

THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE

Journal

MWL holds the International
symposium on Muslim
communities in
Non-Muslim countries

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MWL congratulates Saudi King on naming new Crown Prince



Letter From the Editor

The Rights & Duties of Muslims in non-Muslim Countries

There is goodness in Islam for all living beings: for those who believe in it and for non-Muslims as well. A person who has been guided comprehends the benefits of the pure religion for believers, in this world and the next. As for its goodness towards non-Muslims, the greatest proof of this is the rights which Islam has preserved for them, and the almost unbelievable degree of religious tolerance that Muslims have shown towards them, even in times when Muslims were achieving victories over non-Muslims in War.

In certain countries Muslims are struggling to protect their lives, their religious places, their dress code and religious symbols like Minarets etc. There are some positive indications from Europe, which has long history of Crusades.

There is a huge gap of communication. Miss-information regarding our faith, our conduct with minorities, where we are in majority, is widespread. Misconception and misinformation about Islamic Laws of Qisas and Hudood is more damaging.

Our own understanding of Islamic and un-Islamic behavior also compounds the problem. There is lack of dedication for the work of Dawah in right perspective. It is irony that in most cases we do call people to Islam but stress on our Mazhab or Maslak only. Infighting in Muslims on the bases of Masalik takes many a time heinous turn. Even in the societies where Muslims are in majority, over enthusiasm and stress on particular "Mazhab" is creating problems. This is one cause of concern we should address.

Christians and Muslims are the two largest confessional groups in the world today – together they constitute more than half of the total population of the world. There are large areas where the followers of these faiths live in close proximity, even sharing several traits of culture and language and living under the same political system. It is our duty to seek areas of mutual cooperation, to join hands in combating the evils of modern life. Together we need to achieve a better and more just world where man is free to worship his Lord and Creator without duress; where men live in harmony and understanding; where those who have

been blessed with the good things of life are willing and eager to share them with those that are deprived, and where man is enabled to achieve and fulfil his human potential. It is our fervent hope that we learn to understand and know each other, to develop areas of mutual cooperation and joint action, that we are able to rise above our past and build new bridges of amity and accord between our two religious communities.

Dialogue with different religions will go a long way to erase misconceptions about Islam. Muslims will be beneficiaries in two ways: one by putting Islam to others as it really is, and the other, by getting a correct picture of other religions.

It is necessary to discuss this issue in depth, so that non-Muslims can know what Islam guarantees them, and not go to extremes in making demands that have no basis in truth. At the same time, Muslims can learn about the rights of others, and not oppress them by denying them some or all of their rights. In this era of globalization, each one of us needs to become aware of his rights and his obligations, so that we can build in this world the degree of civilization that its Creator intended for it.

For the development of the Muslim community in the West, Da'wah work and Inter-Faith dialogue the following suggestions for the safeguard of rights and obligations of the significant Muslim communities living in the West. This exciting challenge and responsibility can be addressed simultaneously by the Muslim communities in the West, the MWL and the Muslim Nation. First, by fulfilling their responsibility to organise sustained and well planned da'wah and educational activities for their community. Secondly, by engaging in meaningful dialogue and discussion with non-Muslim neighbors, colleagues and senior position holders in the government and administration. And thirdly, by receiving proper support and encouragement from the Muslim governments and other relevant agencies in the field of da'wah and education such as the MWL is pioneer in conducting negotiations with government agencies to realize their legitimate religious, cultural, economic and political rights in full measure.



The Muslim World League Journal

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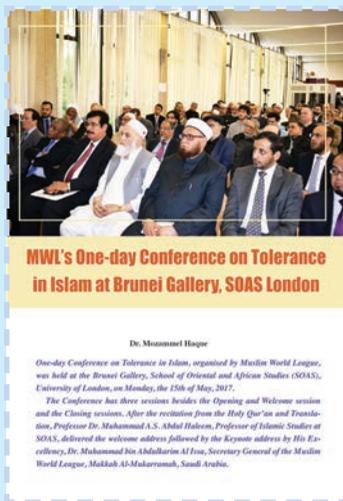
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MWL expresses its full support for the severance of relations with Qatar



MWL's One-day Conference on Tolerance in Islam at Brunei Gallery, SOAS London



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MWL congratulates Saudi King on naming new Crown Prince

The Muslim World League congratulated Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz on the appointment of Prince Muhammad bin Salman as Crown Prince and Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers, while continuing in his role as Defense Minister.

Sheikh Muhammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Makkah-based Muslim World League, described the appointment of the new Crown Prince as successful and promising given the national and international prestige Muhammad bin Salman enjoys.

In a statement issued, Dr. Al-Issa said Prince Muhammad bin Salman had always served his religion first, and his country, king and nation second.

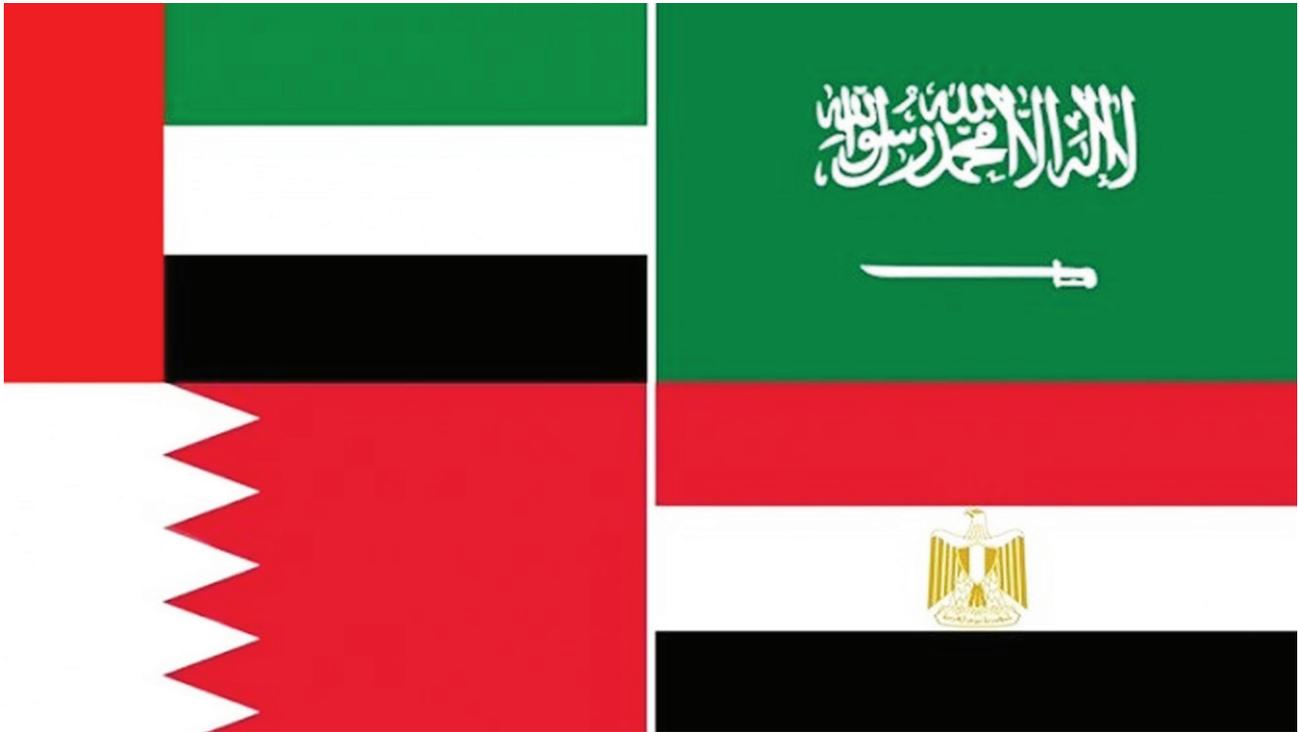
Al-Issa hailed the Crown Prince's "historic positions and achievements" in carrying out his tasks and responsibilities through his distinguished and valued presence in the national, Is-

lamic, and international spheres.

"The achievements of His Highness are an important addition, which translates the size of the leadership merit of this selection and appointment, which was carried out in accordance with successful procedural arrangements," he said, adding that Saudi Arabia enjoys a further consolidation of its leading Islamic role and its distinguished international presence.

Dr. Al-Issa explained that the responsibilities entrusted to Prince Muhammad bin Salman had an important and pivotal role in this consolidation.

According to Al-Issa, Muhammad bin Salman's international communication had a prominent impact, which has been broadly witnessed through his efficiency as a leader and his positive performance on the political system, which benefited the Islamic nation, as well as his successful impact in the economic and development affairs.



MWL heads a global program on shared values

The Muslim World League office in South Africa held a meeting attended by the Director of the South African Prime Minister Office, a number of government officials and religious leaders to discuss the program “Returns to our Origins” about the common religious, cultural and civilizational morals to confront the intellectual relapse clashing with the origin of human instinct.

In the meeting, it was decided that the Muslim World League heads this global program, which will be held for the first time, and will be attended by thousands of religious followers and other private and governmental institutions. The attendance and the participants will discuss and clarify, as a main aim and method of this program, the returning to right common moral values between all.

In another development the Muslim World League has issued a statement condemning what they say is Qatari media campaign of incitement against its religious scholars.

The statement issued early said it condemned several media outlets from Qatar for describing some of their Muslim scholars as “hypocrites to the faith”.

“The Secretariat of the MWL deplores the audacity of insults against the nation’s top scholars, asserting that the media apparatus that is being used to serve extremism can result in such actions against Islamic behavior that encourages in the preservation of religion and foul language,” the statement published on their main Twitter read.

Their statement also comes after the Muslim World League announced the termination of Qatari-Egyptian hardline cleric Yusuf Al-Qaradawi’s membership with the group after being designated on the terrorism list announced by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt last week.

The MWL also issued a statement in which it declared its full support for the statement issued by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain with regard to the list of prohibited terrorists.



MWL holds the International symposium on Muslim communities in Non-Muslim countries

Mohammad Zakir Hossain

MWL hosted the international seminar of “Muslim Communities in non-Muslim Countries, Rights and Duties”.

The leaders of Muslim communities all over the world called in the final statement of the international seminar of “Muslim Communities in non-Muslim countries, Rights and Duties” the countries and governments to stop sponsoring and supporting extremist groups and joins the international martial and intellectual efforts, which is led by Saudi Arabia, in confronting all kinds of terrorism. The leaders also praised the outcomes of the Arab-Islamic American International Summit, which was held in Riyadh last May 2017, and what confirmed in the final statement of that summit recognizes the role of the Islamic world in confronting terrorism.

The participants in this international seminar, which was hosted by MWL in 16 & 17 of Ramadan 1438 at the headquarters in Makkah and opened by the Secretary General of MWL Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, expressed their full sup-

port for the objectives of establishing the global center for fight extremist thought (*E'tedal*), saying that it is an extension of the initiatives of Saudi Arabia in spreading the values of tolerance and coexistence and the principles of moderation. They also in particularly praised the international great role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in confronting and fighting extremism and terrorism which supported with the good reputation and worthy regional and international impact.

The final statement called also not to interfere with the conditions of the Muslim communities and the nature of their relationship with their home countries, pointing out that this concern Muslims outside the Islamic world who have their own independent authority and religious leadership. The statements also valued the great care and provided guidance of Muslim World League and the Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa, which is highly praised and appreciated by all the Muslim communities all over the world.

The statement also demanded MWL to establish a

global communication center for Muslim minorities to strengthen its relationship with the Islamic world by applying a special system to concern their own privacy among the other communities that they are living in and preserve their Islamic identity and rituals without conflicting with these other societies and the rules and regulations of the countries they are living in.

Final Communiqué

Praise be to Allah, and prayers and peace be upon the Seal of the Messengers of Allah, our Prophet Muhammad, his household, companions and followers.

With the help and support of Allah, the International Symposium “Muslim Communities in Non-Islamic Countries, Rights and Duties” held by the Muslim World League in Makkah Al-Mukarramah on 16 and 17 Ramadan 1438H, corresponding to 11 and 12 June 2017, has concluded its deliberations, with the participation of important and “independent” leaderships’ reference of the Islamic communities around the world, as well as intellectuals and experts on Islamic issues.

The seminar was launched by His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa. In his speech, he welcomed the guests of the Rabita, reminding them of the MWL’s attention given to Muslim communities and stressing the need to respect the religious character of Muslims.

The participants praised the outcome of the Islamic Saudi-American Summit hosted by Saudi Arabia in Riyadh that led to the recognition of the role of the Islamic world in tackling terrorism. The summit has also emphasized the leading and pivotal role of Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world and its fight against extremism and terrorism. The Kingdom enjoys a good reputation along with a deserved international and local influence. Its relentless efforts in addressing various Arab and Islamic issues; its support for world humanitarian issues in the world in addition to its contributions to the reduction of tensions and prevention of conflicts.

The participants expressed their support for the establishment of the Global Center for Fighting Extremist Ideology (*E’tedal*), which is yet another addition of the initiatives of Saudi Arabia in spreading the values of tolerance, coexistence, and principles of centrism and moderation.

The participants warned of the interference of

those who are unaware of the Muslim communities’ state of affairs and the nature of their relations with their countries. They also emphasized that this matter concerns Muslims outside the Islamic world, who have their independent religious reference and leaderships; the matter also concerns the MWL which is considered the umbrella of the Muslim peoples. Additionally, the League provides highly appreciated guidance, awareness and support in line with its competence, its international clout and pivotal role according to the basis of comprehensive and accurate surveys; and its relevant outstanding link to their affairs, and the respect it enjoys with the people.

The participants hailed the wise and conscious speech of His Excellency the Secretary General of the MWL, Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, and his agreement with the guidance of Shari’ah and the logic of reason. These, will provide Muslim communities with tranquility, and enhance its confidence. The discourse supports the demands of their rights in accordance with each country’s constitutional and legal means. They appreciated the Rabita’s legal support in claiming these demands within its cultural context.

The symposium emphasized a number of principles which are summarized as follows:

* Islam is the final message of Allah and mercy to the worlds. It includes the great purposes of this wise message in formulating human life in accordance with the guidance of the Shari’ah, which establishes a human society governed by justice and compassion. Allah says in Qur’an: “*We have sent you but mercy to the worlds*”. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “I was sent to fulfill the highest standards of morality.”

* Muslims of communities outside the Muslim world are an integral part of the Muslim nation, and they are at the forefront in defining Islam and its defenders. They demonstrate its message to the worlds: (This nation is one nation and I am your Lord, worship me).

* Communities’ Muslims are citizens in their countries of choice. They participate in the development of their countries, and carry out their national responsibilities in the service of their communities. A true citizenship doesn’t abrogate someone’s right to his or her Islamic identity and high values calling for the dissemination of good and promotion of virtue.

* To cherish the experience of civilizational coexistence among the Muslims communities and their societies; the enrichment they have achieved at all levels requires them to preserve their gains and develop them

further. They must benefit from these experiences in formulating more positive relations between the Muslim Nation and the world at large. However, interventions by bad elements who hold one-sided views and with prior knowledge of these dimensions, will be detrimental to these gains. Moreover, in their misleading inclination, these interventions will be perceived by political and security monitoring as parts of these communities. Their illusory proclivity will harm these communities and further support the theories of suspicion against them; from which they are innocent. This will hold also true if we consider the intervention “in a positive light”. Undoubtedly there are interferences that use various approaches within the context of extremism and fanaticism. Eventually these will serve the agendas of terrorist organizations whose only obsession is to create conflicts among Muslims, and provoke Muslim communities’ fervor. This is clearly evidenced also by the large number of terrorist operations in countries that are more friendly towards Muslim communities. The extremists’ only aim is to put pressure on Islam in general, and Muslim communities in particular; its extremist machination is running at full speed to generate conflicts. Extremists are the happiest and most exuberant about the sweeping craze of Islamophobia; they consider it the most efficient booster to their terrorist agenda. To the extremists, serene and safe regions, especially where Muslim communities live outside the Islamic world, represent a significant undertaking where they can stir up troubles and sow their evil seeds.

* Islam rejects extremism and radicalism, and it’s innocent of ter-



rorism and its conduct which clash with the principles of Islam that are based on moderation and temperance and the preservation of human dignity: “Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.” Surat Al-Nahl, verse 90.

* Terrorism phenomenon is an abnormality in perceptions, visions and behavior; its existence does neither justify the fear of Islam nor the attacks on Muslims and their mosques and their centers. However, insisting on linking Muslims to this phenomenon will only achieve the objectives of terrorist groups, and deepen the schism in human societies and generate more global crises.

Recommendations

* It’s necessary for various parties to cooperate in dealing with extremist and terrorist ideas and prevent their infiltration into Muslim communities’ sons and corrupt their minds.

* Invite the MWL to develop a printed and electronic awareness folder addressed to Muslim com-

munities. The participants emphasize the importance of the Rabita’s continued presence in support of Muslims outside the Islamic world and to follow up their situations and stay in constant communication with them.

* To call upon states and governments to stop supporting extremist groups and to join fully the international efforts in combating extremism and terrorism on the Islamic front led by Saudi Arabia in its military dimension; and ideologically in its global dimension.

* Call on Islamic institutions in the West to avoid ill conceived ideas and differences with each other, since this will undermine Islamic unity and harmony. They must work diligently to protect Muslim communities from the infiltration of political Islam groups and the advocates of sectarianism.

* Appreciate the Rabita’s religious and legal rhetoric in demanding the respect of the Muslims religious particularity in non-Muslim countries; the freedom of practicing religious rites, especially the Hijab, building mosques, Islamic schools and others relevant practices.



* Supporting the discourse of the Rabita because of its far-reaching vision, that seeks to benefit the Muslim communities through constitutional and legal instruments; safeguarding their gains from the futility of conceited extremist trends which call for non-compliance with communal norms, violating its security and disregard of covenants and charters and the social convention of these countries' elements. Hence such steps will expose Muslims to the risks of counter-extremism and bring blame to its reputation and raise the specter of doubts in addition to exposure to other dangers.

* Warn about the negative effects the Muslim communities will be subjected to due to the interference of shady elements who have no prior knowledge of the conditions of these communities and the conditions of the Muslim living within these societies. Caution must be applied not to be drawn by sheer emotions. Exploring future dimensions and the constitutional and legal situation governing these countries and regulate their sovereignty and social contract in light of the democratic modus operandi in each country.

* Call on the Muslim World League to establish a global communication center for Muslim minorities. This Center's objective will be to enhance their relationship with the Islamic world and develop its partnerships with Islamic and international institutions.

* Call upon Fiqh councils to work on developing a special system for Muslim minority jurisprudence, that will respect the privacy, priorities and realities of these communities and contributes to the preservation of the Muslims' identity, culture and rites without constraint in religion or difficulty in life.

* To call upon Western institutions and organizations concerned with education, and media to have a say in correcting the stereotypical image of Islam and Muslims as part of their social responsibility by extending bridges of dialogue and communication with others.

* Call for a global coalition to confront the currents of violence, hatred, racism and Islamophobia through supporting the efforts of monitoring, analysis and management.

* Inviting Islamic institutions in the West to restructure and de-

velop and improve their performance. They must coordinate with each other and overcome their narrow differences. They must communicate with political, cultural and social decision-makers in their respective countries. They should work with political, social and legal symbols to achieve religious specificity.

* To call upon the Muslim communities to be a source of cultural and scientific inspiration to others in their respective countries; and an outstanding model of peaceful coexistence and tolerance. They also must be a source of profit to their countries of residence, and an added asset appreciated by all and the pride of their countries.

All this is reflected on the Muslim communities' reputation and the global reputation of Islam in general. Their civilized behavior symbolizes the honest, sincere and excellent sense of citizenship; a token of thanks and appreciation towards the countries that provided them care, space and relocation. One of the most ethic traits of a Muslim are loyalty and gratefulness, based on the guidance of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), whose noble biography exemplifies the supreme examples of graciousness and loyalty to anyone who has done a good turn to the Muslims.

At the end of the seminar the participants thanked the MWL's efforts in serving Islamic communities, supporting their causes and improving contacts with them.

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his household and all his companions.

Issued in Makkah
17/09/ 1438 H – 12/06/2017

MWL expresses its full support for the severance of relations with Qatar

MWL say: The severance of relations with Qatar came in accordance to the Islamic, legal and logical necessity towards Qatari practices.

The procedure adopted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other countries aim to create necessary guarantees to safeguard its security, stability as well as deter vicissitudes of time

Factors nourishing terrorism were like the prey that sought dishonestly protection in Doha in which it found incubating and supporting environment.

Islamic and humanitarian values as well as international laws and norms reject intervention in the internal affairs of countries, let alone destabilization of their security and stability

MWL has expressed in a statement its full support for the temporary resolutions adopted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kingdom of Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, Libyan government for the severance of relations with Qatar. Furthermore, it indicated that this procedure came in accordance to the Islamic, legal and logical necessity towards the practices that target the security and stability of countries via sheltering and supporting terrorist groups and organizations. Which is the unfortunate and unacceptable intervention in their internal affairs as well as influencing the integrity and harmony of their respective peoples.

The MWL' statement added that "The factors nourishing terrorism have now become like the prey, after they have been vigorously fought and their vanquished members pursued at the wake of exposure of their criminal arrangements which were represented in booby-trapping the intellects of young people as well as instigating their religious enthusiasm towards adopting extremist ideas. The prey continued till it dishonestly found an incubating and supporting environment. In fact,

terrorism was not able to find any forum through which it passes its messages except the way of this dangerous and risky sheltering source, which spared no effort in exploiting all its capabilities, including the employment of mass media as well as its suspicious contact. There is no concern more than betting of these nourishing factors on the protection and patronage of a state.

Through the review of the criminal symbols of the terrorist organizations in the case of ISIS and Qaedah, we remark that these symbols have been produced by the incubators of these terrorist groups and organizations, the top most of which is Muslim Brotherhood Group. This Group directed its message and mission towards the first torch for terrorism in the name of religion via what is called political Islam so as to penetrate the distinct of peaceful religious tendency in the Islamic consciousness to deviate part of it towards these pitfalls.

The MWL recognizes for sure via its quarries that the Muslim World did really live throughout history without knowing this political exploitation in the name of Islam which is represented in its terrorist dimension, flagrant intervention in the internal affairs of countries and its attempt for the secret spoiling of the intellects of their citizens, disturbance of their tranquility and failure in honouring their regional as well as international commitments and obligations.

In many countries, these groups and organizations have altered certain of the hidden isolated religious intolerance theories, whose impact hadn't surpassed the extent of the papers on which they were written and the abstract expression of their views, into active factors - after - of course - providing them with added terrorist thoughts - that target the compelling of all to adopt their misleading concepts, according to hectic political activity, through which they practiced violence and confron-



tation. Furthermore, these groups and organizations have started to export to ISIS /DAESH the outcomes of their attraction for a section of naïve youth, who have been misled and persuaded with these thoughts, till this sparks, which expanded to Muslim communities in a number of countries, was able through its supported suspicious movement to create due penetration in the tiny and peaceful body of inexperienced youth.

The incidents of history have witnessed that any religious tendency, whenever it was politically snatched, its unquestionable results centred over destabilization of security and stability as well as intervention in the internal affairs of countries, violation of freedom of peoples, negligence of values and non-observance of covenants.

Therefore, we confirm that the procedure adopted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Arab and Muslim countries aims to create the required guarantees that safeguard their security and stability as well as deter from them vicissitudes of time.

Any shrewd individual realizes that these countries, with their known history, which is replete with the optimum model for observing good neighborhood, brotherhood, friendship, moderation and peace, would not have taken such significant decision if they were not forced to do it so as to protect themselves from the danger of terrorism and extremism. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in its capacity as an umbrella and reference of Muslims because it embraces their sanctuaries, wants to send a conspicuous message to all that Islam is innocent of both these extremist thoughts and any one providing patronage or support for them; and that the calamities of violence and terrorism, from which all people suffered, have been primarily made at these terrorist incubators.

The MWL concluded its statement by stressing that Islamic and humanitarian values as well as international laws and norms reject the intervention in the internal affairs of countries, let alone destabilization of their security and stability via sheltering and supporting terrorist groups and organizations as well as media promotion for their strategies and plans. The Muslim World League (MWL) has expressed its full support for the classification in the banned terrorist lists issued by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Arab Republic of Egypt, State of the United Arab Emirates "UAE" & Kingdom of Bahrain.

In a statement issued by it, the MWL said this classification emphasizes the commitment of both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its sister countries with the combat of terrorism and besieging its finance and sup-

port sources, indicating that the international community should intensify its efforts in the vigorous fighting of the activities, nourishing factors and incubators of the terrorist organizations.

The MWL called upon each one, who has relation with the entities included in these lists, especially committees membership or affiliation under the leadership of respective institutions, whether in the context of dragging or deception or otherwise, to hasten to declare his withdrawal and disassociation from them, so that he is not adversely affected by their consequences, in addition, to secure due safety for himself from their ideas.

The Muslim World League ends Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's membership in the Islamic Fiqh Council

The Muslim World League announced the termination of the membership of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi after being classified on the terrorism list announced by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt.

The MWL tweeted on its official account in the social networking site Twitter, that "based on the classification issued, the Muslim World League has ended the membership of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi in the Islamic Fiqh Academy."

Based on the classifications issued by the Kingdom & other States, MWL cancels Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's membership with the "Islamic Fiqh Council"

The Rabita also issued a statement in which it declared its full support for the statement issued by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain with regard to the list of prohibited terrorists.

"This classification confirms Saudi Arabia's commitment to fight terrorism and to block its sources of funding and support," the statement said. "The international community must intensify its efforts to counter the activities of terrorist organizations, as well as its feeders and the incubators," added the statement.

The Muslim World League called on all those connected with these lists, especially the members of their committees, the leadership of their institutions to declare their rejection of his ideologies and to stay safe and free of such ideas.

The four countries announced in a quadruple statement the names of individuals and entities sponsored by Qatar as prohibited and wanted terrorists.

The statement included a list of 12 entities and 59 persons housed and supported by Qatar, posing a threat to security and peace in those four countries and in the region with their terrorist activities.



Sir Iqbal Sacrani's Presentation at the MWL Seminar

Founding and former Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) presented his important key note speech titled the Impact of the Negative Intervention and the Obstacles on the Constructive and Peaceful Projects of the Muslim Community in the West and it's effect on society at the Seminar of the Muslim World League in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, Monday 12th June 2017, 17th Ramadhan 1438.

Your Excellency, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, respected scholars and experts, distinguished guests.

As-Salaam Aleikum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh.

I am deeply honoured to be present at this distinguished gathering of scholars, community leaders and experts from different parts of the world in this noble and holy city of Makkah in this blessed month of Ramadhan.

May I, at the very outset, take the opportunity to thank the Secretary General and the Conference department for taking this timely initiative to organise this extremely important Seminar on the subject of “The Escalation of Media Distortion and Campaigns against Islam and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in particular”.

The situation and the challenges facing the Muslim community worldwide and in particular as minorities in the West is unprecedented and deeply disturbing. Since 9/11 the vicious attacks by media organisations on our noble faith and peaceful religion has drastically increased. In my 40 years of community work, never have I experienced such ghastly attacks on the Muslim community in the West. These attacks are not isolated but are well coordinated by Islamophobes and the extreme right wing organisations. This is indeed a challenging time for the Ummah. Our choice is very simple; either to succumb to the pressures and

be isolated and move back to the fringe of society or treat these malicious attacks as a great opportunity to challenge these misconceptions and put forward the correct narrative in accordance with the teachings of our noble faith in order for us to understand the current situation, we must first address both the sources of the negative intervention and then only can we confront this onslaught on our faith and community.

1) The Ideology of Da'ish and Al-Qaidah.

This criminal organisation came into existence shortly after the invasion of Iraq and has carried out numerous acts of terrorism in many Muslim countries including Saudi Arabia and Turkey as well as countries across Europe and Africa. The real tragedy is that almost all these repugnant acts of criminality have been carried out in the name of Islam, giving an impression to the wider world community that these acts of murder and violence are somehow sanctified or sanctioned by our noble faith. We Muslims know, as well as the vast majority of non-Muslims, that these acts of violence have nothing in common with the teachings of our religion. In fact on the contrary, as mentioned by several earlier speakers, the teachings of Islam utterly and totally condemn these acts of terror. One of the most quoted verses from the Holy Qur'an gives reference to the fact that a loss of one life equates to the loss of humanity. There cannot be a more powerful injunction than this!

Questions have been raised with regards to the origins and ideology of this criminal group that has captured the propaganda machinery of the West. It is truly painful to hear the words 'Islamic State' and 'Islamic Terrorists' being used to describe these un-Islamic entities. The Muslim countries and Muslim communities from different parts of the world have refused to describe these terrorist organisations as Islamic. It is worthy of note that these terrorist groups have caused immense harm to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In fact the Muslim communities are double victims of these tragedies. They are also made to bear responsibility and take ownership of these criminal acts in spite of the fact that they have condemned these organisations and totally disassociated themselves from them.

In the attached Appendix, I have analysed some of the major terror attacks claimed by Da'ish in Europe since 2015. It includes the background of the perpetrators and the common theme of these attacks. To summarise, nearly all the attackers identified were

Muslims who had a dubious background of criminality, mental illness and social isolation. Hardly any one of them has been linked to any established Islamic institutions or places of learning such as Madrasahs and Mosques. Furthermore, when carrying out these ghastly attacks the perpetrators to have exclaimed words such as "Allahu Akbar!" Denoting the fact that these attacks were carried out in the name of Islam.

2) Media Organisations.

It is extremely sad that many of these well established international media organisations around the world wrongly equate these terrorist groups to our noble faith despite the fact that nearly all influential scholars, institutions and organisations unequivocally condemn and reject these acts of terror as UN-Islamic. Yet these voices of sanity are deliberately drowned and not heard. Too often we hear western politicians questioning why scholars and Muslim organisations are not condemning these acts of senseless violence.

3) The Governments of the West.

It is disheartening that some of the governments in the West through their spokespersons and politicians use similar rhetoric as the media in describing these acts of terror as somehow to do with Islam and it's teachings. The use of unacceptable terminology such as 'Islamic Terrorist' or 'Islamic Extremist' exacerbates this misconception and gives undeserved attention to these criminals.

4) The Muslim World.

Tragically the media in the Muslim World follow a similar trend of that in the West. Instead of isolating these terror groups as un-Islamic entities, the attention given to their evil ideology confuses the minds of young Muslims in Muslim countries. There is also a huge lack of cooperation between Muslim countries and Muslim organisations in the West to fight this evil manifestation. There is a dire need for enhanced communication between Islamic scholars and Islamic institutions in the Muslim world with Islamic scholars and institutions in the West. The demonisation of Islam affects the positive participation of Muslim communities both in the West and in Muslim countries.

Negative Effect on Positive Work.

Over the last three to four decades extremely important work has been carried out by numerous Muslim organisations and institutions in the West. The most

important being the recognition that Islam and the Muslim communities are no longer on the fringe of society but are now part of the mainstream. Some of the many examples of Muslims being a part of the mainstream in the UK are:

- Muslims regarded as a religious community and not a racial group
- The availability of Halal food in schools across the country.
- Muslim women can wear Hijab in schools and at work places.
- Chaplaincy service accorded to Muslims in hospitals, prison and in the army.
- Places of worship/prayers are now established at all major airports, government departments, schools and colleges and in the offices professional firms such as law and accountancy practices.
- Legislation enacted to protect faith communities including Muslims against discrimination.
- The availability of Shari'ah Compliant Finance available with all mainstream banks. Establishment of Islamic banks and the issuing of the first Sukook (Islamic bond) in the West by the British Government.

All the aforementioned achievements which came after years of deliberation, are now being questioned by right wing organisations as though these basic rights are drivers of radicalisation. To the extent that new movements have been established which are seeking to ban Halal slaughter, to remove chaplaincy services for Muslims, to regulate Mosques and Madrasahs, to stop Muslim refugees coming into the UK and in places like the USA where they want to restrict the number of Muslims entering the country.

In short they want to curtail the basic human rights of Muslims.

Effectively these groups want to reverse all the progress achieved over the years and take back the Muslim community to the fringe of mainstream society.

Governments are also seriously looking at regulating Mosques and Madrasahs by imposing restrictions on what sections of the Qur'an can and cannot be taught.

It is also unfortunate that the governments in the West have identified Muslim secular groups and persons and use them to bring about a new Western Liberal form of Islam, which in essence is an attempt at reforming our noble faith. These so-called Muslim lack both the integrity and credibility in the Muslim

communities. Furthermore their existence is hugely dependent on government funding. Sadly we are fermenting a new form of extremism whose aim is to undermine and isolate mainstream Muslim organisations.

Today in Britain and in many parts of Europe, both the media and the establishment are heavily promoting non-Muslim groups such as the Ahmadiyyah cult as mainstream Islam. This is the biggest Fitnah facing the Muslim community in the West. These groups are given maximum exposure in the media as the moderate voice of Islam. The community has to deal with this menace in the most responsible and effective manner.

The Muslim World League as one of the most important international Islamic organisations has an important duty to work closely with Islamic institutions and organisations in the West.

Almighty Allah will surely protect His Deen but we have been given this unique opportunity to turn these challenges and obstacles into opportunities to convey the true message of Islam.

Appendix.

Brief analysis of terror in Europe since 2015

13/11/2015, Paris, France - people carried out terrorist attacks across various locations in the city. The attacks involved suicide bombings at a football stadium, hostage taking at a theatre and a mass shooting between the perpetrators and French authorities. A total of 137 people were killed (130 civilians, 7 perpetrators) and 368 people injured. It was reported by *the Guardian Newspaper* that one of the attackers shouted "Allahu Akbar" before shooting into a crowd in a restaurant. At the Bataclan theatre, it was reported by the *AFP*, *BBC* and *the New York Times* that a witness heard one of the perpetrators shout "Allahu Akbar" before attacking the crowd. When one of the attackers took the crowd hostage, it was reported by *the New York Times* and *the Daily Telegraph* that a witness heard the attacker say, "This is because of all the harm done by Hollande to Muslims all over the world".

22/03/2016, Brussels, Belgium – 3 people carried out three coordinated attacks across various locations in the city. The attacks involved 3 suicide bombings; 2 at Brussels airport and 1 at a metro station in central Brussels. A total of 35 people were killed (32 civilians, 3 perpetrators shot by the police). Although 3 pepe-

trators carried out the attack, a total of 5 attackers were involved: Ibrahim Al-Bakraoui, a Belgian national of Moroccan descent, who was previously arrested for being involved in an attempted robbery and shooting a police officer. Najim Laachraoui, a Belgian national of Moroccan descent who went to Syria and fought for ISIS before returning back to Belgium to carry out the attack, Muhammad Abrini, a Belgian national of Moroccan descent, prior to the attack where he was involved in petty crime and associations with extremist cells, it is believed that he also fought for ISIS in Syria. Khalid Al-Bakraoui, the younger brother of Ibrahim Al-Bakraoui, was previously convicted for several carjackings and a bank robbery and kidnapping. Prior to the attack he was wanted by Interpol. Osama Krayem, A Swedish national of Syrian descent, is believed to have fought in Syria for ISIS. Prior to the attack he was Europe's most wanted fugitive who was recruiting Arab Swedish youth.

14/07/2016, Nice, France - The attack was carried out when a cargo truck was deliberately driven into a crowd celebrating a national holiday in the city of Nice, France. A total of 87 civilians were killed. The perpetrator was also shot dead by the authorities upon their arrival. The attacker was Muhammad Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, a Tunisian national who was living in France since 2005. He has been described as mentally unstable with a tumultuous personal life, which included the heavy consumption of drugs and alcohol, nervous breakdowns and angry breakouts. It has been reported by *USA Today*, *the Associated Press* and *the New York Times* that in the days before the attack, Lahouaiej-Bouhlel let his beard grow and told people the meaning of this beard is religious. French authorities stated that Lahouaiej-Bouhlel showed a passion for religion only recently; Muhammad only started visiting a mosque in April, a witness stated. In the months before the attack Lahouaiej-Bouhlel made internet searches about ISIS and expressed support for the group.

19/12/2016, Berlin, Germany – a lone truck driver deliberately drove into a crowded Christmas market, killing 12 people including the perpetrator who was captured and shot dead by the authorities. The perpetrator was Anis Amri, a Tunisian national who had his asylum application rejected and who pledged his allegiance to ISIS. According to family reports, Amri regularly consumed alcohol and drugs was not religious and was imprisoned due to violence when he arrived in Europe. However, in prison it is said that he

became radicalised and upon his release he actively sought to recruit followers.

22/03/2017, London, U.K. - British Muslim Khalid Masood drove a car into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge. After crashing the car Masood went on a stabbing spree, injuring one police officer before being shot dead by a police officer. A total of 6 people were killed (4 civilians, 1 police officer and Masood himself). Masood reportedly said in a final text message that he was waging Jihad in revenge for Western military action in Muslim countries in the Middle East. *Amaq News Agency*, which is linked to Islamic State, said the attacker answered the group calls to target citizens of states that are fighting against it, though the claim was questioned by the UK police and government.

22/05/2017, Manchester, U.K. – a suicide bombing occurred at the Manchester Arena where a concert was taking place. The attacker was a 22-year-old British Muslim named Salman Abedi who was of Libyan descent. According to the BBC Friends remember him as a good footballer, a keen supporter of Manchester United and a user of cannabis. Furthermore, according to an acquaintance Abedi was an outgoing figure who would consume alcohol and take drugs. However, Abedi became radicalized by Isis propaganda. He was known to British security services and police but was not regarded as a high risk, having been linked to petty crime but never flagged up for radical views. Moreover, his local mosque had banned him from attending the congregation and had reported him several times to the authorities for his extreme and unsettling views.

04/06/2017, London, U.K. – A white van ran over a number of pedestrians on London Bridge. After the van crashed, 3 attackers emerged and began stabbing people in Borough Market and areas adjacent to London Bridge. A total of 10 people were killed, including the perpetrators who were shot dead by the Metropolitan Police. The three perpetrators were Khuram Shahzad, a British Muslim of Pakistani descent, Rachid Redouane, a Libyan or Moroccan national who was unknown to police and Youseff Zaghba, an Italian national of Moroccan descent. It is reported that Butt was an associate of the banned extremist group Al-Muhajiroun and had been linked with other terror suspects in the UK. He has also been banned from two local mosques due to his extreme views. In March 2016 Zaghba was stopped by Italian police and had found ISIS related material on his phone.



The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) holds its board meeting

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL), Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, chaired the board meeting of IIRO that was held at the headquarter of the General Secretariat of MWL in Makkah Al-Mukaramah and was attended by the SG of IIRO Hassan bin Darwish Shahbar and the board members.

Dr. Al-Issa confirmed in his speech at the beginning of the meeting on the tasks and the goals of establishing IIRO, which is patronage by MWL, and the hard work to achieve them through MWL according to the humanitarian message of Islam all over the world. He also clarified that IIRO is taking a great attention to work only with the legitimate international institutions, associations and organizations.

Sheikh Muhammad pointed out that Islam now is facing great challenges so for that Muslims must react

in more responsibility to spread the true Islamic values of humanity and mercy for all that the savagery of extreme terrorism has tried to keep it in minds that receive its information from one narrow angle. He explained also that the relief programs of IIRO and MWL are for everyone no matter who they are, Muslims or non-Muslims, because this is what Islam taught us to do and this is the universality of real Islam.

The meeting also discussed a number of relevant issues such as the budget estimates for the current year, the technical report of the International Relief Fund for the Islamic Loan and reviewing the work of other previous international and local cooperation agreements. Dr. Al-Issa at the end of the meeting urged the committees of IIRO and its employees and collaborators to redouble their efforts to achieve the goals of which IIRO was established for.



SG of MWL receives Governor of Jakarta

The Secretary General of Muslim World League (MWL), Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, received at his office the Indonesian city of Jakarta Dr. Anies Bas-

wedan, and his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, they discussed a number of issues of common interest between the two sides.



HE the Secretary General receives His Eminence Sheikh Sufyan Mohajiri Zayyan, President of the European Islamic Organization



MWL's One-day Conference on Tolerance in Islam at Brunei Gallery, SOAS London

Dr. Mozammel Haque

One-day Conference on Tolerance in Islam, organised by Muslim World League, was held at the Brunei Gallery, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, on Monday, the 15th of May, 2017.

The Conference has three sessions besides the Opening and Welcome session and the Closing sessions. After the recitation from the Holy Qur'an and Translation, Professor Dr. Muhammad A.S. Abdulhaleem, Professor of Islamic Studies at SOAS, delivered the welcome address followed by the Keynote address by His Excellency, Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia.



The First session was on Tolerance in Islam ... A Method and a Message, chaired by Hajj Ahmad Thomson, Bar-at-Law. There were three papers: Sheikh Haytham Tamim presented a paper on 'Compassion and Brotherhood in Islam'; the second paper on 'Aspects of Tolerance in Islam' was presented by Professor Muhammad A.S. Abdulhaleem, OBE and the third paper on 'Qur'anic Justice and Shared Social Ethics' was presented by Dr. Ramon Harvey.

The Second session was on Muslims and the Tolerance ... Scene and Objectives, chaired by Dr. Ahmad Meliebary. There were three papers; the first paper on 'The Madinah Charter (The First Islamic Constitution dealing with a Treaty on Tolerance and its Global Impact)' was presented by Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London. The second paper was on 'Islamic Tolerance through the eyes of other Religions and Cultures' presented by Shafi Fazaluddin and the third paper on 'Islam's Contribution to World Peace' was presented by Dr. Hashim Mahdi.

After the lunch break and prayer, there was third session on Tolerance and Homeland and Communities Security chaired by Dr. Salman Al-Saad. There were three speakers; the First speaker Peter Clark presented a paper on 'Marmaduke Pickthall and Tolerance in Islam'. Dr. Shuaib Abdulgaffar Hasan presented a paper on 'Harmony between Islam and Homeland and Communities' Security'. Mr. Ajmal Masroor also spoke on this topic. Dr. Fatima Rajina spoke on the 'Role of the Institutions in Promoting Peace in the societies'.

At the end, there was Questions & Answers ses-

sion; Award Giving Ceremony and photo session.

The Keynote speech of the MWL's Secretary General

In the Opening Session, The Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, delivered the keynote speech in which he has affirmed the MWL's keenness to promote a culture of peace and tolerance; constructive dialogue of understanding between the different components of the society. He mentioned the moderate approach championed by the Muslim World League. "Tolerance is an integral part of Islam's lofty values; ever-present in many religious texts, and abound in the Prophetic Seerah (Biography of the Prophet); the latter is considered to be the top of moral values that Islam has commended their application in all areas of life."

He underlined the incompatibility of these lofty values with the approach of extremism based on fanaticism, incitement and confrontation. This radical phenomenon interprets the texts erroneously seeking to distort its accurate and true meanings.

He also explained that the classification of extremism often suggests a perverted behavioural nature. The extremist is intolerant, vulnerable and easily swayed and quickly overwhelmed by the collective thought, for which it falls easily prey to its harmful spell. Extremism is denuded of comfortable nature, and finds itself on either opposite pole.

"The extremist neither knows nor understands the doctrine of priorities and judgement (Jurisprudence of comparison between interests and malevolence). Neither does he recognise the purposes of Shari'ah, the change of Fatwa, and the provisions of necessity. He does not know the possibility of the change in times, places, situations, customs, intentions and people," Dr. Al-Issa said and added, "And you will find the extremist conceited in accepting evidence and facts, glorifying trivial matters, violating major sins; led by encouraging division, sowing the seeds of subversion as well as accusing others of apostasy (*takfir*) and permitting bloodshed."

Dr. Al-Issa also said You'll find him an estranged individual to the Fiqh of agreement, congruence and rapprochement. He will be as far away as possible from being compassionate, accommodating to people and a herald of glad tidings.

He continued, "You will never find all these great meanings except in religious consciousness, which has refined behaviour and generated wisdom. These

meanings have also produced the global scholar within the context of his religion's universality."

Secretary General of the Muslim World League concluded: "We say in brief: The outcome – and God knows best – a pledge based on the defeat the terrorist thought. The terrorist entity is established on an extremist ideology, rather than a military entity and an overwhelming political power. It was able to spread in all countries of the world, attract followers from one hundred and one countries and influence some minds, taking advantage of every available opportunity."

Proceedings of the Conference

I am going to report briefly each session, i.e. from the Second session, the Madinah Charter by Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan and from the Third session on Marmaduke Pickthall and Tolerance in Islam and Homeland and Communities' Security by Dr. Shuaib Abdul Gaffar Hasan.

From the Second Session

The Madinah Charter by Dr. Ahmad al-Dubayan

In the Second Session, Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan, the Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London was programmed to give a lecture on The Madinah Charter. Dr. Al-Dubayan started by saying: The Charter was one of the most important developments of the Charter which was really signed and dictated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). But this was not the first one.

He said, The first one was made about the year 620, that was one year or two years before the immigration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Makkah to Madinah. He continued, "The first treaty was not written, it was verbal, as far as we know, agreed between the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and the people from the Madinah (as it was called Yathrib in those days). And when the Prophet himself (peace be upon him) came from Makkah to Madinah now we have this treaty charter which some people called it was signed by the Prophet himself and the representatives of the population of Madinah. The time when this charter was written is about 624, i.e. the first year of the Hijrah of the Islamic calendar or in the Gregorian or western calendar, the 624AD."

After this, Dr. Al-Dubayan said there was another treaty, not charter; that is the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, in the year 629. These were the main very important treaties, documents in the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This one is in writing; the one of Hudaibi-

yah in the text; the first one we don't have the text we just have it in reading.

Dr. Al-Dubayan then jumped and did not go deep about the authenticity of the text. About the authenticity of the text, He said, "Really lot of scholars, or some scholars have argued about the authenticity of a whole or one text, some scholars argued about the authenticity of some part of it and some scholars have not accepted and there were many who accepted as really authentic text written and narrated by many of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Then Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned about the historian who first mentioned about this. He said, "The first one who mentioned about this is Ibn Ishaq Muhammad bin Ishaq, the most famous historian of the period of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Bin Ishaq died in 768 which is about 150 years after the immigration of the Prophet (peace be upon him), i.e. one and a half century after the immigration of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The ICC Chief also mentioned, "We had actually chain of narrators, from bin Ishaq to the course of the charter and what is really very amazing; the last person in this chain was Othman bin Mugira. Bin Mugira said he found the Treaty was written in a book with the family of Omar bin Al-Khattab himself. That means it was in writing; it was not just their belief, they say and then somebody memorised or memorises it but it was found with the family of Omar bin Al-Khattab. Dr. Al-Dubayan maintained I think the authenticity is very very strong.

Speaking about the importance and significance of the Charter Dr. Al-Dubayan said, "To understand how important this one is we have to go back to Madinah itself to know who were there; when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Madinah. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Madinah, there were Jewish community in Madinah; there were Arabs who were non-Muslims yet and, of course, early strongly there were some Christians in Madinah, may be individuals, not very big community but there were some Christian Arabs who followed their religion before Islam; there was a big community of Jews in Madinah itself when the Prophet came.

So there were different people of different religions of different tribes - all of them living in Madinah. It means it was multicultural multi-religious and multi-ethnic communities living in the city. It is interesting to know the type of life and the relations among these people and communities and here lies the importance



of the Charter, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Madinah, said Dr. Al-Dubayan.

Going into the details of the Charter, the Director General of the Centre mentioned “The first thing we see in this Charter is the tolerance. The subject tolerance is really very very important in this document. The Charter has 52 items, 25 of these items are really about the lives of Muslims and 27 of these items related to the relations within Muslims and between other faiths, Jews and Christians in Madinah in those days.”

First of all, the Madinah Charter removed any kind of racism. Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned, “If we examine first the Charter removed any kind of racism among the relations in Madinah. No racism among the people; they were one nation; they were whole one nation. That means they were sharing the same rights; sharing the same duties; and which actually later on about the duties to help each other when the Madinah the city was attacked. The duties to help each other were like a financial crisis; everybody must share and must contribute something.”

Then Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned about the social justice aspect of the Charter. He said, “Social justice means when there is some issues it must be dealt with the law itself and it must be taken and considered by the head of the city. It is really, may be, the first politi-

cal charter or constitution written. One of the aspects is respecting the rights of the neighbours, respecting the rights of properties. These are all in the document which show what is called in the modern terminology or in modern times the rights and the same written in the same charter.”

Then Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned about the economic aspects about it. For example, the economic independence among the communities is written in the charter. He said, “There was economic independence; that means Jews were responsible for their own properties; Muslims were responsible for their own properties; and everybody knows what he had and they must all contribute in the case of poor or in the case of need. This is what is written in the charter.”

These are some of the aspects of the charter which are very very important. Dr. Al-Dubayan also mentioned another important aspect is that there are some books now really examining the document itself.

He said, just about five days ago there was a conference in Bahrain talking only about this subject of this document the Charter of Madinah and studies and many scholars presented different papers about the economic sides of it. Another one is about the political side in it. I think, in the modern time or in the modern history of Arabs, they did not argue of the different form of the state.

“How is the state in Islam? How is the state written in Arab history? -That is the big argument in the Islamic studies; Arab studies in the 21st century. and I think if this charter is re-examined and studied it will lead us to a kind of or a form of state; said Dr. Al-Dubayan and added, “It will show us how there were respect among people of different faiths; how independence they have of their faiths; how independence they have of their economic issues; how also they must work together whenever there is any threat to the state or for the state itself and how much they have relations to each other and they respect each other. And how much of the justice was there. For example, in item no 40 in the charter it says that everybody is independent of the crime and nobody will be responsible for the mistake of another person, even if he is from the same family or his friend or something.”

Another aspect which Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned is the tribal culture. He said, “Because of tribal culture, if somebody is killed in the tribe the other tribe will try to kill anybody from that tribe, even if he is innocent; not committed by the person who committed the crime. That was stopped in this charter. To make

the responsibility really is individual only; the person himself; and nobody can be responsible for the crime of other people.”

Dr. Al-Dubayan finally emphasized the tolerance aspect of the Charter. He said, “Supporting each other; working together; respecting neighbour and neighbourhood and everything. Actually two items they are all going about tolerance. It is really a model. I think we really trying to implement again the idea and then bring them into life that will help for better understanding of Islam.”

The Third Session

Marmaduke Pickthall and Tolerance

by Dr. Peter Clark OBE

Dr. Peter Clark OBE is a consultant, writer and translator. One of his books is Marmaduke Pickthall, British Muslim. Dr. Clark first spoke about the life and work of Marmaduke Pickthall, a novelist who embraced Islam in 1917 and translated the Holy Qur’an, the first translation by a believing Muslim who was also a native speaker of English. He said, “My study of Pickthall, first published in 1986, has been reissued and translated into Arabic. Two other volumes, dedicated to his work, have been published. I think there are two reasons for this interest. First, he was a British Muslim; his life demonstrates that there is nothing alien about Muslims in Britain. Secondly, his writings emphasised the openness and liberal traditions of Islam, in contrast to some of the statements made in the name of Islam today.”

Dr. Peter Clark talked about Pickthall’s intimate familiarity with three or four areas of Islam. He said, “Pickthall was remarkable in having an intimate familiarity with three or four areas of the world of Islam. In his youth in the 1890s he spent two years wandering round Syria and Palestine, mastering colloquial Levantine Arabic. He spent prolonged periods in Egypt. Before the First World War he was for several months in Istanbul where he learnt Turkish and became a champion of the Young Turks. Then from 1920 to 1935 he was in India, the last ten years in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad under whose auspices he undertook his great work of translation and was founder-editor of the remarkable journal, *Islamic Culture*.”

Speaking about Pickthall’s conception of Tolerance in Islam, Dr. Clark mentioned his lecture entitled “Tolerance”. He said, “In addition to his novels and short stories that articulate the attitudes of ordi-

nary Turks, Syrians and Egyptians, he wrote extensively about Islam. In 1917 he moved to a position of leadership of the British Muslim community and gave addresses and khutbas in which he proclaimed that Islam was a religion of tolerance. The summation of his Muslim faith was expressed in a series of lectures he gave in Chennai/Madras in 1925. They have been published as *The Cultural Side of Islam* and many times reprinted.”

“One lecture was entitled “Tolerance”. In this lecture he quotes from the Holy Qur’an in support of his own liberal views. He argues that Muslims were at their strongest when they were open and tolerant. He recalls the tradition of plurality in places where there were mixed communities of Muslims, Jews and Christians. Places of worship were shared. I could point to a dozen buildings in Syria, he said, which tradition says were thus jointly used; and I have seen at Lud (Lydda), in the plain of Sharon, a Church of St. George and a mosque under the same roof with only a partition wall between.” Dr. Clark mentioned.

Talking about the Ottoman Empire as tolerant Empire, Dr. Clark mentioned, “He (Pickthall) was in Syria at the end of the Ottoman Empire and saw it, at its best, as a tolerant Empire. Christians and Jews flourished. When Jews (and Muslims) were expelled from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, they were given a warm welcome in the Ottoman Empire. Until nationalism undermined relationships, there was a balance of communities. Of course practice was never always in line with precept but, as Pickthall said, The poor Muslims and poor Christians were on an equality, and were still good friends and neighbours. The Muslims never interfered with the religion of the subject Christians. There was never anything like the inquisition or the fires of Smithfield.”

“Tolerance is a negative quality. It is the refraining from persecution or oppression. To turn tolerance into something positive is to celebrate the other,” said Dr. Clark. But while speaking about Pickthall’s works and life in Hyderabad under its Nizam, Dr. Clark said, “He (Pickthall) was happiest in Hyderabad which was effectively a benevolent autocracy. Hyderabad, like the Syria of his youth, was a multi-ethnic community but the Nizam saw himself as the patron of all. He funded the buildings of buildings, not exclusively Islamic, as well as providing extensive social services. One of Pickthall’s tasks in Hyderabad was to negotiate a marriage alliance between the son of the Nizam and the daughter of the last Ottoman Khalifa, Abdulmejid, a

man of great culture, a musician and a painter, at home in the cultures of Turkey, Arabia and Persia as well as of western Europe.”

“Until the Ottoman Empire imploded the Sultans were often the patrons of Christian and Jewish endeavours. In Haydarpasha Istanbul there is a synagogue today named after Sultan Abdulhamid II,” he mentioned.

Speaking about the Sixteenth Century Mughal Emperor Akbar, Dr. Clark mentioned, “He (Pickthall) respected the sixteenth century Mughal Emperor, Akbar, who was open to all religious influences. He established the Ibadatkhana that was open to people of all religions and of none, where there were discussions of everything. In the following century the Persian Shah Abbas enjoyed talking with European Christians about their faith to such an extent that there were rumours that he was about to become a Christian. But it was simply unbounded intellectual curiosity. A believer, Pickthall thought, strong in his faith, should have no anxiety about open and searching enquiry. Any scientific enquiry is simply an exploration of the divinely created world.”

Dr. Clark also said, “Akbar and Abbas and the Ottoman Empire at its best implemented this policy of tolerance, acceptance and even celebration.”

Dr. Clark would like to end this with some words Pickthall spoke in his last Madrasa lecture. “Muslims cannot adopt the institutions of other communities, but it is their duty to respect the customs and institutions of other communities, and to live with them on terms of neighbourly regard and tolerance. Intolerance and what is called fanaticism have nothing to do with the religion of Islam. There is nothing in the teaching of Islam to justify hatred of any man for his opinions or for seeking to win others to his opinions. God forbid that I should have to say it: There is nothing in the teaching of Islam to justify murder. Islam preaches equal justice to all men, tolerance for all sincere opinions, respect for all good men, wherever found. Islam is not against the rest of the world, but for the rest of the world, striving for right wherever found against wrong wherever found. I would urge most strongly on your notice the need to preach and Shuaib the wine of the non-Muslim. We are forbidden to speak anything concerning his religion which could hurt his feelings. The tolerance of Islam in history is our great claim to the consideration of the world.”

Harmony between Islam and Homeland

and Communities’ Security – Dr. Shuaib Hasan

The topic of the third session Harmony between Islam and Homeland and Communities Security. Dr. Shuaib Hasan presented a paper on this subject. In his paper Dr. Hasan said, “As Muslims, we claim that the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, may peace be upon him, was a messenger of peace, who established peace practically. To prove this claim, let us look into it through these three criteria:

*To establish internal peace of mind.

*To establish peace in society at large where people can live without fear and coercion.

*To establish peace internationally in a way the wars are no more than a necessary evil, and exist only to eradicate oppression and bring tyranny to an end.”

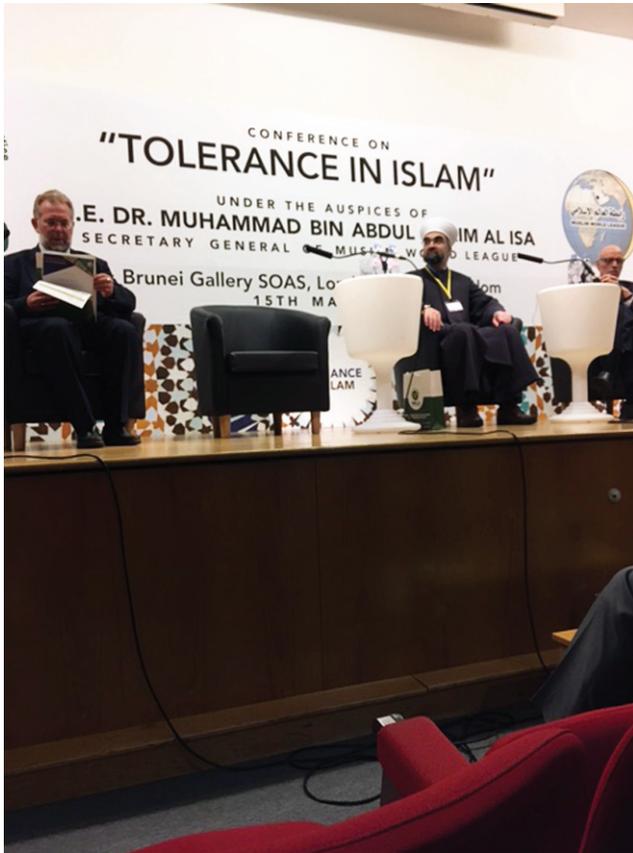
Dr. Hasan said, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) has established all these three criteria. Arabs in his times had some extraordinary characters which eventually made them capable of carrying out the great task of turning the Arabian Peninsula into the seat of Islam and a source of global inspiration. They were known for bravery, generosity, sense of dignity and gallantry and trustworthiness. But these highly merited characters were marked with excessiveness which caused them sometimes to appear negatively.”

“The valour was turned into plunder and smouldering the flames of war on petty issues. The generosity was turned into gambling, even for charitable purposes. The dignity and gallantry, of family and tribal pride led them to create havoc and massacre in the ranks of enemies in the name of vengeance and racial supremacy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was very successful in moulding these characters in a positive direction, to a productive and to a peaceful way of life,” Dr. Hasan mentioned.

Dr. Hasan also said, “So let us take the three criteria, first to establish internal peace of mind internally: Islam is peace and one of Allah’s attributes is Al-Salam and our greetings in The Muslim greeting is “AssalamuAlaikum” (peace be upon you). And Dar Al-Salam means the House of peace.” “

Then the second criteria is to establish peace in society. Dr. Hasan said, “Secondly, establishing peace in society. Society itself is composed of small units: a house or a family. There are a number of institutions that help create a peaceful society. Let us consider each one of them.

He also mentioned, “The House of the Family ‘Sakinah’ or tranquillity is declared as one of the most



important factors in creating a successful dwelling. In the Qur'an Allah said, "And (also) of His signs is that He created for you mates of your own kind so that you acquire peace from them, and He created between you love and mercy. Verily, in this (system of creation) there are signs for those who meditate." (Surah 30:21)

Dr. Hasan then said, "Next to the house comes one's neighbours. Then The institution of Al-Hisbah (Ombudsman) and then the institution of Bait Al-Mal: the wealth to be distributed to the poor and the needy. After this there was very most important thing is the The institution of Al-Qada (importing justice) and this has been mentioned by some of our speakers as well. Allah said in the Qur'an: "*Verily, We sent Our Messengers with clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the balance of justice so that people might grow firm and stable in justice. And (of minerals) We brought forth iron in which there is a fierce force (for weapons and defence) and which has (multiple other) benefits for people (in industrial development). And (the purpose is) that Allah may bring to light the one who helps Him and His Messengers (i.e., the Din [Religion of Islam]) without seeing. Surely, Allah is*

(Himself) the All-Powerful, the Almighty." (57:25) So wherever there is justice, it is a peaceful country."

In this connection, Dr. Hasan mentioned, "Once Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, was asked about the fate of England in the face of constant attack by the enemy during the last days of the Second World War. He replied that as long as the courts of this country were functioning well and providing justice to the people, there was no reason for anyone to fear or despair." Then Dr. Hasan mentioned the institution of *Mirath* (the distribution of the inheritance).

And then the third criterion is to establish peace internationally. About this criterion Dr. Hasan mentioned: "Though the Prophet (peace be upon him) was constantly forced to engage in fighting, seeking peace was his primary objective in life and that is why the Qur'an certified that: "*And if they (the combatant or hostile disbelievers) incline to peace and reconciliation, you also incline to it and put your trust in Allah. Surely, He alone is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*"(8:61)"

Then he mentioned about the The Treaty of Hudaibiya in the 6th year of Hijrah.

Dr. Hasan said, "The legacy which was left by the Prophet (peace be upon him) as for peace and war could be summarised as follows:

*The objective of a State is to provide peace on all levels, individual, social and nationally.

*War is a necessary evil which serves the purpose of defence and eradicates tyranny and injustice."

Dr. Hasan also mentioned, The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself participated in 23 battles (Ghazwat) during which only one person was killed by his own hand because he confronted him directly."

Killing involved the combatants only. He prohibited the killing of non-combatants especially women, children, old people, persons confined to the houses of worship. Beneficial objects, whether cattles or trees were treated as sanctuary.

Peace is the preferred option over even if it is accomplished on the expenses of one's own interest. That was the lesson of the Treaty of Hudaibiya in the 6th year of Hijrah." Mentioned Dr. Hasan.

Closing Statement: Recommendations

After that, the participants started the conference's topics, led by scholars of Dawa activists, leaders in areas of science, advocacy and cultural work in a number of Islamic countries. The conference was also attended by leaders of Islamic centres and offices in

the United Kingdom. At the end of the session discussions, the participants proposed the following recommendations:

To praise the efforts made by the Muslims in the United Kingdom to promote the real image of Islam; to appreciate their cultural contributions and positive engagement with everybody.

They salute their efforts in spreading the culture of accepting others in their midst due to the firm belief in the difference between people while promoting the concepts of positive communication among followers of religions and cultures to serve humanitarian work and maintain human dignity and preserve human rights.

To sustain the positive spirit that Muslims have had over the past centuries in their fair dealings with others and co-existing with them side by side. They call upon the various components of society to exert efforts to promote citizenship and expand constructive dialogue among them.

The consolidation of common human values and solidarity in protecting national public interests, and to overcome difficulties that hinder coexistence in a happy safe way.

Respect symbols and national traditions, including greeting, peace and national protocol, according to the priorities of the concept of citizenship, and accept what some might see from his point of view as reservation or doubt on some of its contexts. Hence, the Muslim has to work on the procedure between the pros and cons within priorities and comparison. One might sustain a greater harm as a result of objection than the original provisions he may consider; as long as – by consensus – it won't cast a Muslim outside the fold of Islam. To bring Muslims together and reject doubts, and the consequences of objection; there are important considerations which have a great weight on the provisions of the law. However, if a Muslim deliberately commits greater evil to avoid a lesser one, then he has breached the basis of Shari'ah. This will be based on the assumption of accepting what he sees as the correctness towards what he considers a lesser evil.

To promote noble moral values, encourage lofty social practices, and the necessity to cooperate in addressing ethical, environmental and family challenges. To endorse cooperation in the development of sustainable progress that will benefit everybody involved.

Denounce the phenomenon of "Islamophobia" which is the result of misunderstanding the reality

of Islam, its cultural creativity and lofty objectives. Imparting objectivity and rejecting prejudices must be promoted. Learning about Islam must be acquired through its origins and principles, not through the horrors committed by perpetrators falsely attributed to Islam.

To invite religious and educational institutions to promote a culture of cooperation and understanding, and encourage religious values that would establish tolerance and positive coexistence.

To inviting Muslim communities in non-Muslim countries to demand their religious rights through peaceful and legal means; including the Hijab, halal slaughter, Islamic schools and the adoption of Islamic holidays.

Muslims must be alert of being dragged behind the religious rebel rousers' passion against the decisions of those States. Moreover, anyone unable to remain in his adoptive country must leave it; God's earth is far and wide; the way it is mentioned in the verse of Surat Al-Nisa'a. Everyone must be careful to preserve his moderate religious belief and his national consciousness from the incursion of extremist ideas.

The need to cooperate on what will benefit the entire humanity. Communities are called to form a universal alliance to reform the civilisational disorder, which considers terrorism one of its branches, and one of its consequences. The beginning of humanity was founded on cooperation among all people based on our common origin and creation.

The participants praised the efforts of the Muslim world League and expressed their thanks for holding the conference. They commended its efforts in the service of Islam and Muslims around the world. They appreciate the Rabita's (MWL's) assistance, awareness to them and interception of extremist messages to reach them. They also cherish the religious advices provided to the communities along with its great support to their demands. They praise the MWL's position in accordance with its new vision based on its weight and trust thanks to its religious wisdom and insight.

They also noted the support provided by the University of London in facilitating the organization of the conference. The Muslim World League along with the Muslim community appreciates the presence of scholars, preachers and intellectuals. These are a reflection of the finest case of a civilized example of coexistence and positive communication. This academic appreciation carries a prestigious dimension of interest and graciousness.

THE CONCEPT OF WORLD PEACE: ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Busari, K.K.

In this paper, an attempt is made to correct any wrong impression or misinformation about the religion of Islam as described by some laity as a religion of terrorism, violence, force and war. This work traces the origin of Islam and its meaning vis-a-vis its concept of peace, violence and war. The true position on the doctrine of Islam is also traced in order to shed more light on the concept of world peace.



THE BEGINNING OF ISLAM

Islam is said to have started since the beginning of the creation. That is Islam is as old as man. The reason for this assertion is that, Islam means total submission to the will of Allah. It is the wish of Allah the world and everything therein should exist, and this come to pass. Human beings are also the handiwork of Allah, therefore, it is left for a man to decide whether to follow the commandments of Allah or do the opposite. He who follows His commandments has submitted himself to His will and vice versa. Allah has decreed that we should worship Him and this is the essence of our creation.

Formally, Islam as a religion started in the Arabian peninsula in the 7th century, precisely in 610A.D. This was when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was called to his mission during one of his usual periods of meditation at the cave of Hira. It was at this point that he received the first revelation as contained in the Holy Qur'an (Q 96:1-5). He was further commanded to start a clarion call and not to seek seclusion but to arise and warn a people sunk in vice and immorality. He was told to make others perfect by warning them of the evil consequences of their evil deeds. The Prophet began to preach the religion of Islam from that time onward, to the Arabs who were then predominantly polytheists, worshipping many idols as opposed to the teaching of Islam which is the religion of monotheism.

ISLAM – ITS MEANING AND EARLY PROPAGATION

The word Islam is from the root-word *salm* or *silm*, both signifying peace. Islam also means submission, that is total submission of oneself to the will of Allah. It is also from the word *Aslama* which signifies entering into peace meaning he entered into peace. Infact, the idea of peace is the dominant idea in Islam and the goal to which Islam leads is called the abode of Peace. A Muslim is therefore one who leads a life of peace, peace with God, which is complete submission to His will, and peace with man which means that he causes no injury to any man as the meaning of Islam connotes.

The peaceful co-existence can be observed from the way Muslims salute themselves when they say: 'as-Salam alaykum' which means: 'peace be unto you'. The name Islam is specifically mentioned in the Holy Qur'an where Allah says:

".... This day have I perfected for you your religion

and completed my favour upon you and I have chosen for you Islam as a religion" (Q 5:3).

Also, Allah says:

"surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam" (Q 3:18).

Islam is a revival and restatement of the religion of Jesus and of all other Prophets. The religion revealed to the Prophets of various nations was the same, but in the course of time it had been misinterpreted and became mixed up with superstitions and degenerated into magical practices and meaningless rituals. The basic principle of all religions taught by the Prophets has been one and the same in all ages and all countries, that Allah is the Lord of all and He alone must be served. Therefore all Prophets are declared to be one community in the Qur'an, and they all led people to virtue through service of God, but their followers broke off this unity.

Islam is a religion without a mythology. Its teachings are simple and rational. Its appeal is to human reason and conscience. The truth of the Islamic doctrine of the Unity and Goodness of God is brought to us by the study and contemplation of the cosmos, where we find the all-pervading unity behind the manifest diversity, by the teaching of all the Prophets, by the experience of the mystics of all religions and nations, and finally by the apologies of the Trinitarians, who, despite their belief in three Divine persons – The father, the son and the holy spirit, declare that there is but one God.

The truth of the other Islamic principles follows logically from the belief in the unity and goodness of God. If God is one, all human beings are the creatures of the same God and are equal in His sight-and hence the Islamic belief in the equality and brotherhood of all men and women. If God is the creator and nourisher of all the worlds, He must provide not only for the physical needs of man, but also for the moral and spiritual needs by revealing to man the path of truth and righteousness – and hence the Islamic belief in Divine Revelation. Moreover, the Divine Revelation must come wherever and whenever needed, and for revealing His message, God must choose men who are completely devoted to truth, are leading godly and sinless life and can inspire others to follow the true path – and hence the Islamic belief in the Prophets of all nations. And finally, if God is the God of Goodness and His plan in creating the world and making man a free moral agent is not frivolous and meaningless, there must be the life-after-death, where men may

reap the fruits of their beliefs, intentions and actions and continue their blissful journey to God and in God – and hence the Islamic belief in the Hereafter.

Islam is the universal message of unity the unity of God, the unity of the Prophets of all the nations, and the unity of all mankind.

The teachings of Islam are in a sharp contrast to the religious beliefs of the Arabs. This was the basis of the hostilities being encountered by the Prophet at the initial stage of the introduction of Islam to the inhabitants of Makkah. They were deeply rooted in polytheism. They also found it difficult to shun the religious beliefs of their progenitors and embrace a new one based on monotheism. Some of them opposed Islam just because they felt the new religion was a threat that would eventually destabilize their political structure. The divine appointment claimed by the Prophet (peace be on him) indirectly meant that he was the most honourable among them.

Members of the Qureish family where Prophet Muhammad descended from, who were the ruling class in Mecca at that time initially thought that the Prophet was attempting to usurp the leadership. They were the custodians of the Ka'abah (the then house of idols) and that placed them at a good political vantage position. All the preachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) at that time centered on condemnation of idol worship. This made some members of Qureish uncomfortable thinking that if he (the Prophet) were to be allowed to continue with his mission, their position might be put in jeopardy. Further, he also preached that the blood should be replaced by a faith bond. Thus, making faith stronger than the blood tie.

Moreover, the Arabs in Mecca believed that the acceptance of the new religion would erode them of the economic gains which they used to derive during the annual idol pilgrimage to Makkah when idol worshippers from the Arabian land would come to worship their gods whose shrines were in Ka'abah at Makkah. The Qureish tried to persuade the Prophet to stop preaching against idol worship in exchange for anything he might desire. When they could not convince him, they started persecuting him and his followers. The cumulative effect of these series of persecutions to the Prophet and his people forced him to embark on a flight from Makkah to Madinah which is popularly known as Hijrah to which the Muslim calendar dated back to.

TERRORISM AND THE POSITION OF ISLAM

Terrorism is an outrageous attack carried out either by individuals, groups or states against the human being (his religion, life, intellect, property and honour). It includes all forms of intimidation, harm, threatening, killing without just cause and everything connected with any form of armed robbery, banditry, every act of violence or threatening intended to fulfil a criminal scheme individually or collectively, so as to terrify and horrify people by hurting them or by exposing their lives, liberty, security or conditions to danger; it can also take the form of inflicting damage on the environment or on a public or a private utility or exposing a national or natural resource to danger.

All these are manifestations of the mischief in the land, Allah has prohibited Muslims from committing. Allah says in the Qur'an:

“And seek not occasions for mischief in the land, for Allah loves not those who do mischief” (Q, 28:77)

Hence, Allah did not only enact deterrent punishment against terrorism, violence, corruption and aggression, but described these acts tantamount to waging war against Allah and His Messenger. Allah says in the Qur'an:

“The only punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive to make mischief in the land is that they should be murdered, or crucified, or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides, or they should be sent into exile from the land. This shall be a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter, they shall have a grievous chastisement” (Q, 5:33).

The words used here imply originally all those opponents of Islam who waged war on Muslims and made mischief in the land by causing loss to the life and property of innocent Muslims who fell into their hands. But it has generally been accepted as including all murderers who cause disorder in a settled state of society. In fact, when war came to an end in Arabia and the kingdom of Islam was established over the whole Peninsula, the enemies of Islam, being unable to oppose its authority openly, resorted to murder to disturb the peace which was now established in the land. Hence, though it is such enemies that are primarily spoken of here, the words are general and include all cases of murder.

Terrorism also involves acts of violence and threats. Violence means behaviour that is intended to hurt other people physically. It also connotes an angry way of reacting or speaking or resort to the use of extreme force. Muslims all over the world are the

vanguard of all righteousness. They are not to engage in anything that will drive terror into the mind of the people, hurt anybody, nor reacting violently to any issue. Muslims have been described as the best community ever evolved from mankind and have also been cautioned not to abuse the idols of other people though their worship is condemned in the strongest terms. This is just to tell Muslims to shun violence and aggression. It may be added that the clearing of the Ka'abah of idols when Makkah fell into the hands of the Holy Prophet, does not in any way contradict the warning, for to abolish the worship of idols and to abuse them are not the same.

From the foregoing, therefore, one would realize that Islam as a religion based its teachings on the recommendations of the Holy Qur'an which had made provisions that would ensure world peace. In Islam, Muslims can only resort to war or violence only in self defence and not offensively. This is according to the dictates of the Holy Qur'an which says:

"Fight in the course of Allah only those who fight you, and do not transgress; Allah hates the transgressors" (Q 2:190).

If the Muslims follow the guidelines as stipulated above, it can be rest assured that the world peace would be guaranteed through Islam.

THE CONCEPT OF WAR IN ISLAM

The overwhelmingly way Islam had treated the concept of peace could no doubt make one wonders why there were records of wars in the history of Islam. It should be recognized that Islam is a complete way of life. The Holy book of Islam left no stone unturned in the matter of the religion of Islam. It is in view of this, that war has not escaped Muslim legislations. Islam has jurisdiction on all facets of human activities. This is why war is allowed when it becomes highly inevitable. The Christian view of turning the other cheek if someone strikes the right cheek as contained in the Bible looks more hypocritical, realizing the various forms of provocations that may confront man in the practical world.

Muslims are only allowed to embark on a Jihad. Jihad in Islam is not synonymous with war. Jihad as derived from the Arabic root word Jahada meaning: he strove or exerted himself against anything that is evil. Technically, it means striving in the cause of God. To raise one's voice against manifest wrong doings is one of the foremost duties of a Muslim and particularly when the wrong doer is an established au-

thority in which apparently there is a great danger of losing one's life.

In the Qur'an, mention is made of war as part of life as long as there is injustice, inequality, oppression and intolerance in the world.

This is the reason why some verses of the Qur'an give allowance for war but with conditions. The Qur'an says:

"Permission to take up arms is hereby given to those who are attacked because they have been wronged. Allah has power to grant them victory" (Q, 22:39-40).

The Prophet welded his followers into a single brotherhood called "The Ummah" while in Madina. Enemies were soon discovered by Muslims from both within and without. About this time, the Prophet was commanded to fight those who fought him; but the Qur'an gave warning on the prosecution of such wars when it says:

"... but if the enemies incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace and trust in God" (Q, 8:61).

This Qur'anic verse advocates that Muslim should sue for peace even during war periods.

Moreover, when the expedition to Syria was ready to take off, Caliph Abu Bakr visited the force at Jurf. He escorted them legged for some distance and admonished them. The instruction, since then became a warfare policy of Muslims in their subsequent encounters in the battle fields. It is a lofty tone of humanity in war fare, and the admonition goes thus:

"Avoid treachery and deceit. Depart not in any wise from the right. Thou shall mutilate none, neither shall thee kill any child, aged man, nor any woman. Damage not the date palm, neither burn it with fire not cut down any tree wherein is food for man or beast. Slay not any flock or heards or camels except for needful sustenance. Ye may partake of the food/meat which the men of the land shall bring up to you in their vessels, making mention there on the name of the Lord. Spare the monks with shaven head who spend their lives in monasteries, if they submit, leave them in their christer unmolested. Now march forward in the name of lord and may he protect you from sword and pestilence".

This is the condition of warfare in Islam. War is not a mission nor a normal course for the Muslims.

THE CONCEPT OF PEACE IN ISLAM

Peace could be defined as the absence of conflict and



freedom from violence, contention and war. Islam as described above, is a religion of peace. Considering the meaning of the word, Islam, is the way of peace. The Ummah, (Muslim Community) is considered to be the community of peace which should surrender itself to the will of Allah. This submission includes the confession of Faith, believing in the Revealed Books other than the Qur'an, i.e. Zabur (Book of Psalms) revealed to Prophet Daud, Taorah (Torah, Pentateuch, Old Testament) revealed to Prophet Musa and Injil (Gospel) revealed to Prophet Isa, (Jesus, Ch.) and believing in all the Prophet sent to the world other than Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) including Prophet Isa (Jesus, Ch.).

Islam strives to bring peace to the entire universe by urging its adherents to proclaim the message of Islam peacefully to all people, inviting them into the abode of peace as clearly stated in the Qur'an that there is no compulsion in religion. Peacefulness is one of the greatest moral values in Islam. Muslims are to live peacefully with one another, avoid inflicting injury on another person. They are equally enjoined to establish peace with adherents of other religions as commanded in the Qur'an which says:

"Be not weary and faint hearted crying for peace when you should be uppermost in search for it..." (Q, 47:35).

This spirit of peaceful co-existence was demon-

strated by Prophet Muhammad himself on his arrival in Madinah. It was an established fact that there were Jews who were Christians when the Prophet (peace be upon him) got there. He, realizing their position in the politics of

Madinah, quickly took some steps to reconcile with them without the intention of converting them to Islam forcefully.

The same motive of maintaining peaceful co-existence with the Jewish Christians also underlines the divine concession given to the Muslims that they could eat the food of the people of the Book (Christians) and marry their females as contained in the Holy Qur'an which says:

"This day all things good and pure are made lawful unto you; the food of the people of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. Lawful unto you in Marriage are not only chaste women who are believers but chaste women from among the people of the book" (Q, 5:5).

It can therefore be observed that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) put up all these measures as enumerated above to establish peace, with all and sundry. It is evident from the foregoing that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) contemplated a religion and a political arrangement that would ensure a measure of unity and peace which is the absence of violence, war, hatred, terrorism, and not necessarily

demanding from the Jews any renunciation of their faith or acceptance of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet.

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, Damascus, then a Christian city was defeated during the battle of Yarmuk in 635 A.D., Khalid b. Walid, the hero of the battle gave the Christians of Damascus, a term which served as a model to ensure peaceful co-existence. The agreement runs thus:

“This is what Khalid ibn Al-Walid would grant to the inhabitants of Damascus if he enters therein; he promises to give them security for their lives, property and churches. Their city walls shall not be demolished, neither shall any Muslim be quartered in their houses”.

This shows that Islam recognizes that there should be no terrorism, violence, raiding, wrangling, swindling as well as infringing on another man’s right unlawfully.

In the same vein, righteousness is highly emphasized in Islam. It is recommended that all human beings are equal and can only be equal than themselves in righteousness, irrespective of colour and race. The Qur’an unequivocally says:

“O! mankind, we created you from a single pair of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may despise each other. Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of God is he who is most righteous of you” (Q 49:13).

CONCLUSION

It has to be understood from this attempt that there is nothing wrong with the tenets of Islam. This has been discussed extensively and objectively. It is believed that Islam is a guidance for its adherents to follow. Any disorderliness that may be discovered is not in the religion but in the ways and manners the adherents have interpreted the tenets and put such into practice.

Some have fought for personal motives such as material gains or to acquire positions in life. However, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad makes a categorical statement on this when it says:

“Action shall be judged according to intention...”

Terrorism in any form among adherents of different religions within our society is uncalled for. If the Qur’an allows Muslims to eat the food of the Christians and marry out of their women those who are chaste, and in Christianity, if the major teaching is based on love of even the enemies, there is no reason why adherents of the two religions should engage in

violence at anytime. This shows, definitely, that the problem is not in accordance with the teachings of their

respective religions but they are creating those problems out of their own volition.

I therefore, through this article, wish to call on all religious groups throughout the world in general and in Nigeria particularly to be more tolerant in the practice of their faith.

Muslims should realize that Islam preaches peace and we should always, as we have been doing, maintain peace. It is a misconception to regard Islam or Muslims as lover (s) of terrorism. This is not strange to one’s hearing, as Islam has been described as a misunderstood religion. However, some adherents of Islam constitute greater obstacles to the right perception of Islam due to their lack of knowledge which is a serious disease. Because of their ignorance about what Islam is, they do not behave in the right manner and do not put Islam into practice principally, practically, morally, economically and socially. To this effect, they misinterpret the teachings of Islam, discourage and block the way of making others appreciate the Islamic principles, concepts and values.

Conclusively, it is not a pre-occupation of any Muslim to engage in terrorism, violence or war, as it is not part of the objectives of Islamic Faith which centres on the world peace. The Clarion call for peace being preached through the religion of Islam is realizable, if the Muslims are neither provoked religiously nor cheated politically or economically and marginalized socially.

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The Qur'anic Concern for Inter-faith Dialogue

Dr. Obaidullah Fahad

The holy Qur'an is the book of guidance sent down for the entire humanity and is not specifically revealed for the Muslims or the Arabs; it's messenger was deputed as a mercy to all the peoples and nations irrespective of their colour, race, geography and language; and its approach is universal. God's revelation was meant for all mankind, to whom, if they turn to God, it is a Message of the glad tidings of His Mercy, and if they do not turn to him, it is a Warning against sin and the inevitable Punishment:



“We have not sent thee But as a universal (Messenger); To men, giving them Glad tidings, and warning them (Against sin), but most men Understand not”.
(1)

The universal approach adopted by the Qur’an, also in the phrase of “O, Mankind!” reveals the general characteristics and human nature lying in the problems discussed in it.(2) The Quranic addresses in the words of “O children of Adam” likely signify the Abrahamic faith in which all the semitic religions believe and which indicates the unitary nature of all these religions. This marked a unique feature in shaping Islamic civilization into a universal one when Muslims under Abbasids appreciated and received the Greek-Byzantine, Persian and Indian civilizations and synthesized them with their worldview. They constructively participated and could later have their characteristic contribution to the universal civilization that lead the world for centuries. The case of Al-Kindi is too significant in this regard.

Abu Yusuf Yaqub Ibn Ishaq Ibn Al-Sabbah Al-Kindi (3) (185-260 AH / 801-873 AD) is known in the history as the “Philosopher of the Arabs” because it was due to him that philosophy came to be acknowledged as a part of Islamic culture. It is true that he borrowed his ideas from Neo-Platonic Aristotelianism, but it is also true that he put those ideas in a new context. By conciliating Hellenistic heritage with Islam he laid the foundations of a new philosophy. Indeed, this conciliation remained for a long time the chief feature of this philosophy. Furthermore, Al-Kindi specializing in all the sciences known at his time made philosophy a comprehensive study embracing all sciences. Al-Farabi (258-339/870-950) Ibn Sina (370-428/980-1037) and Ibn Rushd (520-595/1126-1198) were first scientists and then philosophers. Al-Kindi is unique in his knowledge of all the ancient sciences. His books deal with different sciences, such as logic, philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy etc.(4) Most of his numerous works (numbering about 270) are lost. Scholars have classified his writings into seventeen groups: (1) philosophical, (2) logical, (3) arithmetical, (4) globular, (5) musical, (6) astronomical, (7) geometrical, (8) spherical, (9) medical, (10) astrological, (11) dialectical, (12) psychological, (13) political, (14) meteorological, (15) dimensional, (16) on first things, (17) on the species of some metals, chemicals, etc. Some of his scientific works were translated by Gerard of Cremona into Latin and influenced very much the thought of medieval Europe.

This was appreciated by some of the European historians and writers also. Edward Gibbon having recognized this unique contribution of Islam says:

“The creed of Muhammad is free from suspicion and ambiguity; the Qur’an is a glorious testimony to the unity of God. The Prophet of Makkah rejected the worship of idols and men, of stars and planets on the rational principle that whatever raised must set, that whatever is born must die, that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish. In the author of the universe his rational enthusiasm confessed and adored an infinite and eternal being, without form or place, without issue or similitude, present to our most secret thoughts, existing by the necessity of his own nature, and deriving from himself all moral and spiritual perfection. These sublime truths thus announced in the language of the Prophet, are firmly held by his disciples, and defined with metaphysical precision by the interpreters of the Qur’an. A philosophic theist might subscribe to the popular creed of the Muhammadans; a creed sublime for our present faculties”.(5)

Professor Arnold Toynbee(6) admits that the socio-political, intellectual and scientific renaissance of modern Europe emerged only out of Islam’s direct intercourse with the crusaders when they occupied Palestine. Muslim Far-East was then the centre of Islamic civilization from where the Greek intellectual legacy transmitted to Europe through Italy. He says: “Economically and culturally conquered Islam took her savage conquerors captive and introduced the arts of civilization into the rustic life of Latin Christendom. In certain fields of activity, such as architecture, this Islamic influence pervaded the entire western world in its so-called ‘medieval age’; and in the two permanently conquered territories of Sicily and Andalusia the Islamic influence upon the local western ‘successor-states’ of the Arab empire was naturally still more wide and deep”.(7)

Professor Philip K. Hitti(8) more elaborately provides an account of liberalism, religious tolerance and intellectual advancement that Muslims flourished in Spain for eight centuries. He says:

“Muslim Spain wrote one of brightest chapters in the intellectual history of medieval Europe. Between the middle of the eighth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, as we have noted before, the Arabic speaking people were the main bearers of the torch of culture and civilization throughout the world. Moreover they were the medium through which ancient science and philosophy were recorded, supplemented



and transmitted in such a way as to make possible the Renaissance of western Europe. In all these Arabic Spain had a large share”.(9)

Modern Moral Insensitivity

Muslim appreciation of other cultures did not mean a withdrawal from the Islamic ideology or Muslim legacy nor a surrender to others’ culture and mythology. It meant a full consideration of others’ contributions in the Islamic paradigm. They interacted with others with full confidence and unshakable faith in Islamic worldview. Now Muslims are required by the very nature of their legacy to interact with all the forms of others.

An Agenda for the 21st Century by Rushworth Kidder is a unique contribution in the field of the emergent needs the west has. The author has well enumerated the “six vital items that seem to emerge (as) the first-intensity items – the high leverage issues (in former World Bank President Robert McNamara’s phrase) to which humanity devotes its full attention and its unstinting resources : (1) the threat of nuclear annihilation; (2) the danger of over population; (3) the

degradation of the global environment; (4) the gap between the developing and the industrial worlds; (5) the need for fundamental restructuring of educational systems; and (6) the breakdown in public and private morality. The list is not in order of priority, although the nuclear issue appears to rank first.(10)

With regard to last issue, McNamara elaborates further, in Reinventing the Future by Kidder, while concentrating on the moral etiquettes: “By the end of the century we should seek to increase awareness and sensitivity to the moral dimension of the behaviour, both of individuals and nations. In particular we should stress the immorality of the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies for unilaterally adopting security strategies that place at risk the survival of other nations. We should stress the immorality of the rich consuming a disproportionate share of limited resources with adverse effects on other individuals and future generations and other nations. There is a moral dimension to each of these major subjects we have been discussing, but very rarely do you see in public debate a discussion on the morality of them”.(11)

In her first book Barbara Tuchman, a prominent

writer, characterizes the present “an Age of Disruption”, and the greatest disruption is found in the “real deterioration of public morality”. Kiddler summarizes this point in her book *An Agenda for the 21st Century*: “The failure of public truth-telling, the sale of political influence, the acceptance of illegality in stock-market dealings – such are topics that appear again and again in these interviews (that the book includes), sometimes prominently and sometimes subtly. For the social philosopher Sissel Bak, morality is the central issue for 21st century. Because she sees trust as the vital missing ingredient in so many negotiations, she foresees a time when public officials will have to take ‘moral principles’ in order to develop the trust necessary for negotiating toward solution”.(12)

Utilitarian Ethics

The moral insensitivity which is main reason for national or universal insensitivity about the sufferings of the people, was the greatest loss the world suffered so far after the retreat of Muslims from the process of universal participation. Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss formerly) has well criticized the west that knows only one “religion”, and that is the worship of material progress, the belief that there is no other goal in life than to make that very life continually easier or, as the current expression goes, “independent of Nature”. The temples of this “religion” are the gigantic factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, dancing halls, hydro-electric works; and its priests are bankers, engineers, film stars, captains of industry, record airmen. The unavoidable result of this craving after power and pleasure is the creation of hostile groups armed to the teeth and determined to destroy each other whenever and wherever their respective interests come to clash. And on the cultural side, Muhammad Asad goes on, is the creation of a human type whose morality is confined to the question of practical utility alone, and whose highest criterion of good and evil is material success. He says: “In the profound transformation the social life of the west is undergoing at present, that new, utilitarian morality becomes daily more and more apparent. All virtues having a direct bearing upon the material welfare of society – for example, technical efficiency, patriotism, nationalist group-sense – are being exalted and often absurdly exaggerated in their value; while virtues which, until recently, were valued from a purely ethical point of view, as for example, filial love or sexual fidelity, rapidly lose their importance – because they do not confer a tangible, material

benefit upon society. The age in which the insistence on strong family bonds was decisive for the well-being of the group or the clan is being superseded, in the modern West, by an age of collective organization under far wider headings. And in a society which is essentially technological and is being organized, at a rapidly increasing pace, on purely mechanical lines, the behaviour of a son towards his father is of no great social importance so long as those individuals behave within the limits of general decency imposed by the society on the intercourse between its members. Consequently, the Western father daily loses more and more authority over his son, and quite logically the son loses his respect for the father. Their mutual relations are being slowly overruled and – for all practical purposes – made obsolete by the postulates of a mechanized society which has a tendency to abolish all privileges of one individual over another and – in the logical development of this idea – also the privileges due to family relationship”.(13)

The moral insensitivity of the west may be strongly checked only by the Islamic ethics and morality if sincerely adhered to by the Muslims in their individual and public life. The holy Qur’an duly emphasizes upon its followers to establish justice in all the cases and to maintain Islamic standards in all the circumstances.

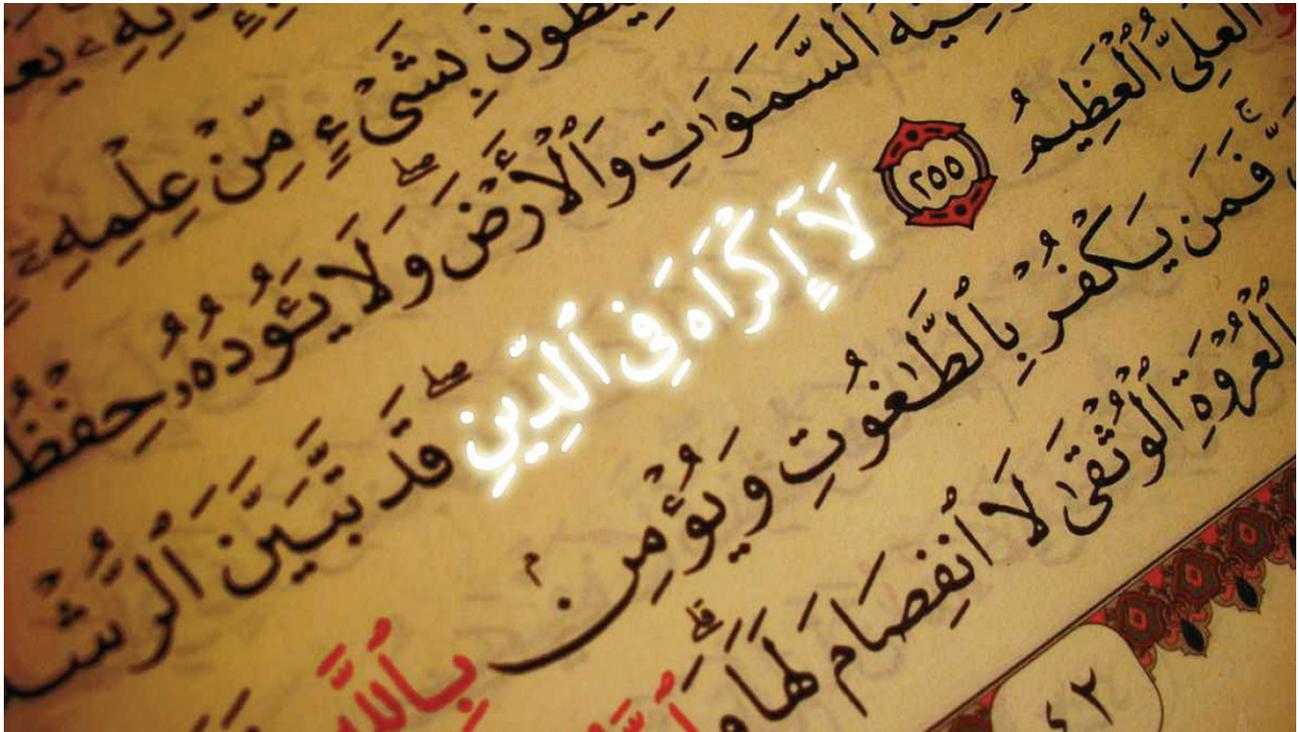
Validating Diversity

The holy Qur’an firmly asserts for the truth and justice and calls the faithful to establish ‘*adl* and *qist* and stand for the truth revealed by God:

*“O ye who believe !
Stand out firmly
For justice, as witnesses
To God, even as against
Yourselves, or your parents,
Or your kin, and whether
It be (against) rich or poor:
For God can best protect both”*(14)

The Qur’an, however, recognizes diversity in the culture, language, religion and tradition. This is eagerly validated by the Qur’an in its different verses:

*“To each among you
Have we prescribed a Law
And an Open Way.
If God has so willed
He would have made you
A single people”*.(15)



*“If it had been thy Lord’s Will,
They would all have believed, -
All who are on earth !
Wilt thou then compel mankind,
Against their will, to believe!”.(16)*

The verse addressed the Prophet (peace be upon him) directly not to compel humanity against its will to believe. This has wider implications. Men of faith must not be impatient or angry if they have to debate, and more importantly, they must guard against the temptation of forcing faith, i.e., imposing it on others by physical compulsion, or any other forms of compulsion such as social pressure, or inducements held out by wealth or position, or other adventitious advantages. Forced faith is no faith. They should strive spiritually and democratically and let God’s Plan work as He wills. This constitutes the next Qur’anic concern regarding an inter-faith dialogue:

“Let there be no compulsion In religion: Truth stands out Clear from Error”.(17)

Say : O ye That reject Faith ! I worship not that Which ye worship, Nor will ye worship That which I worship. And I will not worship That which ye have been Wont to worship, Nor will ye worship That which I worship. To you be your religion, And to me mine”. (18)

The Qur’anic ikrah, disqualifying all kinds of compulsions in the matters of faith, does not only mean that, in the act of subjugating to religion and submitting to it, one must not compel others to submit; but also applies that even with oneself, one must subjugate and submit oneself wholeheartedly and willingly and love and enjoy the submission. Unwilling submission betrays arrogance, disobedience and rebellion, and is tantamount to misbelieve, which is one of the forms of unbelief (*kufur*). It is mistake to think belief in One God alone is sufficient in true religion, and such belief guarantees security and salvation. Unwilling submission – as that of *Iblis* (satan) – is not the mark of true belief, and a Kafir might therefore be also one who, though professing belief in One God, does not submit in real submission, but prefers instead to submit in his own obstinate way – a way, or manner, or form neither approved nor revealed and commanded by God. Real submission is that which has been perfected by the holy Prophet as the model for mankind, for that is the manner of submission of all the Prophets and Messengers before him, and the form approved, revealed and commanded by God.(19)

This was maintained by Muslims throughout the history. No forced Islamization is recorded nor it is sanctioned by the great jurists. Allama Abu Bakr Jassās (d. 370 AH) in his *Ahkam Al-Qur’an* has nar-

rated an interesting case in this regard. Hilal Al-Kai reports from Wasaq Al-Rumi that he was a slave of Omar. Once Omar requested his slave to embrace Islam so that he would be entrusted with some official responsibility in the matters of Muslims, because holding any responsibility by a non-Muslim would not suit this noble job in his view. Wasaq Al-Rumi refused to accept the request of Umar. The caliph then recited the Qur'anic verse that reads: *“There is no compulsion in the religion”*. When Omar was to breath his last he called his slave and freed him saying: *“go wherever you desire!”*(20)

Emphasising on Common Terms

The holy Qur'an called the followers of other religions specially the “Peple of the Book” to come to common terms and discuss the commonalities of all the faiths:

Say: *“O People Of the Book! Come To common terms As between us and you:*

That we worship None but God; That we associate No partners with Him; That we erect not, From among ourselves, Lords and patrons Other than God”. If then they turn back, Say ye: “Bear witness That we (at least) Are Muslims (bowing To God’s Will)”(21)

The people of Semitic religions, specially the Jews and the Christians, share some fundamental articles of faith with the Muslims. The Qur'an commands the faithful to initiate a process of dialogue and mutual understanding on the basis of these commonly shared tenets. The special affinity between Islam and other Semitic religions is also reflected in the permission accorded to inter-marriage between Muslim men and Jewish and Christian women and the permissibility of the flesh of animals slaughtered by Jews or Christians.(22) This conciliatory approach was adopted in modern times by Mufti Muhammad Abduh of Egypt (1849-1905).

The first historic instance of associating or integrating a non-Muslim segment of population with the Islamic Nation is found mainly in the case of Jewish tribes and marginally with regards to some pagan pockets of the city-state of Madinah as early as 623 A.D. Details and principles of this politico-social adjustment are enshrined in what is termed by the modern Muslim scholars as the first written constitution of the world. It was promulgated by the holy Prophet just after the social cohesion was brought about by his Islamic social measure called muakhat (brothering) between the old inhabitants of the city and the new migrants who had come from different parts of Arabia

specially Makkah.

Jews and pagans of Madinah were granted the same rights and duties which age-honoured customs of hilf (confederation or association) offered to all confederates and recognized by different oligarchies of Arabian Peninsula, with the pioneering modification that they approved by a central authority. Like Muslim citizens of the Islamic city-state, the Jews and their associates were charged with equal duties and obligations which are enumerated below:

1. With regard to political and administrative supremacy all had to submit to the overlordship of the holy Prophet who, being an apostle and a divine vicegerent, represented to only central authority and exercised sovereignty throughout his jurisdiction.
2. Both Muslims and non-Muslims were placed under the obligation of being faithful to the city-state; they could not give shelter or extend assistance or information to the enemies of the state; they should contribute their might for the defence of the city and bear their share of expenses of ware in case of any external aggression, and more significantly cooperate with the Islamic Nation in all matters of mutual interests.
3. All conflicts and disputes that could arise between Muslims and non-Muslims must be brought to the court of the Prophet and his verdict should be accepted by all without any grudge or ill will.
4. On condition of loyalty to the Islamic state and political submission to the holy Prophet, a guarantee of Allah, His Apostle and the Islamic Nation was provided to all the confederates for the safety and protection of their life, property and honour.
5. Several articles of the Constitution of Madinah, when read together, provide religious, social, economic and cultural freedom to the Ahl Al-Dhimmah who eventually were called as Dhimmis(23) in Islamic literature.

Incidentally the same terms and conditions were offered to all Arab pagans, tribes, clans or groups, or for that matter, individuals who preferred to come into the fold of Islamic state as confederates. (24)

Applying Better Methods

The Qur'an instructs its followers to apply always better methods in the mutual talks. Mere disputations are futile. In order to conclude an understanding and de-



velop mutual confidence Muslims should show their unbanity, kindness, sincerity, truth, civic attitude and genuine anxiety for the good of others, that they are not cranks or merely seeking selfish or questionable aims: And dispute ye not With the People of the Book, Except with means better (Than mere disputation). (25)

In this regard the Qur'an has laid down certain principles:

1. Muslims while preaching their religion should adhere with wisdom and discretion, meeting people on their own ground and convincing them with illustrations from their own knowledge and experience. Their propagation and conversation must be, not dogmatic, not self-regarding, not offensive, but gentle, considerate, and such as would attract their attention. Their manner and their arguments should not be acrimonious, but modelled on the most courteous and the most gracious example. The Qur'an says :

*Invite (all) to the Way
Of thy Lord with wisdom
And beautiful preaching;
And argue with them*

*In ways that are best
And most gracious:
For thy Lord knoweth best,
Who have strayed from His Path. (26)*

2. The dialogue must not aim at silencing the others by invalid arguments, or at scoring merely the points by weakening their deliberations; this must aim at understanding the reality and finding out the truth by sincere and serious discussions. Playing with words or raising vain controversies is not sanctioned in the Qur'an :

*We only send the apostles
To give glad tidings
And to give warnings:
But the Unbelievers dispute
With vain argument, in order
Therewith to weaken the truth,
And they treat My Signs
As a jest, as also the fact
That they are warned! (27)*

3. The Qur'an does not allow to use the abusing words against others' mythological perceptions, to hu-

miliate their gods or sacred personalities and to ridicule their religious rites, because they think in their self-obsession that their own ideas are right. God in His infinite compassion bears with them, and asks those who have purer ideas of faith not to vilify the weaknesses of their neighbors, lest the neighbors in their turn vilify the real truth and make matters even worse than before: “Revile not ye Those whom they call upon Besides God, lest They out of spite Revile God In their ignorance”.(28)

Danish Caricatures

Muslims had been restrained even in the blasphemous cartoon wars(29) when Jyllands Posten, the Danish newspaper reprinted the twelve cartoons of the noble Prophet of Islam – first published in its issue of September 30, 2005 – in January 2006 and the more upsetting point was the “solidarity” with the Denmark demonstrated by the newspapers across Europe (Norway, France, Italy, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Spain and B.B.C. London) through choosing its reprints on February 1, 2006. More provocation ensued in the form of a T-shirt carrying the Prophet’s caricature, worn by an Italian right-wing Minister. These caricatures drawn by 12 of 40 cartoonists were stupidly invited by the Danish newspaper to “draw Muhammad as they see him”.(30)

Muslim scholars all over the world appealed the Muslims to protest against these blasphemous caricatures but not to demonstrate any vulgar response to other faiths and cultures. Muslim Scholars, delivering the Friday sermon in Jami Mosques emphasized that Islam did educate his followers to save themselves from all types of abuse Plasphehy, to avoid degrade any person – dead or alive – any non-living thing even the animal or the time. They cited the following Islamic texts and ahadith in this regard: “Don’t abuse my companions!”(31) “Neither should one abuse the other nor degrade him!”(32) “Don’t abuse those dead, lest you offend against those alive!”(33) “Don’t abuse those dead, because they were to face with what they had performed!”(34) “Don’t abuse the fever since it replaces the sins of human beings!”(35) “Don’t abuse the wind since it is deputed by God!”(36) “Don’t abuse the age and time since God is (the Creator of the tie!”(37)

In this most sensitive issue Muslims all over the world had been too restrained. They did not use any derogatory words against the sacred personalities of other faiths because they were abided by the Quranic

teachings.

No Withdrawal

The holy Qur’an appreciates and encourages the inter-faith dialogue but warns its followers from any withdrawal or compromise. This must not aim at any appeasement or any interaction at the cost of the fundamental principles: “O ye who believe ! Take not for friends Unbelievers rather than Believers: do ye wish To offer God an open Proof against yourselves!”(38)

“Never will the Jews Or the Christians be satisfied With thee unless thou follow Their form of religion. Say: ‘The Guidance of God, - that Is the only Guidance”

Wert thou to follow their desires After the knowledge Which hath reached thee,

Then wouldst thou find Neither Protector nor Helper Against God”.(39)

Western Hegemony

Muslim scholars, who have been receptive to other faiths and cultures throughout the history, do realize the changing tactics of the neo-colonial west in which the military, political, economic and the cultural aspects assume equal importance. The objective of this neo-colonialism is not just to bring all the countries and nations under the political and military umbrella of only super power of the unipolar world, but also to impose on them a single value system, intellectually, economically, financially and culturally. The venture is intended to be a success through the use of all possible means of coercion as well as cooperation and conversation. The post 9/11 measures are part of the same broad-based strategy.

Joseph Nye, editor of US journal Foreign Policy has without any reservation laid bare this US strategy in his article. He says: “The nature of power in world politics is changing. Power is the ability to affect the outcome you want, and if necessary to change the behavior of others to make this happen.”(40)

Now the military and economic power, which Joseph Nye calls hard power, remain effective, there are other factors too that are now growingly playing the dominant role. Nye terms them as soft power.

“In this sense, it is just as important to set the agenda in world politics and attract others as it is to force them to change through the threat or use of military or economic weapons. This aspect of power getting others to do what you want I call soft power. Soft power rests on ability to set the political agenda in a way that

shapes the preference of others”.(41)

Andrea Lueg, a German orientalist, states clearly the western intellectuals’ position on their intolerance towards Islam itself. She says: “The west concentrates on Islam as a religion which is made to be responsible for countless political, cultural and social phenomenon in Islamic countries. And it is clearly Islam as a religion that generates such fear in western countries, a fear of religion that we thought we had banished from our enlightened societies”.(42)

Notes and References

1. *The Qur’an*, 34: 28.
2. See for example *The Qur’an*, Al-Baqarah: 21, 168; Al-Nisa’a: 1; Al-Aaraf: 158; Yunus : 23, 57; and Al-Hujurat: 13. The last verse is too meaningful in this respect. This is addressed to all mankind and not only to the Muslims, though it is understood that in a perfected world the two would be synonymous. As it is, mankind is descended from one pair of parents. Their tribes, races and nations are convenient labels by which we may know certain differing characteristics. Before God they are all one, and he gets more honour who is most righteous.
3. Al-Kindi, popularly known as *Faylasuf Al-Arab* in earlier writings of Muslims, because the philosophical studies in the second/eighth century before him were in the hands of Christian Syriacs, who were primarily physicians. They started, through encouragement by the caliphs, to translate Greek writings into Arabic. Al-Kindi’s father, Ishaq bin al-Sabbah was governor of Kufah during the reign of the Abbasid caliphs Al-Mahdi and Al-Rashid. Al-Kindi learnt the Qur’an by heart, the Arabic grammar, literature, and elementary arithmetic. He then studied fiqh and kalam. He also learnt Greek and then mastered the syriac language from which he translated several works. He also revised some of the Arabic translations such as Al-Himsi’s translation of Plotinus’ *Enneads*, which passed to the Arabs as one of the writings of Aristotle. In Baghdad he was associated with Al-Mamun, Al-Mutasim and the Latter’s son Ahmad. He was nominated tutor of Ahmad bin Al-Mutasim, to whom he dedicated some of his important writings. He flourished also under the reign of Al-Mutawakkil. His notoriety for avarice was equal to his fame for knowledge. This bad reputé was due to Al-Jahiz’s caricature of him in his *Kitab Al-Bukhala*. He, however lived a luxurious life in a house, in the garden of which he bred many curious animals. It seems that he lived aloof from society, even from his neighbours. See, Ahmad Fouad Al-Ehwany’s article *Al-Kindi*, in : Sharif, M.M. (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. I, Delhi, Low Price Publications, 1989, pp. 421-422.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 423-424.
5. Gibbon, Edward, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire – An Abridgement*, by D.M. Low, London, 1960, p. 665.
6. Toynbee, Arnold (1889-1975) English historian whose 12-volume *A Study of History* (1934-61) put forward a philosophy of history, based on an analysis of the cyclical development and decline of civilizations, that provoked much discussion. He was a nephew of the economist Arnold Toynbee. He was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, and studied briefly at the British School at Athens. In 1912 he became a tutor and fellow in ancient history at Balliol College, and in 1915 he began working for the intelligence department of the British Foreign Office. After serving as a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 he was appointed professor of Byzantine and modern Greek studies at the University of London. From 1921 to 1922 he was the Manchester Guardian correspondent during the Greco-Turkish war, that experience that resulted in the publication of *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* (1922). In 1925 he became research professor of international history at the London School of Economics and director of studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. He also served as director of foreign research of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (1939-43) and director of the research department of the Foreign Office (1943-46); he also retained his position at the London School of Economics until his retirement in 1956. His other works include *Civilization on Trial* (1948), *East to West: A Journey Round the World* (1958), and *Hellenism: The History of Civilization*. See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. II, p. 880.
7. Toynbee, Arnold, *Civilization on Trial*, Oxford, 1984, p. 185.
8. Hitti, Philip Khuri (1886-1978), was considered a leading authority in the United States on Arabic and Islamic culture and was one of the first persons in any American University to appreciate and promote the importance of Arab world in that

- century. He retired in 1954 after 28 years' service as a member of the University's faculty. Hitti, B.A., Ph.D.; American orientalist; born at Shimon, Lebanon; educated at the American University of Beirut, and the Columbia University; Lecturer, Oriental Department, Columbia University (1915-1919); Assistant Professor of Semitic Literature, Princeton University (1926-1929); Associate Professor (1929-1936); Chairman, Department of Oriental Language (1944); Director, Programme in Near Eastern Studies (1947-1954); member, American Oriental Society; American Historical Association; Hony. Litt. D. (Princeton) 1966, Hony. L.H.D. (American University of Beirut, 1969). His publications include: *The Origin of the Islamic State* (1916); *The Semitic Languages spoken in Syria and Lebanon* (1922); *The Syrians in America* (1924); *Characteristics of Moslem Sects* (1924); *Syria and the Syrians* (1926); *Usama bin Munqidh : An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades* (1929); *The Origins of the Druze People and Religion* (1929); *Kitab Al-I'tibar li Usamah* (1930-1964); *History of the Arabs* (1937); *The Arabs* (1943-44); *History of Syria, including Lebanon and Palestine* (1951-1957); *Lebanon in History* (1957); *Syria: A Short History* (1959); *The Near East in History* (1961); *Islam and the West* (1962); *Short History of Lebanon* (1965); *Short History of the Near East* (1966); *A Short History of Syria* (1967); *Makers of Arab History* (1968); *Islam – A Way of Life* (1970); and *Capital Cities of Arab Islam* (1973).
9. Hitti, Philip K., *History of Arabs*, London, 1937, p. 557.
 10. Kiddler, Rushworth, *An Agenda for the 21st Century*, Cambridge, MIT Press, Mass. and London, 1988, p. 193.
 11. McNamara, in : Kiddler, Rushworth, *Reinventing the Future*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1989, pp. 73-74.
 12. Kiddler, Rushworth, *An Agenda for the 21st Century*, op.cit., p. 201.
 13. Asad, Muhammad, *Islam at the Crossroads*, Lahore, Arafat Publications, 1955, pp. 57-58.
 14. The Qur'an, 4: 135.
 15. The Qur'an, 5: 51.
 16. The Qur'an, 10: 99.
 17. The Qur'an, 2 : 256.
 18. The Qur'an, 109: 1-6.
 19. Al-Attas, S.M. Al-Naquib, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur, 1978, p. 61.
 20. Jassas, Abu Bakr, *Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, Egypt, p. 44.
 21. The Qur'an, 3: 64.
 22. The Qur'an, 5: 5.
 23. *Ahl Al-dhimmah or dhimmi* (the people in protection), an Islamic term that signifies the non-Muslim citizen of an Islamic state who is granted full protection and citizenship rights and is exempted from military duties in case he agrees to pay the jizyah to the state, and will be relaxed to pay the same if he joins the military services.
 24. For a detailed analysis of the constitution of Madinah and its socio-political implications see Siddiqui, M.Y. Mazhar, *Organization of Government Under the Prophet*, Delhi, Idarah Adabiyat, 1987, pp. 9-15.
 25. The Qur'an, 29: 46.
 26. The Qur'an, 16: 125.
 27. The Qur'an, 18: 56.
 28. The Qur'an, 6: 108.
 29. For an analysis of the entire western movement of supporting the Danish Cartoons on the name of freedom of press and freedom of conscience and projecting it in the clash of civilizations perspective see Fahad, Obaidullah, *Understanding Moderate Islam*, N. Delhi, Jnanada Prakashan, 2009, Chapter 4: Caricaturing the Noble Prophet: The Restrained Backlash, p. 96-142.
 30. *The Hindu*, February 13, 2006.
 31. Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, *Muslim*, Al-Sahih, vol. 4, p. 1967.
 32. Hadith narrated by Abu Jarir, Tibrani, *Al-M'ujam Al-Kabeer*, vol. 7, p.65.
 33. Hadith narrated by Mugheerah bin Sh'ubah, Ibn Hibban, Al-Sahih, vol. 7, p. 292.
 34. Hadith narrated by Aishah, Ibn Hibban, Al-Sahih, vol. 7, p. 291.
 35. Hadith narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah, *Al-Bayhaqi*, *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra*, vol. 3, p. 377.
 36. Hadith narrated by Ubai Ibn Kab, Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 298.
 37. Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, Muslim, al-Sahih, vol. 4, p. 1763.
 38. *The Qur'an*, 4: 144.
 39. *The Qur'an*, 2: 120.
 40. Leonard, Mark (ed.) *Reordering the World: The Long Term Implications of 11 September*, Forward by Tony Blair, Foreign Policy, London, 2002.
 41. *Ibid.*
 42. *Ibid.*

FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AND WEALTH MANAGEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF HIGHER OBJECTIVES OF SHARI'AH

Dr. Qais bin Mohammed Al-Mubarak

The wisdom of Almighty Allah intended the human life to be on earth with a need of interpersonal relationships within their surroundings and cultures and beyond for earning their livelihood. In order to foster a culture of cultivation of earth, accumulation of wealth and digging out of valuable minerals, Allah granted for people the right of ownership. Likewise, people carry out trans-

actions and exchange of properties thereby they benefit each other in their routines. The transaction sometimes take place without compensation in lieu like gifts and presents and at other times it is performed for compensation that refers to trade including sale and leasing. Trade is the activity or process of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services.



Governing the human conduct and social interaction with classic principles, the Shari'ah not only allows trading and doing business but also promoted the efforts thereof. As a result, the high figures from the companion of Prophets involved in trades and strived to business success. Islam commands and encourages being the working people and considers the work as high virtue. In addition, the scholars denounce to nature of sitting idle without any actions for growth and success and end up in begging by impairing the human honour and shattering one's personality.

Instead of sinking in committing bad innovations and plunging to the doom, any human being has to give weight to the rules and regulations set by the Shari'ah for the trades to get rid of unlawful transactions and stay from usury-based businesses. The basic law for all transactions is legal whereas prohibition is charged only if it goes against the Shari'ah principles. If the trade consists of forgery or deliberate creation of losses to others or any factor that leads to the disputes among people, thus to culminate in deceiving trade, the Shari'ah forbids to be part of that trade. So, people need to be precautionary to carry out the transactions only in Shari'ah-compliant methods that are built on fair circulation, flourishing with one's properties and social benefits out of its growth and outcomes. The higher objectives of Shari'ah (*maqāṣid Al-Shari'ah*) are explained as the philosophy of Islamic law, its outlook and goals at large that cast light on ultimate secrets behind the various Islamic legal interpretations. The effective application of *maqāṣid* will enable society to make great difference with robust and efficient wealth management. Islam accentuated achievement four objectives in determining the transactions and exchanges of their properties; below are the objectives:

1. Durability and Stability (*thabāt*).
2. Marketability and Distribution of Wealth (*rawāj*).
3. Transparency (*wuḍūh*).
4. Justice and Equity (*'adl*).

DURABILITY AND STABILITY (THABĀT)

Durability and stability are among the primary objectives in the financial transactions, which are obtained by stability of wealth and property in the hands of owners by protecting their ownership thereby the owners do not fear of loss or its

transfer to other without a valid contract or right. As part of giving weight to the stability, Islam approved the validity of ownership of matters carried out in jahiliyyah. Regarding this approval, Abu Al-Waleed Al-

Baji noted that approval of the contracts concluded in jahiliyyah meant to facilitate continuation of sales and marriage contracts carried out in that period though they were invalid, thus to legalize their ownerships.

For the reason of durability and stability, Islam posited the willingness and consent as the cornerstones of any valid contracts. Allah says: "*O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent*" (Al-Nisa'a: 29).

For the achievement of durability, Islam stipulated the fulfillment of contracts as obligatory obligation. Allah says, "*O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts.*" (Al-Maidah: 1). This verse is deemed as foundation of several legal rulings and inclusive of many issues. The contracts become binding by the wordings; if a person says "I sold" and other replies "I bought", the contract is valid and binding. Likewise, the contracting parties have option to dissolve the contract before they disperse from the spot of contract. The Islamic law demands the parties to meet the conditions of the contract, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said "Muslim are with (i.e. are bound to fulfill) conditions". The hadith above emphasizes that the candidness and magnitude of faith of Muslim is evident in his fulfillment of conditions. For the achievement of stability, Islam gives freedom for the owners to use their possessions and prohibits ignorance, uncertainty.

MARKETABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH (RAWĀJ)

One of primary objectives in the wealth is its fair circulation in the hands of people and its availability with an easy access as far as possible. This objective is achieved by promotion of marketability and prohibition of hoarding or exclusive occupation over the wealth; rather healthy competitions in financial activities thereby to flourishing the opportunities are welcomed.

The reason behind some of the prohibited transactions in Islam is its obstacles in the marketability whereas Islam shows keen concern in removing the obstacles in fair financial initiatives and its circulation. Prophet (peace be upon him) denounces: "No one hoards but one who is in error", it is because the hoarder poses the threats to whole society at large by ruining their routines as well as markets. The prohibition of hoarding is issued due to high concern of the Shari'ah for public good.

For facilitating marketability, Islam promotes the trade and markets that make the products and services easily obtainable. The Qur'an uses the phrase "seek-

ing of Allah's bounties" for doing business for "profit" and mentions trade together with fighting for Allah's cause with a message of its importance in the sight of the Shari'ah: "and others who will go about the land in search of God's bounty, and others who will fight in God's cause" (Al-Muzammil: 20).

Islam prohibits the 'exploitative commercial arbitrage' (*Talaqqi Al-Rukban*) in which a city-dweller purchases goods from a Bedouin (desert-dweller) at cheaper price before the latter gets into the market. It is an illegal practice because the public suffers from it given they are forced buy the goods at expensive prices due to the above-mentioned illegal arbitrage. 'Abdullah bin 'Omar said: "We were practicing Talaqqi Al-Rukban and buy food from them, then the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited doing it until we reach to food of market". Before the advent of Islam, black market was quite common, but Islam prohibited it given it comprises monopolistic collusion, manipulative trade and exploitative acts.

Likewise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited sale of city-dweller to Bedouin because the latter was largely exploited due to unawareness and ignorance about the market price. The famous jurist Yahya bin Omar (d. 289 AH): "In my view, owner in market should ask the Bedouins, when they come with food, to not conclude sale in hotels and motels. They have to take them to markets of Muslims". Hoarding causes price-hike and inflicts harm on people. The jurists are in consensus that if people are in trouble and one person hoards all food, then they can force the hoarder to sell his goods. The unavailability of stocks in market will raise the demand of people thus the hoarder makes sales with higher price, exploiting the needy situation of people. Omar bin Al-Khattab said: "Someone who brings imported goods through great fatigue to himself in the summer and winter, such a person is the guest of Omar. Let him sell what Allah wills and keep what Allah wills." This statement shows his appreciation for the efforts and hard work done by importers to make the goods reach to people who are in need of it.

However, some compromises may happen in some rulings with non-citizens by reducing the fees and levies in order to remove the trade obstacles. To put the properties stagnant without using or utilizing is also reprehensible; one of the wisdoms in zakat is to propel to use the property. Caliph Omar said: "Trade with the property of orphans and then it will not be eroded by zakat." Imam Malik said that our predecessors found the prevention of trade as defect and huge fraud. At the

heart of fair marketability, the traders can enhance their opportunities and people can benefit with reasonable price.

TRANSPARENCY (*WUḌŪH*)

Transparency, which is meant to avoid harm and disputes as much as possible, constitutes one of higher objectives in wealth management and financial transactions. In order to achieve this goal, the Shari'ah stipulates the documentation, pledges and witnesses as part of transaction. The documentation occupies a dominant position in the exercise of Islamic finance. The famous scholar Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin 'Abdulsalam Al-Hawwari (d. 749 AH) underlined: "Documentation studies has significant position and vital role for it regulates people's matters in conformity with the Shari'ah rules and preserves their blood and wealth in line with applicable standards".

The holy Qur'an underscores the importance of documentation: "*O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down*" (Al-Baqarah: 282). This verse sheds light on the concern of Shari'ah in documentation in transaction for the protection of the individuals' properties. The Qur'an's style is of shortest expression that carries the widest meanings, thus the debts is not used for excluding other contracts but all other transactions are incorporated in the injunction mentioned above. Al-Hafiz bin Al-Arabi derived more than 50 legal rules in the light of the above verse, that is the fact which shows the inimitability of Al-Qur'an (i'jaz Al-Qur'an). For referring to debt, the Qur'an used the word "al-tadāyn" (dealings based on debt) that is more comprehensive to comprise of debt and other form of sale than "al-qard" (to give loan). One form of trade involving debt is that successful trader sometimes needs to give debt as part of making of bigger transactions. The contracts of trades that involve the debt are built upon the lenient approaches and kindness where sometimes people are reluctant of doing documentation out of shyness. Howbeit, this shyness is reprehensible and unwelcome.

Therefore, if the documentation is needed in the contracts of debts, then it is more crucial in all other sales and financial transactions. The injunction of Qur'an for the documentation meant to be an instrument to remember the agreements when date is due, which will be also usable to get rid of disagreements and disputes that come out of forgetfulness and negligence. In the documents, the contracting parties must scribe all relevant specifications in order to regulate the wordings, state-

ments and conditions of contract; these details sometimes become important for judge to issue a sentence if the parties disagree each other later. Allah emphasizes in verse “And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice” (Al-Baqarah: 282) that the contracting parties have to choose a scribe who is religious, knowledgeable of rulings and prudent in actions. By doing so, the contract becomes free from all factors that are capable to make invalid. This verse encourages the scribe to offer his work of writing with due care and sometimes his duty becomes obligatory. The scribes have to use the words and statements that are clear and free from causing disputes in future. Therefore, the scribes must have knowledge of the terms of contract. Imam Malik said, “The agreements must be written by a knowledgeable person who is pious and trustworthy.”

As much as people adhere to the teaching of Shari’ah, they keep themselves away from the reasons of dispute and disagreements. In addition, it increases in them God’s consciousness and protect them from mischiefs and corruption. In the verse of debt (al-Baqarah: 282), Allah warns, “For if you do so, indeed, it is [grave] disobedience in you. And fear Allah”. In the verse, Allah uses the word “*fisq*” (disobedience) that linguistically refers to ‘going out of agreement’ and technically means ‘to violate the boundaries set by Allah’.

JUSTICE AND EQUITY (‘ADL)

The justice in wealth is achieved by facilitating acquisition of wealth and property in trust-worthy and considerable methods excluding all the rooms of cheating, contractual ambiguities and oppression. The spreading of equity and justice among people is of the basic objectives of Shari’ah. Allah says, “*We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice*” (Al-Hadid: 25). Justice in financial transaction requires that the dealings must be carried out in transparency and in line with market standards in exchange and transfers. It leads to smooth-running of business and growth of markets with healthy competition. The principle of justice demands the people to avoid the transactions that are ambiguous and uncertain. In the case of ambiguity, the parties of contract remain unaware of the procedures and unable to make an informed decision. The dealings comprised of deception and cheating (*tadlis*) are against the concept of justice. In the discussions of financial transactions, *tadlis* means ‘dealing in that the seller conceals the defects of object for deceiving the buyer’.

Allah says: “*That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance*” (Al-Rahman: 8-9). “*Woe to those who give short weight, who, when they take by measure from others, take it fully, and when they measure or weigh for them, they give them less than what is due. Do they not think that they will be raised up again on a Great Day?*” (Al-Mutaffifeen: 1-4).

The above verse refers to prevalent evil practices in commercial dealings. It relates that people who deal fraud in measuring and weighing must remember the day of hereafter in which they will be questioned for their actions. Allah says “*And Give full measure and weight in justice, we do not charge anything except its capacity*” (Al-An’am: 153). Ibn Ashur denoted that the justice in that is emphasized by the prohibition of fraud dealings as it is obvious in the statement of Prophet Shu’ayb: “*And do not decrease from the measure and the scale*” (Hud: 84). These verses shed light on the fact that all the dealing should be fulfilling the due amount in terms of weighing and measurement that is commensurate to the justice in the particular situation and should not be decreasing from the mentioned amount.

The transfer of wealth takes place in three forms:

1. Compensation of work or property.
2. Charity or contributions.
3. Inheritance

CONCLUSION

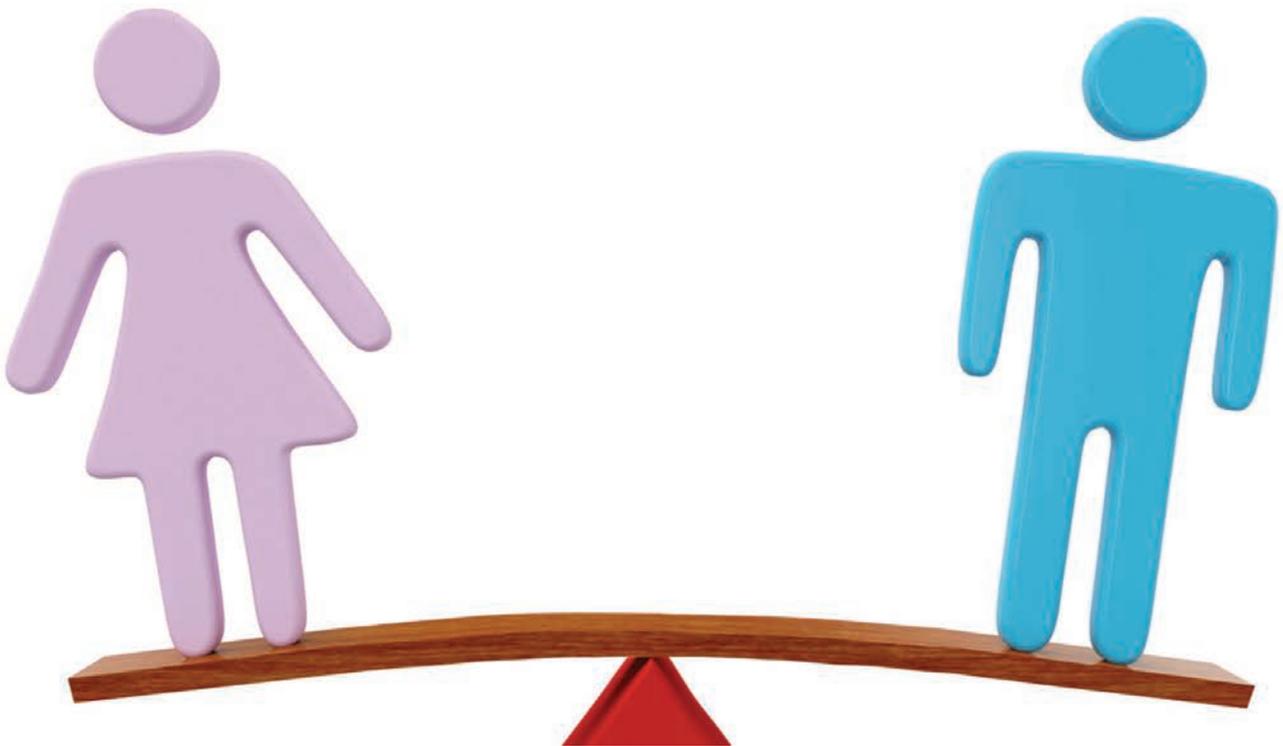
Islam as comprehensive way of life embraces all dimensions of life with its own unique guidelines and principles that govern the human life along with definite and higher objectives behind each action and order. From the basic sources of Shari’ah i.e. the Qur’an and Sunnah, the erudite scholars tried to proffer the minutia of social and interpersonal relationships of an individual as well as the relationship with Allah. One of the primary objectives of Shari’ah is the preservation of wealth (*hifz Al-māl*) and the Islamic law is replete of the instructions to make the transactions and exchange of wealth and property in a healthy and fair ways. For the excellent wealth management and fair financial interactions, people have to make sure mainly four factors that are stability, marketability, transparency and justice.

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RETHINKING THE QIWAMAHA: A QUR'ANIC-CENTRIC EVALUATION OF MODERN WOMEN EXEGETES' PERSPECTIVES

Mohamed Saleck Mohamed Val

On Rethinking the Qur'an I have always been intrigued by the quasi-dichotomous relation the Moroccan scholar Muhammad Abd Al-Jabiri (1982) sets between Al-Aql and Al-Fiqr. In fact, Al-Jabiri's distinction opens wide the doors before serious and audacious revisions of the Muslim scholarly heritage—more adequately Al-Fiqr Al-Islami—not in light of the other part of the dichotomy—Al-Aql al-Islami that Al-Jabiri himself critiques, but rather in light of what one could effectively call Al-Aql Al-Qur'ani. The powerful nature of Al-Aql al-Qur'ani lies in its unceasing stimulating force that allowed and still allows for the generation of meaning in different times and for various socio-cultural, political and economic contexts.



This paper argues that the Qur’anic-centric perception (Al-Aql Al-Qur’ani) would never cease to allow for the socio-cultural recontextualization of controversial notions such as *Qiwamah*, a recontextualization that would permit us to measure and judge the extent to which a particular community has come to comprehend the Qur’anic *weltanschauung* or worldview. No doubt, the Islamic interpretive corpus could be seen—in light of the aforementioned division given by Al-Jabiri—as expressing a specific mode not only of Al-Fiqr Al-Islami—which definitely includes these interpretive conclusions, but also of Al-Aql Al-Islami—that is the complex ‘rational’ stimulating mechanisms by which Al-Fiqr is generated. The latter stance has also been succinctly described by the eminent scholar Muhammad Arkoun, who did not only embark on a serious and arduous epistemological project that questioned the “traditional scholastic interpretive corpus”, but also and more significantly, revealed the need for a more profound challenge that inquires into the methods by which the aforementioned corpus is formulated. (Arkoun, 2002, p. 148).

Undeniably, any modern attempt at rethinking the Qur’an should never gloss over the traditional methods by which its meaning had been determined. This is not to say that, the modern exegete should literally stick to all the “orthodox” traditional and modern conservative interpretive renderings, but it essentially draws attention to reconsidering the text in light of the exegetical corpus that accompanied it throughout its historical trajectory. Unfortunately, it is often at this stage of Qur’anic examination, or in the words of Fazlur Rahman Malik, of “the historical journey” into the Qur’an, that many interpreters would either fail to get a round ticket to-and-back from tradition, or get stuck at the airport of a short-sighted modern Qur’anist position that does not consider these traditions at all.

Actually, the majority of the modern interpreters often fall short of accomplishing what Rahman calls “the double-movement” while approaching the sacred text. Rahman states in the introduction to his invaluable book, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 1982 that, “the process of interpretation proposed here consists of a double movement, from the present situation to Qur’anic times, then back to the present.” (p. 5). But why this double movement suggested by Rahman is important for interpreting the text? And what are the

methodological risks of failing to consider it by both the traditional and modernist interpretive communities?

The dilemma of Qur’anic interpretation throughout Islamic history had always been concentrated in the complex and extremely vital disagreements between Al-Aql and Al-Naql. Certainly, any exegetical attempt that runs against what is ‘consensually’ perceived as traditions transmitted from the Prophet Muhammad or his early companions and their successors would inevitably be consigned to oblivion in the mainstream Muslim circles and hence would lack the authoritativeness which is part and parcel of the success of any new intra-Islamic Ijtihadist endeavor. But, a thorny problem that immediately emerges with the Naqli approach to the Qur’an is its, sometimes, illogical negation of the differing and evolving socio-cultural and historical contexts. It is in the aforementioned sense that Fazlur Rahman maintains: “the Qur’an is the divine response, through the Prophet’s mind, to the moral-social situation of the Prophet’s Arabia, particularly, the problems of the Meccan society of his day.” It is with this clarification by Rahman that one could argue that any sound understanding of the socio-historical evolution of human societies in general and Muslim societies in particular along with the fathoming of the universal nature of Qur’anic injunctions, would necessarily demand the realization of the nuanced epistemological relation, not only between Al-Fiqr and al-Aql Al-Islami, but also between these two and Al-Aql Al-Qur’ani.

Unfortunately, the above articulations of Rahman had often been mistaken as entailing “a desacralization of the Qur’an”; turning it into an historical document with little validity or convenience to today’s realities. In fact, a thorough look into the work of Rahman would give the modern interpreter a deeper understanding of this eminent scholar’s project and the dire need to reconsider it by both conservative and modernist exegetes. The challenging claims of Rahman have resonated in the work of great Muslim thinkers such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Hasan Hanafi who had an extremely important contribution to what I would call the new Qur’anic-reasoned involvement with the sacred text and the implementation of its injunctions in modern day Muslim and global societies.

In his seminal book: *Mafhum Al-Nass*, for example, Abu Zayd laid the case for a new hermeneuti-



cal approach to the Qur'an that, for him, would allow for a pluralistic and universalist understanding of the text. But the interesting part in the claims of Abu Zayd was not only this emphasis on the accommodating the text with the contemporary reality of Muslims, but also on uncovering the Qur'anic dynamics that provided the appropriate atmosphere for the flourishing of various readings within Al-Turath Al-Islami. Abu Zayd asserts:

It is in the above sense that the Jabirian epistemological divisions we started with could be clearly realized. No doubt, it was only the Qur'anic-reasoned approach that had allowed for all these diverse context-based interpretations of its injunctions. Hasan Hanafi also comes to emphasize the above conclusions of Abu Zayd by declaring:

Hanafi's position highlights the generating power of the "the primary sources" that had often permitted the formulation of new thoughts in line with the evolving socio-cultural, political and economic circumstances. But for Hanafi, as well as for the majority of Muslim scholars who laid emphasis on the generating mechanisms of *Al-Aql Al-Qur'ani*, the major methodological and institutional impediment

to their work lied in the mainstream suspicion and rejection of these "alien" hermeneutical and historical perspectives. It was this "dogmatic enclosure", in the words of Muhammad Arkoun that led to what Al-Jabiri labels "the resignation of reason" in Islamic societies.

The Trap of "Methodolatriy"

In spite of the fact that the concept "Methodolatriy" was first coined and subversively deployed by the American feminist theologian Mary Daly to critique the traditional patristic Biblical commentaries, still I see that this seditious anti-methodological mechanism should necessarily be brought to the debate over what constitutes an authoritative Qur'anic interpretation.

What particular methods have to be adopted regarding exegesis? What is the Qur'anic stance on Methodolatriy? And more importantly, how could we identify the methodolaters in Islam?

Mary Daly laid out her feminist arguments against the traditional biblical exegeses by embarking on a vehement attack not only against the interpretations of the early church fathers, but also by critiqu-

ing the very epistemological mechanisms by which that interpretive corpus was generated. Having been excluded for a long time from the process of the formulation of religious thought, women, claimed Daly, have not only become subject to the androcentric formations of men, but also they themselves, by dealing with the sacred text had had to take a priori the methodological routes and trajectories set by the male custodians of the faith. She cogently declares:

The tyranny of methodolatry hinders new discoveries. It prevents us from raising questions never asked before and from being illumined by ideas that do not fit into pre-established boxes and forms. The worshipers of method have an effective way of handling data that does not fit into the Respectable of Questions and Answers. They simply classify it as nondata, thereby rendering it invisible. (Daly, 1985, p. 11)

As a believer in the openness of the Qur'an and its recurrent emphasis on contemplation and personal reflection, I see in the critical views of Daly a surprising compliance with the Qur'anic perception that does not only urge the faithful to question the traditions in light of the divine word, but also pushed the early community of the prophet to rebel against and condemn tradition-based religious commitments. The Qur'an says, condemning the responses of the idolaters in the Meccan community: "Nay, they say: We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we do guide ourselves by following their footsteps." (Al-Zukhruf 22). See also (Al-Baqarah, 170), (Al-Maida 104), and (Luqman 21).

Unquestionably, this Qur'anic stress on the danger of unreasonable Taqlid illustrates the degree to which the exegetical articulations of the traditionalists may end up with the blind reiterations that Daly labels "methodolatry." The Algerian scholar Mohamed Arkoun had been cognizant of the restricting apparatuses of methodolatry within the "orthodox" traditional Islamic circles. Trying to draw attention to the peril of the discourse of scholarly dogmatism and its connection to the fixture of some outmoded traditional injunctions, Arkoun asserts that the modern interpreter needs to venture into the realm of the unthought in Islamic thought.

The latter is a serious epistemological endeavor that "requires analysis of the way in which discourses are integrated within the logocentric and dogmatic enclosure, and thus the modalities of how reason was put into the service of religious truth and used in

order to consolidate the monopoly of interpretation held by the representatives and supporters of orthodoxy." (Arkoun in Gunther 2006, p. 133).

It was with those new hermeneutical and historical approaches propagated by Islamic scholars like Fazlur Rahman, Arkoun, Abu Zayd, Hanafi, and various others of the modernist trend that some modern women started to rethink the traditional exegetical corpus. Modern Islamic feminists such as Asma Barlas and Amina Wadud who had recently been engaged in an arduous project of de-patriarchalizing the sacred text provide an ample case in point of the modernist interpretation that denounces the traditions in favor of a contextualist reading of the Qur'an. But again, the negation of the efforts of these women and the prevalent suspicion towards their modernist interpretations raises the questions of who decides what is an authoritative exegesis and what are the mechanisms used for the exclusion of these new readings from the mainstream Islamic circles. In response to the latter inquiries Barlas claims that traditional religious scholars who were basically men:

Have in the name of tradition-in the singular and with a capital T-rejected new readings of the Qur'an, especially by women, both because such readings unsettle the meanings ascribed to the text by male exegetes and because in doing so, women's readings also pose a threat to men's traditional roles as interpreters of religious knowledge. In this way, conservatives can dismiss women's interpretations without even having read them. (Barlas, 2004, p. 144)

Clearly, the above statement of Barlas is an indication of the problematic nature of the emergent feminist hermeneutical approach towards the traditional Muslim interpretive heritage. Not only do these conclusions of Barlas reveal the degree to which the conservative discourse had dominated the Islamic mainstream exegetical domain, but also expose the enormously powerful methodolatrical exclusionary mechanisms that would render any 'innovative' interpretive articulations void and useless. A more voiced Muslim feminist scholar was Amina Wadud whose views had been subjected to similar rejection by the majority of Muslims. Wadud (2006) also declares:

As a Muslim woman struggling for gender justice in Islam, I have not only been accused of working from outside Islam doing whatever I want, but also rejected as anti-Islamic... For any who wish to be



accepted as truly Muslim, their struggles cannot go beyond established patriarchy or male authorities, otherwise they face the potential consequence of being labeled outsiders to Islam.

Many sincere women and men accept the choice to stay in Islam as authoritatively defined by Muslim neo-conservative specialists... or simply choose silence. (pp. 4-5)

It is against the above complaints of feminist interpreters like Wadud and Barlas that I will endeavor to measure the exegetical views of two modern “canonical” women exegetes whose interpretations have recently been approved and hailed by the mainstream Islamic religious structures. Throughout analyzing these latter’s stance on the controversial concept of *Qiwamah*, the modern reader will be enabled to see the degree to which these Muslim women have set themselves towards the traditional exegetical heritage not only in light of the contemporary realities, but also with regards to the new critical interpretive

approaches to the Qur’an.

Rethinking *Qiwamah* in Modern Women’s Exegeses

In the years 2008 and 2010 respectively, the work of Fawkiyah Sherbini and Kariman Hamzah had been hailed by Al-Azhar—a prominent Islamic religious educational institution, as an important female contribution to the highly regarded domain of Qur’anic exegesis. I first came across the exegesis of Sherbini entitled: *Taysir Al-Tafsir* when I was embarking on an exploratory journey that included Mauritania, Morocco and Egypt in search for women exegetes of the Qur’an.

This invaluable female interpretive addition was seen by many in the majority Muslim countries as a legitimate endeavor at Qur’anic exegesis which should set a model for Muslim women scholars who intend to get involved in the domain.

The fact that Sherbini was an Azhari educated disci-

ple of Sheikh Muhammadd Mutawalli Al-Sha'raawi has also played an important role in the prevalent appreciation of her work. The following is a cursory reading into this exegete's perspective on the debatable concept of *Qiwamah*.

The notion of *Qiwamah* in the Qur'an has recently been the focus of a heated debate in the Islamic scholarly arena. The Qur'anic verse on *Qiwamah* is found in Surat Al-Nisa'a where it states:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because ALLAH has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what ALLAH would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, and (last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): for ALLAH is Most High, Great (above you all). (Ali, 2007, p. 114)

Historically, the classical and modern conservative interpretations of the above verse had often portrayed *Qiwamah* as entailing men's *Riyasa* and *Wilaya* over women because of the latter's deficiency in intellect, morality and physical strength. The majority of early exegetes such as Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Al-Razi, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Zamakhshari and numerous others have linked the verse of *Qiwamah* in Surat Al-Nisa to the implications of the *darajah* in verse 228 of Surat Al-Baqarah which says: "And women have shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have degree (of advantage) over them. And ALLAH is exalted in power wise." (Q: Ali, 2007, p. 49).

The degree of advantage shown in the ayah above was seen by women such as Wadud and Barlas as exclusively restricted to the husband's right to initiate divorce.

Wadud (1999), for example argues that "the context of the discussion is clearly with regard to divorce. In the Qur'an the advantage men have is that of being able to pronounce divorce against their wives without arbitration or assistance.

Divorce is granted to a woman, on the other hand, only after intervention of an authority (for example, a judge)." No doubt, this interpretation by Wadud had glossed over a vast exegetical corpus that associates the degree of advantage with male-guardianship and control over women.

Wadud's reading, similar to that various modernists, has also laid emphasis on the need for a contextual understanding of the verse that would not only link it to the modern day realities of women, but also to the limitations of historical conventions that are relative to time and place.

Commenting on the above verse of *Qiwamah*, Sherbini states in *Taysir Al-Tafsir*:

At the surface, this verse seems to convey a privilege of man over woman, but a deeper reflection would rather show that this privilege is for women. A man whether he is a husband, a father or a brother should have this responsibility of *Qiwama* towards these women. But, *Qiwama* is an extremely arduous responsibility that puts man in charge of the family's provision, peace, chastity and security. So, here comes the privilege of men because they have been naturally endowed with much physical power that could allow them to pursue the hardships of work and the maintenance of the family. "Then we said: O Adam! Verily, this is an enemy to thee and thy wife: so let him not get you out of the Garden, so that thou art landed in misery (*Tashqa* meant to Adam only)." (Taha: 117).

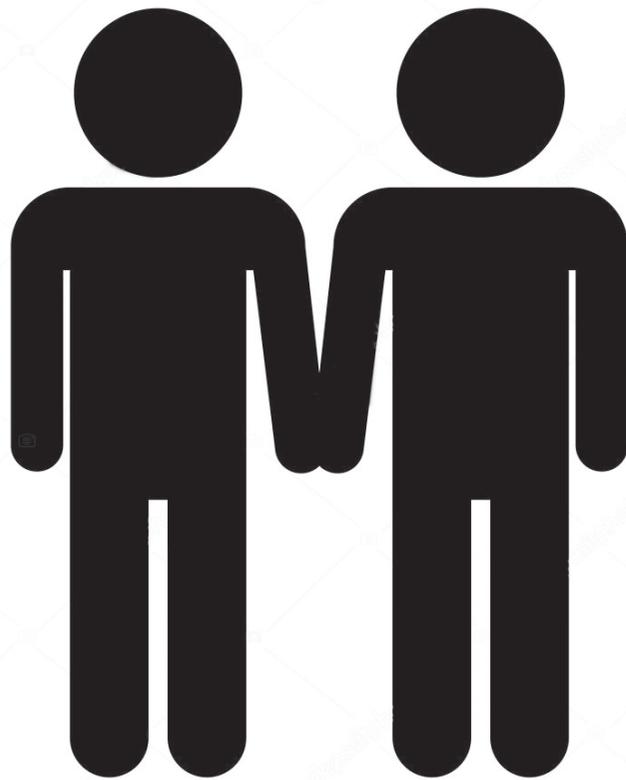
Women's privilege then emanates from their being dwellings of tenderness and love for men. (Sherbini, 2008, vol.1, p. 264, My Translation)

Not far from traditional perspective that had often associated *Qiwamah* with the *darajah* found in Q: 2: 228, Sherbini continues to affirm:

This *darajah* is one of protection, guardianship, care, instruction and leadership. But it should be taken as a responsibility for an appropriate regulation of the family affairs. It should never mean that the husband is superior to the wife or that he could oppress her. Indeed within the family, there are areas wherein the man rules and also there are domains at which the woman excels; each according to his or her capabilities and competence.

A man's *Qiwama* then is through working for the provision for the family, while the woman has many different other responsibilities. None of them is better than the other, but they live a life of complementarity and solidarity. (Sherbini, 2008, vol.1, p. 128, My Translation)

Now, despite the fact that the above commentaries of Sherbini have positively laid emphasis on the "responsibility" element of *Qiwamah*, this exegete's articulations seem to comply with the traditional perceptions of womanhood.



Undoubtedly, these opinions of Sherbini would be seen by feminists like Wadud and Barlas as a negative institutionalization of patriarchy by female agents.

For Wadud, Sherbini's stance could be easily categorized as one of methodolatry. She states:

This is evident in the empty articulations combined with simultaneously rendering selected female scholars and activists as tokens for public window-dressing and by limiting other women. Therefore, women must either cater to masculine standards of evaluation as either facilitators or be castigated as adversaries. (Wadud, 2006, p. 190)

But, contrary to the views of women like Barlas and Wadud which had been automatically pushed to the periphery of the mainstream debate over the rights of women in Islam, I see in the work of Sherbini a more subtle and subversive feminist element that endeavors to incur change from an intra-Islamic position. Still, this canonical exegete's negligence of the contextual reading of *Qiwamah* that would see the concept from a Qur'ano-reasoned perspective along with her reliance on the traditional context-bound interpretive corpus, all these actually raise some serious questions concerning the applicability

of her exegetical views to the modern day realities of Muslim women.

The exegesis of Kariman Hamzah entitled: *Allu'lu wa Al-Marjan fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, on the other hand, came to see light in 2010. Hamzah's contribution has also received the same cadence of appreciation as that of Sherbini.

The work was revised and approved by Al-Azhar's Islamic Research Academy, a fact that played an important role in its wide reception in the mainstream religious circles. Hamzah's interpretation held a conservative stance towards the issue of *Qiwamah* in the Qur'an.

She too had been immersed in the classical perceptions of the role of women in the family and in the Muslim society at large.

But interestingly, in her commentary on 4:34, Hamzah, instead of showing *Qiwama* as a divine privilege to males, she subtly relates it to a set of social and economic duties a husband has to accomplish. She declares:

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women" means that a man should take the responsibility of ensuring the woman's safety, cater for her needs and protect her rights, particularly her right of religious learning. He should be responsible in that *Qiwama* before Allah and the people. "Because AL-LAH has given the one more (strength) than the other", this is because men work outside, and they have the duty of providing all the necessary demands of their women ranging from lodgment, food, clothing, to even providing a handmaid to work if they could so afford.

Moreover, they should protect not only the family, but also the society and Nation at large by way of Jihad. (Hamzah, 2010, p196, vol.1, My Translation)

Clearly, the above articulations of Hamzah show the degree to which her views have been shaped by the conservative interpretive discourse she brought into her work. But, instead of turning the concept of *Qiwamah* into a locus of gender conflict and hierarchy, Hamzah systematically and subversively takes into account the conservative socio-cultural and religious environment of her time. In other words, though she has explicitly complied with the traditional description of men as maintainers and protectors of women; still she systematically linked it to "responsibility", a concept that locates this *Qiwama* in a context of reciprocity and mutual respect within the Muslim family.

Having analyzed the views of the “orthodox” women exegetes of the Qur’an on the concept of Qi-wamah in light of the modernist contextual reading strategies, one could conclude that despite the powerful intrusion of these women into the male-dominated arena of Qur’anic exegesis, still their work fell far behind in applying new interpretive mechanisms that take historicity and context into consideration. Unlike the modernists who have been considerate of the need to look at Islamic societies as evolving human structures, the canonical interpreters’ exegetical conclusions have taken only a one-way ticket to the classical Muslim traditions ending up with Hassan Hanafi calls the discourse of intellectual stagnation and social immovability. (Hanafi, 1992, p. 17).

Towards a Qur’an-reasoned Interpretation

The readings accomplished earlier on the various exegetical perspectives on the concept of Qi-wamah should indisputably be seen as a proof of the generating Qur’anic mechanisms that opened the ground before these divergent interpretations.

However, the dilemma that stands at the core of all of these exegetical articulations does not only lie in how they have been able to rid themselves from the shackles of traditionalism, but more importantly, in the way they could be linked to the necessarily just and egalitarian Qur’anic weltanschauung.

A Qur’ano-reasoned interpretation would necessarily entail an investigation into the mechanisms by which the early classical heritage was formulated through what one could legitimately call Al-Aql Al-Islami. But, more significantly, the modern interpreter should not be trapped into idealizing and fixating those traditional mechanisms of al-Aql Al-Islami; a fact that would turn the exegete into a methodolater or worshiper of the method as Mary Daly has reasonably claimed.

Al-Aql Al-Qur’ani, on the other hand, pushes the modern critical reader of the Qur’an to examine it not only against the traditional classical renderings, but also in light of modern day realities and circumstances. In the words of the eminent Muslim scholar Fazlur Rahman, the Qur’ano-reasoned reading suggested in this paper, invites the modern exegete to reconsider “the double movement” in his or her journey into the sacred text.

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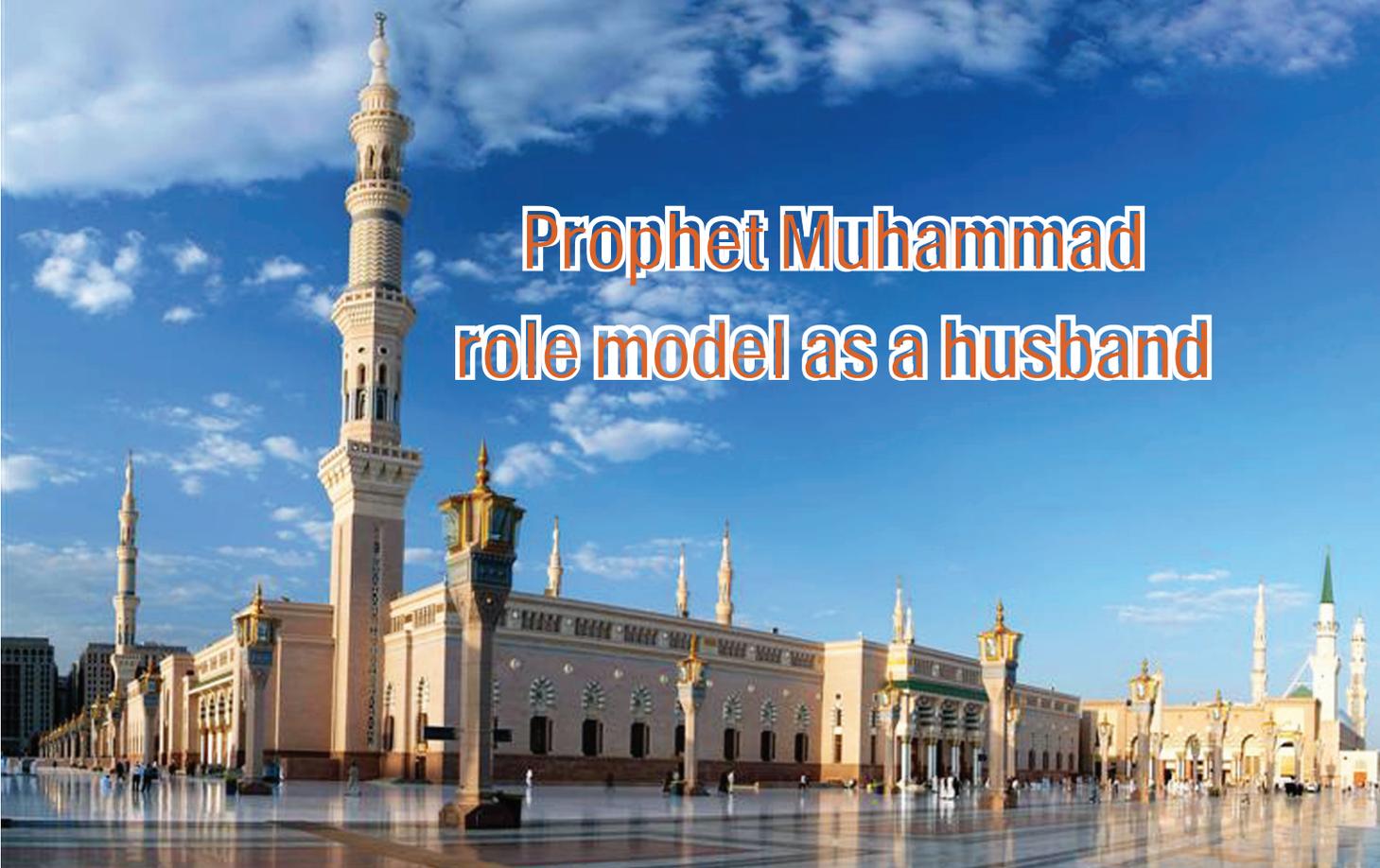
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Prophet Muhammad role model as a husband

Zubair Zafar Khan

This essay traces the family life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the last messenger of Islam. His conduct in every phase of life is a role model for us because Allah choose him as our guide and his every word and action is recognized by Allah for humankind to follow. His behavior with his wives was friendly and inspiring especially for those who want to be a perfect husband. Everyone who studies the family life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) finds no matching example of such excellent conjugal relations as Muhammad (peace be upon him) has. In this research paper, an attempt has been made to discuss different aspects of conjugal relationship of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in detail (peace be upon him). The sources of the essay are authentic and easily accessible.



When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), brought the delivered revelation to humankind, all human societies were ill-treating women. Arabia was no exception. Prior to Islam Arabian women had no rights, not even the right to live. Often parents killed their young daughters, burying them alive, for fear of poverty or shame. Under the Roman and Byzantine empires, women practically enslaved, even by the law. The Persian Empire did not not respect women at all.

Today, the Western civilization boasts of its achievement of equality between men and women. Yet, this achieved only after a hard struggle. Until World War 1, women did not have the right to vote in general elections in Britain or elsewhere in Europe. The Suffragette movement (1905-10) had to fight hard for that right to be granted in Britain. In contrast, Islam, as preached by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) 1400 years ago, gave women a status equal to that of men. The Holy Qur'an clearly states, "Women shall, in all fairness, enjoy rights similar to those exercised against them". Legal provisions are one thing and personal treatment is another. A member of parliament may give the best argument in a public debate for looking after women,

but his behavior toward his wife and women folk may be overbearing and hurtful. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) made sure that his conduct was always a practical endorsement of what he preached. He lived and demonstrated how a perfect husband should be. He understood the nature of women. He knew that though women are created beautiful and attractive, they can also be unreasonably volatile and emotional, which men will just have to accept in their lives. He knew that patience, wise usage of words, and a control over temper are mandatory qualities a husband must possess while dealing with his wife. Allah says to the reader of the Qur'an: "*You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad (peace be upon him) a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is Allah and the Final Day*".

Ali Akbar, in his book "*God and Man*", says: "Great minds and teachers like Buddha, Lord Krishna could not present their lives as models for mankind to follow. One left the family while the other had none. One severed his connections with the worldly affairs altogether and the other had never entered into them. Their teachings are lofty but can be followed rightly by those who live an ascetic life like them. "Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) practiced most phases of life to follow. He was born an orphan and rose to become a head of a state. As an orphan, as a shepherd, as a son, as a nephew, as a father, as a grandfather, as a husband, as a citizen, as a neighbour, as a humanitarian and lover to children and orphans, as a supporter and free worker for poor widows and needy persons, as tolerant teacher, as an honest trader, as a conqueror of hearts and state, as a forgiver of those who persecuted him after they came under his power, by his example of forgiving the people of Mecca who had ruthlessly persecuted him, and in many other respects a model to follow".

As a husband, he never wavered in his love and kind treatment to Khadijah, his first and only wife for 25 years. He continued to cherish her memory to the end of his life. After Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) married to Sawdah bint Zama, A'isha bint Abi Bakr, Hafsa bint Omar, Zaynab bint Khuzayma, Zaynab bint Jahsh, Juwayriya bint Al-Harith, Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan, Maymuna bint Al-Harith, Maria Al-Qibtiyya, Rayhana bint Zayd, Hind bint Abi Umayya, Safiyya bint Huyayy but none could fill the place of Khadijah. Yet with them, he committed himself as per what Islam requires of all men, to be kind and caring of their wives. He disliked to be seen by any of his wives without a smile on his face.

He visited each one of them in the morning and in the afternoon, enquiring after them and ensuring that they received what they needed. At night, he would be with the one whose turn it was for him to stay. A'isha mentions that when he was alone with his wives, he was the most amenable of people, always smiling and relaxed.

His relationship with his wives

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) relationship with his wives was friendly and loving. Each of his wives, because of his generosity and kindness, thought that she was his most beloved. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The best of you is the one who is best to his wives, and I am the best of you towards my wives". (Al-Tahaawi)

His gentleness penetrated the souls of his wives so deeply that his departure led to an unceasing separation, endless sorrow and ceaseless tears.

His kindness was described on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, who narrated, 'Omar said: "One day I went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and saw him smiling. "May Allah make you smile forever, O Messenger of Allah!" I said, and asked why he was smiling. "I smile at those women. They were chatting in front of me before you came. When they heard your voice, they all vanished, he answered still smiling." On hearing this answer, I raised my voice and told them, 'O enemies of your own selves, you are scared of me, but you are not scared of the Messenger of Allah, and you do not show respect to him.' "You are hard-hearted and strict", they replied".

In another Hadith, narrated by Anas: Every night, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives used to gather at the house of the wife whose turn it was. Zaynab entered A'isha's house and the Prophet (peace be upon him) extended his hand, so A'isha said: She is Zaynab. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) closed his fist, and both (wives) began arguing until their voices became very loud. Abu Bakr, who was passing by, heard them and said: I feel like throwing dirt in their mouths. The time for prayer approached, so the Prophet (peace be upon him) got up and left without saying anything to her, but Abu Bakr came back and scolded A'isha. (Muslim)

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) patience and kindness can be seen in the way he treated his wives here. Even though they were arguing with each other loudly in front of him, he did not rebuke them.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) in home

Unlike many husbands, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not a man who was dominating and strict at home, aggressively forcing his opinions on others, with an incessant frown on his face all the while. Instead, he set an example by being extremely good-natured and friendly with his family.

Narrated Al-Aswad: That he asked A'isha "What the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do in his house?" She replied, "He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was the time for prayer he would go for it". (Bukhari) This hadith demonstrates that Prophet (peace be upon him) used to behave as an ordinary man in his home, helping his wives in household works, unlike today's tradition especially in traditional Muslim families, where he behaves like the lord of the house to such an extent that he does not even drink a glass of water by himself.

In another Hadith, A'isha was asked about the manners of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his home? She replied, "He helps in carrying out the family duties and when he hears the call of prayer, he goes out". (Bukhari) In another Hadith she replied, He washes his clothes, milks his ewe, and serves himself. (Bukhari)

Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Anything not involving the extolment of Allah is vanity or negligence including the four things: exercising shooting, training the horse, playing with his family and learning swimming". (Al-Nasa'i)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) in bed

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is so far the only human in the history of humankind who has such a detailed life account of every aspect of his life. Even his intercourse preserved in the books of Ahadith. Here we are quoting some Ahadith which reflect his saying about intercourse and his own conduct in it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) recommended that on the wedding night the husband should be kind to his bride, and comfort her by offering her something to drink when they meet the first time after the official marriage ceremony (Editor's Note: this does not refer to alcoholic drinks, but rather milk, water, juice, etc). The man should put his hand on her forehead, say the name of Allah (*Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*), and pray to Allah (make a Du'a) to bless their marriage. The groom and the bride are also recommended to pray two Rak'ahs together when they meet on the first day of marriage.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) recommended that the couple should start every intercourse by saying:

Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim (In the name of Allah), and by praying to Allah (making a Du'a) to protect them from Satan, and to protect the child from Satan if a child is to be born from that intercourse. Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If anyone of you on having sexual relations with his wife said (and he must say it before starting) 'In the name of Allah. O Allah! Protect us from Satan and also protect what you bestow upon us (i.e. the coming offspring) from Satan, and if it is destined that they should have a child then, Satan will never be able to harm that offspring'". (Bukhari)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told, men not to leave their wives before assuming that they were satisfied too, it is their right. The man should not surprise his wife by starting the intercourse suddenly, since that is harmful to her, and the consequences could be harmful to her health. He should get acquainted with her and should make her feel comfortable instead. "Not one of you should fall upon his wife like an animal; but let there first be a messenger between you (Note: this "messenger" consists of sweet words and caresses)".

Islam allows all positions in sex but only through the vagina. Jabir bin Abdullah reported that the Jews of that time used to say that when one comes to one's wife through the vagina, but being on her back, and she becomes pregnant, the child has a squint. So the following verse revealed to refute their claim. (Muslim) "Your wives are your tilth; go then unto your tilth, as you may desire". Another Hadith reported the same on the authority of Jabir through another chain of transmitters, but in the hadith transmitted on the authority of Zuhri there is an addition (of these words): "If he likes he may (have intercourse) being on the back or in front of her, but it should be through one opening (vagina)". (Muslim)

However, Prophet (peace be upon him) strictly prohibited anal sex. Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: He who has intercourse with his wife through her anus is accursed. (Abu Dawood) Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If anyone resorts to a diviner and believes in what he says (according to the version of Musa), or has intercourse with his wife (according to the agreed version) when she is menstruating, or has intercourse with his wife through her anus, he has nothing to do with what has been sent down to Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Islam).(Abu Dawood)

Seeing one another's private parts is permissible in Islam but disliked and avoided by the Prophet (peace

be upon him). A'isha reported that she and the Prophet (peace be upon him) never looked at one another's privates during intercourse.

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) patience

The Prophet (peace be upon him) never beat any woman, any servant in his hand other than fighting in the way of Allah. Even his four great companions have no record of beating their wives. It is an irony that in traditional or conservative Muslim background families it is a usual practice that a husband abuses his wife and considers his act as Islamic.

One of his wives woke up in the middle of the night and discovered that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not beside her, though it was her night to have him with her. She tells us that she locked the door on him, thinking that he had gone to one of his other wives on her night. When he returned after a short while to find that she had locked him out of the house and asked her to open the door, she confronted him on why he had gone out. He calmly told her that he simply had needed to go to the bathroom.

When wives were in anger

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is an ultimate human example for how patient one should be with his wife. In spite of his highness before Allah's sight and before the people's, it is rare to hear of a man who had more patience with his wife when she was in anger.

It reported that Omar bin Al Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "We the tribe of Qureish used to overpower our wives. When we encountered by Al-Ansar, we find out that the women overpowered the men. Therefore, our wives started to learn from Al Ansars' women their ethics. Therefore, once I vociferated to my wife and she disagreed with me, but I disapproved her disagreement. She said: "why do you disapprove? By Allah, the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) sometimes disagree with him and abandoned him for a whole day." Omar was dismayed and told her that whoever did this did it to her loss. Then he went to Lady Hafsa and told her: O Hafsa, do any of you stay angry with the Prophet (peace be upon him) a whole day? She said: "Yes." He said: "You are in loss, don't you fear Allah's anger because of the Prophet's (peace be upon him), so that you will be doomed?". (Bukhari)

Note how Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), was angry because of a simple disagreement from his wife, while the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted

the same from his wives with great patience being the generous Prophet (peace be upon him).

Narrated A'isha: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said to her, "I know when you are pleased with me or angry with me". I said, "Whence do you know that?" He said, "When you are pleased with me, you say, 'No, by the Lord of Muhammad (peace be upon him),' but when you are angry with me, then you say, 'No, by the Lord of Abraham.' "Thereupon I said, "Yes (you are right), but by Allah, O Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him), I leave nothing but your name". (Bukhari)

Anas reported, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah was with one of his wives when another wife sent him a plate of food. The one in whose house the Prophet (peace be upon him) was hit the hand of the servant who was carrying the plate. It fell down and broke into two pieces. The Prophet (peace be upon him) collected the broken pieces and the food and said, "Your mother is jealous". He then kept the servant wait until he brought a new plate from the wife who broke the plate, to give it to the other wife and kept the broken one at the home of the one who broke it". (Bukhari)

Mother of believers, Safiyyah Bint Huayy narrated, "The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah went to Haj with his wives. On the way, my camel knelt down as it was the weakest among all the other camels, and so I wept. The Prophet (peace be upon him) came to me and wiped away my tears with his cloth and hands. The more he asked me not to weep, the more I went on weeping".

This is such a beautiful depiction of the caring and loving husband to his wife on seeing her upset, wiping away her tears of sorrow, and asking her to stop weeping. He was in a journey with all his wives, yet he was alert when one of them was hurt. He did not ignore her and he did not brusquely tell her to stop crying. He showed concern and love for her publicly. It is sad to note some husbands, behave very awkwardly with their wives in public. They think it is embarrassing to show affection or laugh with their wives in front of onlookers. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), however, in his considerate and loving treatment of his wife during Haj, set an example of how an ideal Muslim husband should be in public.

Loyalty to spouse

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was immensely honorable and loyal to his wives especially to Lady Khadija. Narrated A'isha: I did not feel jealous of any woman as much as I did of Khadija because Allah's

Apostle (peace be upon him) used to mention her very often. (Bukhari)

In another Hadith, Narrated A'isha: I did not feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as much as I did of Khadija though I did not see her, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to mention her very often, and when ever he slaughtered a sheep, he would cut its parts and send them to the women friends of Khadija. When I sometimes said to him, "(You treat Khadija in such a way) as if there is no woman on earth except Khadija," he would reply, "Khadija was such-and-such, and from her I had children". (Bukhari)

Loving and praising wives

Narrated Abu Othman: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) sent 'Amr bin Al-'As as the commander of the troops of That Al-Salasil. 'Amr bin Al-'As said, "(On my return) I came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'Which people do you love most?' He replied, A'isha. I said, 'From amongst the men?' He replied, 'Her father (Abu Bakr)'. I said, 'Whom (do you love) next?' He replied, "Omar." Then he counted the names of many men, and I became silent for fear that he might regard me as the last of them". (Bukhari)

Narrated Anas: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The superiority of A'isha to other women is like the superiority of Tharid to other kinds of food". (Bukhari)

Amusement

Another beautiful characteristic of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was how he would share light-hearted moments with his wives.

A'isha narrated: "Once, Sawdah visited us and the Prophet (peace be upon him) sat down between me and her. I made Khazira (a dish of bran in meat broth) at that day, and told her: "Eat!" She refused. I said: "If you don't eat I will paint your face with Khazira," but she insisted not to eat; therefore, I put my hand in Khazira and painted her face. Seeing that, the Prophet (peace be upon him) laughed and gave his share in Khazira to Sawdah and told her to stain my face; so, Sawdah stained my face and the Prophet (peace be upon him) laughed".

Notice how one wife cooked a meal for another when she came for a visit. She was keen to serve her co-wife. Also, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wisdom in dealing simultaneously with two of his wives is praiseworthy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sat

in such a way that neither wife would feel ignored. He did not show preference to one over the other and gave Sawdah his portion of food to playfully do what Ayesha did to her. He laughed constantly to keep the situation light and ensured that no one took it seriously.

In another Hadith, A'isha narrated that Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) entered the home of the Prophet (peace be upon him) while two young girls were striking on the tambourine and signing and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was laying and covering himself with his clothes. Seeing him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) uncovered his face and told him: O Abu Bakr, let them continue, it is the days of Eid (festival). (Bukhari)

This hadith shows how kind, merciful, and indulgent the Prophet (peace be upon him) was with his wives and in his social interactions with them. This marvelous religion of Islam is characterized by its ease and leniency, as it caters to the needs of a human being, whatever his or her circumstances or situation may be, despite the fact that the reason for our existence on this planet is to worship Allah, there is nothing wrong with having fun and being merry, as long as it does not go against the limits set by Islam.

A'isha narrated that she was accompanying the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a journey when she was a young girl. She said I was still slim. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told his companions to go forward. They went forward. Then he told me: come, I want to have race with you. We started the race and I won. After a period, I went in another journey with him and he said to his companions go forward. The companions went forward and then he told me: come have a race with me. At that time, I was fat. I told him: how can we race while I am in this situation? He replied, 'you can do it'. Then we started the race and he won. He laughed then and said 'this for that' (counter of previous race). (Abu Dawood)

Romance

Romance and speaking with love to wife are not only permissible but recommended in Islam. The only difference is that the relationship has a legal foundation; that the man and woman, who have this bond of love, should be bound together legally in the bond of marriage.

We all have a certain image of lovers, a star-crossed pair, and love at first sight, living happily ever after... Normally, we associate these ideas of love with couples who meet, date, and fall head over heels for each

other. Very rarely do we relate these images to married couples who marry according to purely Islamic customs. Although this link actually exists an example in Islam's own history, which not only depicts this kind of love but goes far beyond it. This was the pure, love between the Prophet Muhammad and his beloved wife, 'A'ishah. As the so called "honeymoon period" between the couple came to an end, many challenges and trying moments began to arise. In the midst of all the mayhem, this blessed couple still took time out for simple fun and laughter. Aishah fondly recalls memories of racing with the Prophet and even winning the race when she was young and fit. (Abu Dawood) They enjoyed these races so much that the couple even raced to the Battle of Badr which was one of the most important battles in the Islamic history. The romance in this marriage was not limited to just fun and games. As their marriage continued, intimacy was ultimately interwoven in their daily affairs. They would sit and eat together and Aishah would take a sip and then the Prophet would do so from the same spot her lips touched.

A'isha said: When I drink water from the pot while in menstruation period and give the pot to the Prophet (peace be upon him) he drinks from the same place which touched my mouth, moreover, during menstruation, Once I was eating from a piece of meat and I gave the same to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Prophet (peace be upon him) put his mouth in the same place that I did. (Muslim)

Narrated 'A'isha, when the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah was in I'tikaf, he put out his head towards me, while he himself was in the mosque, and I combed his hair; and he did not enter the house except for the call of nature so long as he was In I'tikaf (Muslim)

Narrated Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said, "You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for Allah's sake even if it were a morsel which you put in your wife's mouth". (Bukhari)

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Al-Aswad: (on the authority of his father) A'isha said: "Whenever Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) wanted to fondle anyone of us during her periods (menses), he used to order her to put on an Izar and then fondle with her. A'isha added, "None of you could control his sexual desires as the Prophet (peace be upon him) could". (Bukhari)

Narrated Zainab bint Abi Salama: Om-Salama said, "I got my menses while I was lying with the Prophet (peace be upon him) under a woolen sheet. So I slipped

away, took the clothes for menses and put them on. Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said, 'Have you got your menses?' I replied, 'Yes.' Then he called me and took me with him under the woolen sheet." Om Salama further said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to kiss me while he was fasting. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and I used to take the bath of Janaba from a single pot". (Bukhari)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whatever you spend is considered charity even the mouthful that you put in your wife's mouth". The food that one feeds his wife with his own hand is considered an act of charity that is rewarded by Allah the Almighty and it is an action that guarantees her love and cooperation.

If spouses treated each other in such way, a marriage would definitely be beautiful. We desperately need to lead our lives by studying the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Islamic history which contains some of the most beautiful and inspiring practical guidance in the art of marriage.

Calling with nicknames

Calling one's wife with a nickname or a musical name is one of the forms of pampering and being kind to wife. This also can be seen in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He used to call 'A'isha: (Homayra) a short form of ("Hamraa") which, according to Ibn Kathir in 'An Nehaya', means the white skinned woman. Adh dhahabi also said that "Hamraa" in the language of the people of 'Hejaz' means white and blushing a rare feature among Arabs. So Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to treat 'A'isha kindly and call her with lovely names.

Equality between wives

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) dealt with his wives justly. He loved them and showed his feelings towards them equally. His actions arose from a sense of responsibility and because Allah the Almighty created him righteous and equitable by nature.

He was constant in his equitable treatment of his wives despite the changes in his conditions. He remained the same whether he was in travel or present at home. When he had to travel, he would choose without personal preference (by drawing straws) which wife would accompany him.

He used to spend one day and one night with each wife except when Lady Sawdabint Zama'a reached old age and no longer had sexual desire. She dedicated her

day and night to Lady 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with them). In this way, Lady Sauda was also seeking to please the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Bukhari)

Narrated Al-Qasim: A'isha said that whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) intended to go on a journey, he drew lots among his wives (to take one of them along with him). During one of his journeys, the lot fell on A'isha and Hafsa. When night fell, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would ride beside A'isha and talk with her. One night Hafsa said to A'isha, "Won't you ride my camel tonight and I ride yours, so that you may see (me) and I see (you) (in a new situation)?" A'isha said, "Yes, (I agree)". Therefore, A'isha rode, and then the Prophet (peace be upon him) came towards A'isha's camel on which Hafsa was riding. He greeted Hafsa and then proceeded (beside her) till they dismounted (on the way). A'isha missed him, and so, when they dismounted, she put her legs in the Idhkhir grass and said, "O Lord (Allah)! Send a scorpion or a snake to bite me for I am not to blame him (the Prophet (peace be upon him))." (Bukhari)

Another example of how the Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt justly with his wives was that when he married a non-virgin he would stay with her for three nights so that she would not feel lonely or not pampered. After that, he would spend the same period with her as his other wives. When he (Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) married Umme Salma, he said to her: "There is no lack of estimation for you on the part of your husband. So, if you desire I can spend a week with you, and if you like I may spend three (nights) and then I will visit you in turn." She said "Spend three (nights)". (Muslim)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) treated his wives equally even during his last days when he was very ill. He used to go to each of his wives according to her turn. Lady 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) became very sick he asked his wives for permission to be nursed at my ('A'isha's) house. Naturally, they agreed.

In another narration, narrated A'isha: that during his fatal ailment, Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him), used to ask his wives, "Where shall I stay tomorrow? Where shall I stay tomorrow?" He was looking forward to A'isha's turn. So all his wives allowed him to stay where he wished, and he stayed at A'isha's house until he died there. (Bukhari) The idea that any man could show equality and complete fairness in relationship with nine women seems almost impossible.

For this reason, the Messenger (peace be upon him) asked Allah's pardon for any unintentional leanings. He would make this prayer: I may have unintentionally shown more love to one of them than the others may and this would have been injustice. So, O Lord, I take refuge in Your grace for those things which are beyond my power. (Tirmidhi)

Keeping their privacy

The Prophet (peace be upon him) strictly prohibited his Ummah to disclose the privacy of his or her spouse to others. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "The wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of Judgment is the man who goes to his wife and she comes to him, and then he divulges her secret to others". (Muslim)

Trusting wife

No relationship can sustain without a level of trust that should be earned. Because, mutual trust is the foundation of a peaceful family life. Lack of trust sometimes causes the disintegration of a family. The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited Muslims to suspect their spouses unnecessarily and to search for their mistakes unreasonably. In a Hadith, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited men from knocking the door of their families at night while trying to charge them with treason or follow their mistakes". (Muslim)

Consultation with wives

The Messenger (peace be upon him) discussed matters with his wives as friends. Certainly, he did not need their advice, since Revelation directed him. However, because he wanted to teach his Ummah.

The conditions of the Treaty of Hudaibiya seemed, at first sight, very heavy to the Muslims. They felt they had no power left. They wanted to reject the treaty and go on to Makkah and face the possible consequences. The Messenger (peace be upon him) ordered those with him to slaughter their sacrificial animals and leave their pilgrim attire. Some of the Companions were hesitant. They had hoped for a change in his decision. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) repeated his order. It did not change their reluctance. They did not oppose him, but still hoped he might change his mind as they had set out with the intention of pilgrimage and did not want to stop half way. Noticing the reluctance of some of his Companions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned to his tent and asked the opinion of his wife, Umm Salma. She said: 'O Messenger (peace be upon

him) of Allah! Do not repeat your order. They may resist and thereby perish. Slaughter your sacrificial animal and change out of your pilgrim attire. They will obey you, willingly or not, when they recognize the certainty of your order'. Immediately he took a knife in his hand, went out and began to slaughter his sheep. The Companions began to do the same. Everybody understood that there would be no change in his decision. (Bukhari)

Counsel and consultation, like every good deed, were both practiced by Prophet (peace be upon him) first in the context of his own family and then in the wider community.

Islamic conjugal relationship in modern perspectives

There is a lot more that we can learn from the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life and the Qur'anic injunctions on how the relationship between husband and wife, should be maintained. A person well informed about the familial relationships of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) can find out that it included guidance that we desperately miss out in our present time. This guidance would definitely contribute for the stability of our homes and marriages.

'Women are secondary beings' in the minds of many, including those who claim that they are defending Religion. However, it is seriously un-Islamic. In the past it may have been acceptable because all other communities other than Muslims were inclined with the same. However, in this modern age, it could not be acceptable and Muslims who apply this notion in their practical behaviour with women reflects a false and ugly figure of Islam. Muslims should behave with their women in a very friendly manner. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave us a great example with his own behaviour with his wives and sayings.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The most perfect of believers is the best of them in character and the best of you is the kindest to his family". (Abu Dawood) The Prophet (peace be upon him) is the best role model for those who want to be a perfect husband. None of the religious leaders have an excellent and detailed record of his family life as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has. Even in the modern age, it is difficult to present a matching example to Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) behaviour with his wives. If the Muslims follow the true example of Prophet Muhammad in their family relations, it will prove a great attraction for non-Muslims, towards Islam.

Papua New Guinea

Aiman Ambrin

Papua New Guinea is situated in the South Pacific and is located on the eastern half of the Island of New Guinea and is 160 km north of Australia. It is in the east of Indonesia, north of Australia and south of the Philippines, and has an area of 178,000 square miles, about the same size as Thailand. It is a mountainous and forested country, and was ruled by Holland, Germany, and Britain successively, but was later turned over to the United Nations, under which it was ruled until its independence in 1975.



The Western half of the Island is called Irian Jaya, a province of Indonesia, Solomon Islands to the east and United States territory of Guam to the north. Papua New Guinea comprises of mainland and over 600 off-shore Islands. Its capital city is Port Moresby.

The country's constitution declares that Papua New Guinea is a Christian country. Its total population is 5.5 million. It is the world's most diverse country with more than 820 different native languages (largest in the world) and most widely spoken languages are English, Pidgin and Hiri Motu. Over 82 percent of the population lives in rural areas, average life expectancy is 55yr and literacy rate 53.4 percent.

Many tribes are in the isolated mountainous interior and live within a non-monetarised economy, and hence dependent on subsistence farming and agriculture crops. Papua New Guinea has an abundance of natural resources that include large reserves of gold, copper (world's biggest), crude oil, LNG gas, extensive forestry, fishery, palm oil, coffee and a number of beautiful locations with potential for ecological and cultural tourism. Despite all these potential resources, Papua New Guinea is a poor country; it has a poor standard of living, its economy poorly managed, weak performing public services and law and order problems which affect the country's growth.

The area has been inhabited for the last 50,000 years, probably by people from east Indonesian islands. The first European to reach New Guinea was the Portuguese Jorge de Menezes around 1526 who called it "Ichas de Papuas". Several Dutch traders visited in the 17th century. The Englishmen William Dampies came in 1700. The Dutch East India Company took control of the western half and in 1828 it became part of the Dutch East Indies. In 1884 Britain claimed the south-east while Germans staked claim to the north-east.

The British part, Papua, was given to Australia in 1905, which also got the German part after World War I.

After World War II Australia governed both sectors as the territory of Papua and New Guinea. Dutch Guinea was annexed to Indonesia as the Province of Irian Jaya in 1969. Following independence in 1975, a long war with Bougainville fighters began which ended in 1997. A peace treaty was signed between the two parties in 2001.

Papua New Guinea is a Christian dominant country, and despite a stiff Christian opposition to Islam's taking roots, the Muslims lately began making their presence felt. The first Muslims to arrive in Papua New Guinea were contracted laborers, who came here

in 1972. Later Muslim diplomats from Malaysia and Indonesia began pouring in after the country gained independence.

It was through educated Muslims like them that dawah works were started. In October 1982, a Briton, Mr. Sadiq Sandbach (then British Scottish Army Ex-Colonel), who was a permanent resident in Papua New Guinea, embraced Islam. Since then the number of people entering the fold of Islam is growing faster and steadily. A number of indigenous Papuans too embraced Islam. The first Papua New Guinean to embrace Islam was Mr. Bilal Dawia, in January 1986. By 2000, the number of Muslims had grown to 2,000. The number of those embracing Islam continues to increase.

Things have changed since 1972, when the expatriate Muslims, who would arrive in the country for jobs, would be surprised to find Islam entirely unknown there. The Friday Prayers were held for the first time at an expatriate Muslim's house in Port Moresby.

The country has witnessed a significant number of reverts during the past 12 months. Currently, there are more than 3,500 Muslims across the country.

The Papua New Guinean Muslims are a minority community. Like in most parts of the world, the anti-Islamic forces are out to suppress and eliminate the growth and influence of Islam in Papua New Guinea too. However, the history has shown that such situations resulted in unification of Muslim Ummah only.

In order to organize dawah works, in 1981, the Muslim Association of Papua New Guinea was formed with the aim primarily being to serve the basic needs of the Muslims. It has various constituent sections, such as the Youths Section, the Women's Affairs Section, and the Publications Section.

Another important organization – The Islamic Society of Papua New Guinea Inc. (ISPNG) – came into being the same year.

In 1988, the Muslims of Papua New Guinea set up another Islamic Centre, which was adequately helped by the Malaysia-based Regional Council for Islamic Daawa in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia too came forward to spread and stabilize Islam in the region. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs of the Kingdom provided an imam for prayers at the Center.

In 1996, three more new Islamic centers were established, with help from the Makkah-based Muslim World League (MWL). Currently, a grand mosque is under construction that has a capacity for 1,500 worshippers. The MWL and few other Muslim countries



like Indonesia are providing their support in the construction of the mosque.

Presently, there are fourteen Islamic centers in the country. Their main function is to teach the local people matters relating to their faith, and to train prospective Imams to take charge of the increasing number of mosques.

Islamic Society of Papua New Guinea

The Islamic Society of Papua New Guinea Inc. (ISPNG) is the most important Islamic organization in Papua New Guinea that was formed in April 1981. Initially its registration was refused due to strong opposition from the government ministers, churches and Christian missionary groups, but it finally gained its recognition and was officially incorporated as a religious organization in November 1983.

In 2002, the ISPNG built its first ever masjid in the nation's capital, Port Moresby, which is probably the largest mosque in South Pacific. The government has declared it a listed building. There are over 14 Islamic centers around the country, the majority of them in highland region.

The ISPNG President, Mohamed Fazul Jiffry, thinks that the Muslims in the Papua New Guinea are a new and growing community and challenges to "our faith may affect practice of Islam in public, especially for the new Muslims." But such things "do happen in the beginning."

President Jiffry advised that Islam "must be practiced" as a way of life. It is only through good per-

sonal examples that "we can make people appreciate the beauty of Islam."

In 2004, Papua New Guinea government officially recognized Papua New Guinea Muslim community and invited ISPNG to be a part of the country's religious delegation to Asia Pacific Interfaith conferences, Yogyakarta, Indoneshis.

Since then it has attended several other such conferences. The ISPNG is now actively and officially supporting the Papua New Guinea government (Ministry of Youth and Community Development) in promoting interfaith dialogue that aims to promote religious harmony and tolerance among all faith groups.

"We are exerting enormous efforts in propagating Islam and carrying out many Da'wa activities around the country, without any regular and reasonable income. This noble, important and challenging task is solely left to ISPNG and a few Individuals to excel whatever possible way. Islam is now seen as more friendly and respected religion by others," Jiffry said.

"We witness many people from other faith groups regularly visiting our centre, showing Interest to know more about Islam, they often borrow books and Islamic literatures. Despite many challenges and hurdles Islam has a great potential in this beautiful pacific country. In order to achieve our objectives we need more Islamic scholars, da'ees, overseas scholarships, Muslim volunteer groups/NGOs, and Islamic literature and text books," he said.

The ISPNG President exudes confidence that "We are the first generation of Muslims and despite many challenges Papua New Guinea posses a great potential and good opportunity for the propagation of Islam. The major problems are its isolation from the world, low-level of education system that prevail in the country, high illiteracy rate, lack of Muslim scholars (Imam etc.), no appropriate support to carry out da'wah works. The Muslim community in Lae, which is the second capital city of the country is struggling hard for the past 20 years without a proper Masjid. It is sad to see Friday prayers still been conducted on house to house basis."

"As we all know past few years were the most difficult period with the new world order and many issues unfolded around us. We are bound to face more confrontation, challenges and threats, which are true testing of our faith. Therefore it's important for us to unite though our nationalities, cultures and traditions are different from one another but we are all Muslims and ambassadors of Islam."

