

162744 - Will civilisation collapse at the end of time and will battles be fought with swords and spears?

the question

People have different views about the issue of technology and its fate at the end of time. Will it still exist or will it disappear? There are hadeeths which indicate that there will be a war with the Dajjaal and that it will be fought with swords, and that 'Eesa (peace be upon him) will kill the Dajjaal with a spear, and so on. Does this mean that technology will disappear?

Detailed answer

The scholars differed concerning the issue of fighting at the end of time, and whether the weapons used will in fact be swords and spears in a real sense, or will the means of transport be horses and camels in a real sense, or is this more like something that was addressed to the Sahaabah in terms of what they were familiar with, but it be in a form that is appropriate at that time?

There are two scholarly views. The view of most of the contemporary scholars is that this civilisation that we see now, with its technology and weapons, will all disappear, and that wars will go back to being fought on horseback and the weapons that will be used in them will be spears and swords, and what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) spoke of is how it will really be. This is the view of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him), Shaykh 'Abd al-Muhsin al-'Abbaad - in his audio commentary on the books of Sunnah - and Shaykh 'Umar al-Ashqar, and others.

Among the texts of which the apparent meaning supports this view are the following:

1.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The Hour will not begin until the Byzantines camp at al-A’maaq or Daabiq, and an army composed of the best people on earth at that time will go out from Madinah to meet them. When they arrange themselves in ranks, the Byzantines will say: Do not stand between us and those who took prisoners from us; let us fight them. The Muslims will say: No by Allah, we will never let you reach our brothers. Then they will fight them, and one third will flee, whose repentance will never be accepted by Allah; one third will be killed, and they are the best of martyrs before Allah; and one third will prevail and will never succumb to any fitnah, and they will conquer Constantinople. Whilst they are dividing the spoils, having hung their swords on the olive trees, the Shaytaan will shout out among them: The (false) messiah has taken your place among your families. So they will march, but that will be false news. When they reach Syria, he will emerge, and whilst they are still preparing for battle, drawing up their ranks, the iqaamah for prayer will be given and ‘Eesa ibn Maryam (S) will descend and will lead them in prayer. When the enemy of Allah sees him, he will melt as salt melts in water. If he left him alone, he would still melt until he was destroyed, but Allah will kill him by his hand (i.e. Allah will cause him to be killed at the hand of ‘Eesa), and he will show them his blood on his lance.”

Al-A’maaq and Daabiq are two places in Syria.

The hadeeth mentions the use of swords and lances (or spears) in fighting, and that will happen at the end of time.

2.

It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him) said - in a hadeeth about the time of the Dajjaal -: The cry will reach them that the Dajjaal has taken their place among their offspring. So they will throw aside whatever is in their hands and will go there, sending ten horsemen ahead of them as scouts. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "I know their names, and the names of their fathers, and the colours of their horses. They will be the best horsemen on the face of the earth at that time" or "among the best horsemen on the face of the earth at that time." Narrated by Muslim (2899).

3.

It was narrated that Al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The Muslim will use the bows, arrows and shields of Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj as firewood, for seven years."

Shaykh 'Umar Sulaymaan al-Ashqar (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after quoting a number of hadeeths about this matter:

These hadeeths and many similar hadeeths indicate that this powerful civilisation which has invented all this huge arsenal of bombs and missiles will decline and disappear. It is most likely that it will destroy itself, and that humanity will once again go back to fighting on horseback, using spears, bows and arrows, and the like. And Allah knows best.

End quote from al-Qiyaamah as-Sughra
(p. 275)

What we think concerning this matter is that the hadeeths quoted above should be taken as they appear to mean and we should not try to interpret them differently, and that fighting at the end of time in those battles and wars will use those weapons and fighters will ride on horses. But we cannot be certain that the present civilisation will disappear altogether, because that is something that is not mentioned in the texts. Another indication is that swords, horses and mules are still used in battles that are currently happening, even though civilisation has reached such a high level. By expressing this view we confirm what is narrated in the saheeh hadeeths, but we leave knowledge of the unseen to Allah, may He be exalted.

This view is more on the safe side for religious commitment; there is no great practical benefit in discussing this matter, so we do not think that we should be distracted by it, let alone indulge in discussion about it.

And Allah knows best.