

## WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY SWORD?

“That force was not the determining factor in these conversions may be judged from the amicable relations that existed between the Christian and the muslim Arabs. Muhammad himself had entered into treaty with several Christian tribes’ promising them his protection and guaranteeing them the free exercise of their religion and to their clergy undisturbed enjoyment of their old rights and authority.”<sup>1</sup>

“From the examples given above of the toleration extended towards the Christian Arabs by the victorious Muslims of the first century of the Hijrah and continued by succeeding generations. We may surely infer that those Christian tribes that did embrace Islam, did so of their own choice and free will”<sup>2</sup>

When the Muslim army reached the valley of Jordan and Abu Ubaydah pitched his camp at Fihl, the Christian inhabitants of the country wrote to the Arabs, saying: “Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantines, though they are of our own faith because you keep better faith with us and are more merciful to us and refrain from doing us injustice and your rule over us is better than theirs, for they have robbed us of our goods and our homes”<sup>3</sup>

In 640. “The Byzantine army was utterly routed..... Cyprus was shut up in Babylon..... The following words out in the mouth of Cyprus enjoys purport to sum up the impression created by the Arabians:

We have witnessed a people to each and every one of whom death is preferable to life, and humility to prominence, and to none of whom this world has the least attraction. They sit not except on the ground, and eat naught but on their knees. Their leader is like unto one of them: the low cannot be distinguished from the high, nor the master from the slave. And when the time of prayer comes none of them absents himself, all wash their extremities and humbly observe their prayer.”<sup>4</sup>

1. Sir Thomas W. Arnold. The Preaching of Islam, pp.47-48

2. Ibid.p.51

3. Ibid.p.55

4. Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p.163