³ Al Husaini, *Life History of Nabib Besar Muhammad*, 731-735.

⁵⁴ Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad*, 148

of apostates, in which he recounts the murder of several apostate shepherds whose legs were cut crosswise and eyes ironed with heated irons.⁵⁵ He explains the Muslim justification for this incident was the ayah of the Quran.⁵⁶ According to Al-Marāghi's interpretation, this verse was revealed in connection with the events that happened to some of the shepherds who came from the Ukla and Urainah, where they deceived the Prophet and Muslims by pretending to be Islam, then did damage by killing the shepherd sent by the Prophet and robbing the camels the Prophet gave. they committed the crime openly, so they deserve the punishment.⁵⁷

Marriage with Hazrat 'Aisyah

Spencer blames Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on marrying Hazrat Aisyah when she was seven years old and the marriage took place when she was nine years old. Actually this was commonplace for the Quraysh society at that time and Robert Spencer himself writes in chapter three that child marriage and female infanticide were common, as women were regarded as a financial liability ".⁵⁸ So that the Prophet's marriage was commonplace and normal at that time.

In the past, before and during the time of the Prophet, even several generations afterward, marrying a woman of the same age as a natural child was a common thing in human society. It can be read in the previous description of the marriage of the Prophet's father, Abdullah, how his

⁵⁵Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 147-148

⁵⁶ Al-Ma'idah5: 33.

⁵⁷ Ahmad Mustafa al-Marāghi, 184-187.

⁵⁸Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 34.

father, Abdu Mutthalib, married a woman who was the same age as his son's wife, namely Halah, the son of Aminah's uncle.⁵⁹

Place of women in Islam

Regarding Spencer's question whether Muhammad was a hater of women, he relates that the number of the Prophet's wives reached to eleven. Then he explains about the testimony of women only half from men, half of the inheritance of men, then the number of women who go to hell, all of which he mentions as the reason women in the Islamic world live in inequality.⁶⁰

Views about Islamic Law

Robert Spencer criticizes Islamic law which according to his opinion is based on cruel punishments. He mentions that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had participated in the war twenty seven times. In the following discussion, Spencer questions about tolerance in Islam. Then he doubts the goodness and moral dignity of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which is something that is very difficult to find in the discussion of his book. He suggests that non-Muslims should "stop insisting that Islam is a religion of peace," "end the Western dependence on oil from the Islamic world," "make western aid contingent upon renunciation of the jihad ideology," "call upon American advocacy groups to work against the jihad ideology," and "revise immigration policies with the jihad ideology in view."⁶¹ Because from the beginning, Spencer's intention was to make the prophet Muhammad a cruel,

⁵⁹ M. Quraish Shihab , Reading the Sīrah of the Prophet in the Highlights of the Quran and Ṣaḥīḥ Hadiths (Cet. I, June 2011), 530.

⁶⁰ Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 172-174

⁶¹ Spencer ,The Truth about Muhammad, 192-193

intolerant and immoral person from the beginning of his discussion, so that of the many facts of the goodness and moral dignity of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) not one is included in the discussion of this book.

Conclusion

Spencer, with all his basic hatred against Islam, has produced a work that not only denigrates the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), he even denigrates Islam as a religion of peace, holiness, tolerance and kindness. Many of the arguments he conveyed were only a prophecy against Islam, while the data he used were manipulated and incomplete, so that it would increasingly raise doubts about the truth and nobility of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The morals, and the examples of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which can be seen from his noble behavior, is not a story based solely on an obscure Islamic tradition as revealed by Spencer, however, since the early Hijri years, the story of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s life has been written continuously by Ḥadīth narrators. And this will continue as long as Islam exists on this earth.

In order to properly understand and know about the life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Muslims must be more observant and critical in seeing and reading various books, journals, articles and other sources of information about the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Because in an era where information is very easy to obtain like today, it will be very easy for the enemies of Islam to make things worse and further corner Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Various issues and slander can be considered to be the truth, if it has been accepted by many people. Whereas it is today, Islam and the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) have become something that looks scary and cruel in the eyes of people in the West, especially America and Europe.