

ازالدين عند الله الاسلام



The Muslim Sunrise

In This Issue:

**Assassination Attempt on Pope's Life:
The Islamic View**

Islamic Concept of State

The Perfect Guidance

From Cross to Kashmir

Good Morals

Islam Through Christian Eyes

JULY – OCTOBER 1981

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CONTENTS

Editorial

- Assassination Attempt on the Pope's
Life: The Islamic View 3
- Islamic Concept of State**
Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan 7
- The Perfect Guidance**
Mubasher Ahmed, M.A., LL.B. 29
- From Cross to Kashmir**
Sheikh Abdul Qadir, Lahore, Pakistan 40
- Good Morals**
Aminullah Khan Salik 43
- Current Topics and Trends:**
Islam Through Christian Eyes
(The Lutheran) 46

THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

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*Editorial***ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON THE
POPE'S LIFE: THE ISLAMIC VIEW**

It was a dark, tragic day for the whole world when, on May 13, 1981, shots rang out in St. Peter's Square in Rome. A young, unbalanced terrorist, Mehmet Ali Agca, opened fire on Pope John Paul II and left him seriously wounded. However, the world was greatly relieved to learn that the assassination attempt failed. The Pope is respected, revered and followed by hundreds of millions of people around the globe. His death would have brought grief and sorrow everywhere.

While we rejoiced on the reports that the Pope's life had been spared, we were equally shocked and horrified to learn that anybody should attempt to assassinate the supreme leader of the Roman Catholic Church. For the Muslim world, this tragic incident is the source of even greater shock and sorrow. Islam stands unique among the faiths of mankind to lay a very special emphasis on the sanctity of human life. Its teachings on tolerance of other beliefs and views are clear and unequivocal. It condemns categorically this kind of horrible act, regardless of who the culprit is and from whatever background he comes.

Of course, it was a matter of some embarrassment for Muslims that Mr. Agca happened to come from Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country. However, it should be manifestly clear that Islam neither encourages nor condones this kind of horrible act. Deranged and unbalanced individuals can and do emerge in any society and among any people. History records many assassination attempts on the previous Popes. None was committed by a Muslim. The last Pope to be murdered was John XIV (997 A.D.),

ironically by individuals of the Catholic faith. As *Newsweek* pointed out, "In 1970, a Bolivian fanatic attacked Pope Paul VI in Manila." And, "two years ago, a member of the Swiss Guard overpowered a deranged man who tried to force his way into the Vatican, vowing to kill John Paul with a knife." (*Newsweek*, May 25, 1981).

None of these acts were attempted by a Muslim. Yet, it is shocking to note that some columnists have tried to exploit the recent incident by insinuating that somehow Islam is responsible in producing this kind of an assassin.

One such attempt has been made by Joseph Kraft of the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. In his column headlined "The Dark Side of Islam", he calls the gunman "the crazed product of a notorious cultural milieu." Under the guise of some sociological jargon, Mr. Kraft has, perhaps ignorantly, if not maliciously, tried to implicate Islam. He contends that Agca is a byproduct of a society which asserts "that the Westernized elites have betrayed the values of Islam." Kraft alleges that Agca "went after the Pope as a living symbol—indeed, the most significant example—of the spirit that breaks down the barriers the Islamic fundamentalists seek to build." (*The Washington Post*, May 19, 1981).

Mr. Kraft argues his conclusions on the basis of some erroneous information from an unnamed source that Mr. Agca, an "Islamic fundamentalist nut" belonged to a "right wing Islamic movement, the National Action Party."

It is most unfortunate that, by making such baseless assertions, Mr. Kraft has committed a terrible calumny against Islam. He ignores the obvious fact that it was the act of a loner who was certainly not inspired by Islamic teachings. In addition, as Mr. James J. Zogby, Organizing Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee of Washington points out, the National Action Party

“is a secular fascist party. It is as Moslem as the Nazis, the KKK and the White Citizens Council are Christians.” (The Washington Post, May 22, 1981).

To brand the policies and actions of the above mentioned organizations as “the dark side of Christianity” will be clearly illogical and unjust. Mr. Zogby further raises the interesting questions of whether the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki would become “Christian bombs” and Lee Harvey Oswald would be described as a “Christian assassin.” And, “the terrorism of the Irgun, the Jewish Defense League and the Gush Eminent would point out the Dark Side of Judaism”.

Islam, which literally means peace, has very emphatically enjoined the right of life of every person, Muslim or non-Muslim alike. As the Holy Quran says:

“Wherefore We prescribed for the children of Israel that whosoever killed a person—unless it be for killing a person or for creating a disorder in the land—it shall be as if he had slaughtered all mankind; and whosoever secured the life of one, it shall be as if he had secured the life of all mankind.” (5:33).

More specifically, according to the Holy Quran:

*“Say, ‘Come, I will rehearse to you what your Lord has enjoined: that you associate not anything as partner with Him and that you comport yourselves benevolently towards your parents, and that you kill not your children for fear of poverty—it is We Who provide for you and for them—and that you approach not nigh unto indecency, whether overt or hidden; **and that you destroy not the life that Allah has made sacred, save by right.** That is what He has enjoined upon you, that you may understand.” (6:152)*

There are numerous injunctions in the Holy Quran that are clearly directed against every form of trespass, whether against the person, property, honor or good name of another. (e.g. 16:91). The Holy Prophet Muhammad's own testament to the sanctity of human life can be cited both from his sayings as well as his eminent example. Even his farewell address offers the same admonition. He was speaking on the occasion of the Pilgrimage to the host of pilgrims gathered in the Plain of Arafat when he said:

"Your persons, properties and honor are declared sacred like the sanctity of this day, (the day of the pilgrimage) this month and this spot. Let them not be violated." (Hanbal, V, p.411).

Even in the daily dealings with the people of other faiths, Islam commands that due respect be shown to the leaders of the other people. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"When a respected person of a community comes to you, you should honor him." (Bukhari).

It is strange, indeed, that Mr. Joseph Kraft chose to criticize Islam for this isolated act of a person who cannot expect even the slightest condoning from its teachings. We, as Muslims, join the whole world in condemning any such attempts on human life. We sincerely wish the Pope a full and speedy recovery. Of course, we also hope that no writer in future will wrongly and unjustly attribute such fanatic acts to the teachings of Islam.

Khalil Ahmad Nasir

THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF STATE

By

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In Islam, the basic concept is that sovereignty over the universe belongs to God, but that mankind, God's vicegerents, are invested with authority in certain spheres, as a trust, for which they are answerable and accountable to God. The Holy Prophet has said: "Everyone of you is a steward, and everyone of you is accountable for that which is committed to his care."

As God's sovereignty extends over the universe, the ultimate ideal of a state in Islam is a universal federation, or confederation of autonomous states, associated together for upholding freedom of conscience, for the maintenance of peace, and for cooperation in promoting human welfare throughout the world. In pursuit of this ideal, the Islamic State, established by the Holy Prophet, spread rapidly westward through Egypt and North Africa to Spain, and eastward through Iraq, Iran, and Central Asia to the confines of China. It instituted a single citizenship entailing overall allegiance to a single head of state, the Khalifa, who was guardian of the Pac Islamica and was responsible for the welfare of all sections of the vast populations united and inspired by common ideals. With the decline of moral and spiritual values, the ideal was neglected. The central authority weakened progressively, until allegiance to the Khalifa was reduced to a mere formality and local rulers became virtually independent.

A study of the Holy Quran reveals that it contemplates two types of states, having the same ideals and objectives,

but differing with regard to the scope of the authority of the state and the manner of its establishment. The ideal again is a state in which the head of state exercises authority in both secular and spiritual spheres. The Quran says:

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and act righteously, that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them, and that He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely grant them security and peace in place of their fear. They will worship Me, and will not associate anything with Me. Then whoso disobeys thereafter, they will be the rebellious ones.” (24:56).

The office of Khalifa is elective. He may be elected directly or, as happened in the case of Umar, the second Khalifa of the Holy Prophet, he may be nominated by his predecessor, the nomination being subject to approval by the people after the death of the nominating Khalifa.

The Khalifa holds office for life. He is not permitted to abdicate and cannot be called upon to do so. He must devote his whole time, all his faculties, and his full capacity to the service of the people. He is bound by ordinances of Divine law and by the principles on which they are based. He must carry them out both in the letter and in the spirit, and see that they are put into effect within the State in the most beneficent manner possible.

The Khalifa must decide questions of policy and all major questions of administration after consultation with the chosen representatives of the people, both for the purpose of informing himself, in arriving at a decision, with regard to the matter in hand, and also in order to train the

representatives in the conduct of public affairs (3:160). Indeed, the administration of public affairs through appropriate consultation of competent persons is mentioned as a characteristic of Muslims (42:39). On the part of the people, cooperation with, and obedience to, those set in authority and entrusted with the conduct of public affairs is a duty which is as obligatory as the duty of obedience owed to God and to His Messenger(4:60).

The institution of the Khilafat thus partakes of both a secular and religious character. The Khalifa is the chosen representative of the people, and he has promise of Divine support so long as the institution maintains the character with which the Quran invests it, and does not merely bear the title, as has unfortunately so often happened in the history of the Muslim peoples.

The other type of state is that in which also the head of state is a representative of the people, with duties and responsibilities corresponding to that of the Khalifa; but with regard to his tenure of office, the scope of his authority, and the limitations upon it, he is bound by the provisions of the Constitution in conformity with which he is elected to office and which he must uphold. In his case, also, the emphasis is upon his role as a representative of the people. The Quran says:

“Allah commands you to entrust authority into the hands of those who are best fitted to discharge it.”
(4:59)

It is thus clear that sovereignty in this context is vested in the people. They are commanded to entrust it to those who are best fitted to discharge the responsibilities attaching to it. The exercise of the franchise for the purpose of electing representatives for the discharge of the various responsibilities of the state is thus elevated to a

sacred trust. The verse continues:

“And when you are called upon to judge between, or exercise authority over, the people, you must do so equitably and with justice.” (4:59)

These two obligations, the one laid upon the people to choose their representatives wisely, and the other laid upon those who are chosen to exercise their authority equitably and with justice, are the very essence of good administration. The verse concludes:

“Surely, excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.” (4:59).

This implies that the Muslims might, from time to time, be tempted to depart from these two fundamental principles, and to try other experiments, but they are warned that what Allah has admonished them with is alone the most excellent and the most beneficent method by which these responsibilities might be discharged. Allah would watch the discharge of these responsibilities, and those upon whom they are laid would be accountable to Him.

The head of a Muslim state is immune against judicial action in respect of the discharge of his public duties, but in respect of obligations undertaken by him in his private capacity as a citizen, he enjoys no privilege, and is subject to the same judicial process that is applicable to all other citizens.

The duties of the Islamic State are no different from those of any other enlightened state or ruler, but they must be conceived and discharged in the spirit which Islam seeks to infuse into all institutions. This is concisely expressed in the admonition of the Holy Prophet:

“Everyone of you is a steward and is responsible and accountable for that which is committed to his care.

The sovereign is responsible and answerable for his people, every man is responsible and answerable for the members of his family, every woman is responsible and answerable for her home and children, and every servant is responsible and answerable for the property of his master that is in his charge."

Islam regards the state as a shepherd put in charge of a flock, and as a shepherd is bound to protect and look after the flock and provide for all its needs—keeping the sheep from straying, guarding them from the prowling wolf, feeding and housing them, protecting them against pestilence and disease—so it is the duty of the Islamic State to safeguard the people against dissension, disorder, disturbance and oppression; to secure them from attacks from outside and to make provision for all their intellectual and material needs. A principal duty of the Islamic State is to safeguard the security of the state and to maintain its defense arrangements in proper condition (3:201).

Islam pioneered the first effective concept of the welfare state. The dignity of labor was emphasized. The Holy Prophet, on one occasion, held the callused hands of a laborer between his own soft palms, and massaging them gently, observed: "These hands are very dear to God." Islam laid down that it was the duty of the Muslim State to ensure the provision of the average necessities of life for all its citizens. This is regarded as the minimum requirement of a beneficent social organization. (20:119-120).

On one occasion, Umar, during his tenure of the office of Khalifa, discovered by chance that outside Medina a woman and her three children had been left without proper provisions for two days, because she lacked the means therefor. He returned immediately to Medina

where he collected flour, butter, meat; and dates in a large bag and summoned a servant for assistance in lifting the bag onto his back. The servant protested and offered to carry the bundle himself. Umar declined his offer, observing: "No doubt you can carry this bundle for me just now, but who will carry my burden on the Day of Judgment?" He then carried the provisions to the woman, who blessed him for his kindness, and exclaimed: "You are far more fit to be Khalifa than Umar. He knows not how the people fare." "Well, Mother, perhaps Umar is not so bad," said the Khalifa gently, smiling.

The duty of the Islamic State to make provision for the intellectual development of the people was early emphasized by the Holy Prophet. He was himself so anxious concerning it that after the Battle of Badr he announced that any Meccan prisoner of war who was literate could earn his freedom by instructing ten Muslim children in the elements of reading and writing. This duty was so well discharged by his immediate Successors that within a brief period the camel drivers of the desert, despised by Iran and Byzantium, became the teachers of the world and the torch-bearers of enlightenment.

Provision was made for the administration of justice at a very high level as soon as the Prophet was entrusted with the duties of Chief Executive in Medina. Umar was appointed one of the judges, and the Prophet himself often performed that function. The Quran lays down as a condition of belief in Islam that a Muslim must accept the obligation of judicial determination of disputes, find no demur in his heart against the final judgement that may be handed down and carry it out fully (4:66). In addition to the safeguards inherent in the orderly process of the administration of justice, a very emphatic admonition was

pronounced by the Prophet. He said that a party which obtained a judgment in its favor should not consider itself as having a valid right to the subject matter of the judgment if in fact it was not entitled to such right. The mere fact of a judgment in its favor would not shield it against the consequences of the wrong that it would be guilty of in appropriating that to which in fact it was not entitled. He added that if such a party wrongly appropriated anything under cover of judgement, it only took home a quantity of fire.

Judges must carry out their duties with strict impartiality and justice. No party should attempt to pervert the course of justice through bribery(2:189) or by presenting false evidence (25:73). A more emphatic and comprehensive injunction is:

“O ye who believe, be strict in observing justice, and bear witness for the sake of Allah even though it be against your own selves, or against parents and kindred. Whether they be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them than you can be. Guard yourselves against being led astray by low desires, so that you may be able to act equitably. If you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of that which you do.” (4:136).

Hostility towards a people should not incite a Muslim, or the Muslim community, or the Muslim State, to act unjustly or inequitably towards them:

“O ye who believe, be steadfast in the cause of Allah, and bear witness in equity, and let not a people’s hostility towards you incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is closest to righteousness. Fear Allah, Surely, Allah is well aware of that which you do.” (5:9).

Within this broad framework, a Muslim state is free to make such regulations and adopt such measures as it may deem suitable and appropriate to its requirements and to the needs of the people. The Holy Quran discourages the tendency to seek regulation of everything by Divine command, pointing out that such regulation would be restrictive and prove burdensome (5:102).

As already mentioned, the subjects of a Muslim State are under obligation to render full obedience to the authorities of the State; as is said:

"O ye who believe, obey Allah and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you." (4:60)

The rights, duties and obligations of such non-Muslim subjects of an Islamic State as have submitted to the authority of the State by virtue of a treaty or covenant are regulated by the terms of the treaty or covenant, as the case may be. In other cases, so far as rights and duties in spheres other than religion are concerned, there should be no discrimination whatever. In the sphere of religion, in all cases, there is complete liberty and freedom of conscience and belief. This is emphatically affirmed by the Holy Quran, which says: *"There shall be no compulsion in matters of faith. Guidance has been clearly distinguished from error."*(2:257). Again: *"The truth is from your Lord, so let him who will, believe; and let him who will, disbelieve."*(18:30). Further: *"There have come to you clear proofs from your Lord, whoever will, therefore, see and recognize the truth, it will be for the good of his own soul and whoever will remain blind to it shall only harm himself."*(6:105).

The Prophet suffered keen anguish when his people appeared impervious to all reason and argument, to the

various signs set before them, and to every method of explanation and illustration employed in the Quran. So extreme was his anguish that God repeatedly comforted him:

"Haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death by sorrowing after them if they believe not in this Discourse". (18:7); "Haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death that they are not believers." (26:4); "Let not thy soul waste away in sighing after them. Surely, Allah knows what they do." (35:9)

It is explained that complete freedom in the matter of conscience and belief is essential for the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. It would be easy for God to compel belief inasmuch as He has power even over the consciences of people, but He leaves them free to decide for themselves, as is said: *"If thy Lord had enforced His will, surely all who are on the earth would have believed together. Wilt thou, then, force people to become believers." (10:100).*

Clear directions have been given with regard to the manner in which the message of Islam is to be conveyed to mankind: *"Say: This is my way: I call unto Allah on the basis of understanding, I and those who follow me." (12:109).* It was the duty of the Prophet and of each one of his Companions, as indeed it is the duty of every Muslim all the time, to invite people to the acceptance of the truth, both by precept and by example; but the precept and the example must be such as to preclude the remotest suspicion of any pressure or coercion, as is said: *"Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation, and reason with them in the way that is best. Surely thy Lord knows best who has strayed from His way; and He knows best those who are rightly guided." (16:126).*

In an Islamic State, all fundamental rights—including

the profession, practice and propagation of their respective faiths—are guaranteed for Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

The very name of the faith, Islam, derives from a root which means peace and submission, that is to say, the attainment of peace through submission to the Will of God, by conformity to Divine law and guidance. In the Islamic concept, Divine law includes all laws governing and regulating the Universe.

Among the attributes of God, the Quran mentions that He is the source of Peace and the Bestower of Security (59:24). The establishment of peace and the maintenance of security must, therefore, be the constant objectives of man. Peace and order are deemed essential for material, moral, and spiritual progress.

Every pursuit and activity which has a tendency to disturb the peace is severely condemned. The Quran says:

“Do not promote disorder in the earth after peace has been established” (7:67); “Do not go about committing iniquity in the earth and causing disorder”. (29:37); “They seek to create disorder, and Allah loves not those who create disorder.” (5:65); “Seek not to create disorder in the earth. Verily, God loves not those who seek to create disorder.” (28:78); “There are those who talk glibly and plausibly on all subjects and call God to witness as to the sincerity of their motives and intentions, yet they constantly promote dissension by their persistence in magnifying differences and disputes, and when they happen to wield authority they run about in the land seeking to create disorder, which destroys harvests and entails severe sufferings and hardships upon people. Allah loves not such conduct.” (2:205-206).

When the Prophet announced his mission to the people of Mecca, who had known him as an honest, upright, and faithful comrade, the announcement was received with incredulity. His persistence in the assertion of his claim and in calling men to the worship of One God, and to a moral and spiritual revolution in their lives, at first drew only ridicule. When here and there his call began to evoke a favorable response, the ridicule turned into harassment. During ten long years the Prophet and his small but slowly increasing band of Companions were subjected to cruel and merciless persecution. They bore it all with patience and dignity under the most difficult conditions. Neither abuse nor persecution could provoke them into conduct unbecoming orderly, law-abiding citizens. Except for a vehement repudiation of idol-worship and persistence in proclaiming and upholding the Unity of God, neither the Prophet himself nor any member of the small Muslim community in Mecca ever attempted to defy the authority of the Assembly of Elders, or the rules and conventions regulating the conduct and behavior of the citizens of Mecca. When the persecution became unendurable, the Prophet, rather than risk a state of civil disorder in the town, counselled that such Muslims as could afford it should leave Mecca and seek asylum in the neighboring state of Abyssinia, across the Red Sea. Later, other Muslims, including the Prophet himself, migrated to Medina. The Meccan period of the Prophet's ministry is an outstanding example of the upholding of law and order by a hard-pressed and sorely persecuted group, whose membership was constantly growing and whose strength was progressively increasing.

In the domain of international relations, religion and inter-religious relations occupy an important position.

Unfortunately, comparatively little attention is paid today to this aspect of human relations. It is assumed that religion is a private matter for each individual and, therefore, should have no direct connection with the political, social, or economic aspects of life which affect the relations not only of individuals, but also of groups, communities, and nations with each other. This assumption is not justified. Religion is a vital factor in the field of human relations and there is good ground for hope that it might progressively become more effective in promoting unity and accord, rather than continue to be a source of friction and conflict. It is important, therefore, to ascertain what attitude Islam adopts towards other faiths and their followers.

The Quran teaches that God has sent His revelation to all people from time to time and that no section of mankind has been left without Divine guidance (35:25,26). Several of the Prophets of the Old Testament are mentioned by name in the Holy Quran, and so also is Jesus, who with the other Prophets, is honored and revered by the Muslims (2:187). Indeed, the Quran requires belief in the truth and righteousness of all the Prophets and in the revelation that came to Jesus are repeatedly mentioned as sources of guidance and light (5:45,47).

Thus Islam seeks to bring about reconciliation between the followers of different faiths and to establish a basis of respect and honor among them. It holds out to them the hand of cooperation and friendship on a basis of righteousness, as the Holy Quran says:

“Surely those who have believed, and the Jews, and the Sabians, and Christians, whoso believes in God and the Last Day, and acts righteously, on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve.” (5:70).

They are all invited to unite on the basic ecumenical principle which all of them profess to believe in:

"Say: O people of the Book, let us agree on a word that is common between you and us, in that we worship none but Allah and that we associate no partner with him, and that some of us take not others for lords besides God (3:65).

Islam draws attention to factors which tend to disturb or destroy peace and order, and deprecates them. Some of these may be briefly considered.

Domination of one group by another in the domestic sphere, or of one people by another in the international sphere is a potent cause of disturbance of peace and is strongly condemned. God does not approve of the division of His creatures into groups for the purpose of domination of some by the others, and whenever such an attempt is made, God's purpose works for the uplift of those who are dominated or oppressed. In this connection, the Holy Quran cites the instance of Pharaoh and his treatment of the people of Israel as an example. It says:

"Pharaoh behaved arrogantly in the land and divided the people thereof into sections; he sought to weaken one section, slaying their male children and sparing their female children. Certainly he was of the workers of corruption. We desired to show favor unto those who had been reduced into the position of subordination in the land, and to make them leaders, and to make them inheritors of our favors, and to establish them in the land." (28:5-7). "Pharaoh's end and that of his nobles and courtiers became a terrible lesson for all succeeding generations." (10:91-93).

Economic exploitation of one people or country by

another inevitably leads to domination by the exploiters and develops into a threat to peace. The Quran prohibits such exploitation and points out that an economy based on the exploitation of other peoples and their resources cannot be beneficial in its consequences, nor can it endure. Only such economic development is beneficial and enduring as is based on the exploitation of a people's own resources and on equitable sharing with others of the bounties which God has provided for each people; as is said:

"Do not raise thine eyes covetously after that which We have bestowed on some groups to enjoy for a period, of the ornaments of this life, that We may try them thereby; the provision bestowed upon thee by thy Lord is better and more lasting." (20:132-33).

Even when a strong and powerful state avoids domination or exploitation of weaker states or peoples, if its behavior and attitude towards them savor of arrogance or contempt, it will cause irritation and resentment which could result in the disturbance of good relations and imperil the maintenance of peace. The Quran admonished against such behavior, pointing out that the strength or weakness of a people is no indication or measure of its superiority or inferiority. It emphasizes that, in the process of rise and fall of nations, a people that is weak today may become strong tomorrow, and memories of conduct that occasioned resentment or engendered ill will would rankle and would lead to disturbance of good relations (41:12).

Another source of international conflict is the divergence between proclaimed intentions and policies and actual practice and conduct, which is bound to cause irritation and distrust. Doubts concerning motives and designs are bound to be raised in respect of a state whose

conduct is inconsistent with its undertakings and its proclaimed policies and aims. Such conduct could bring about a situation serious enough to endanger international relations. The Quran insists on complete conformity of conduct to declarations and professions of intent. It says:

“O ye who believe, why do you say that which you do not; most displeasing it is in the sight of Allah that you should say that which you do not.” (61:3-4).

On the other hand, it warns against indulgence in undue suspicion of other people's motives and against seeking to discover pretexts for differences and disagreements, as this might result in much harm; as is said:

“O ye who believe, avoid such suspicion, for suspicion in some cases might do great harm.” (49:13)

Experience has shown that a too ready credence to rumors and their wide publicity may cause grave repercussions in the sphere of international relations. These rumors may have their origin in deliberate mischief, or may be the products of a too active imagination but the harm done might be serious. The Quran warns Muslims to be extremely careful in this respect. They are told to apply a rigorous test to everything that may emanate from a source not completely dependable and trustworthy, for carelessness in this respect may not only give rise to tension but entail grave consequences. It says: *“O ye who believe, if news comes to you from an untrustworthy source, examine it carefully, lest you do harm to a people in ignorance and then be sorry for what you did.” (49:7)*

The tendency to broadcast all manner of news, even such as might have the effect of disturbing people's minds and agitating public opinion, is deprecated. There is the warning:

“When there comes to them a matter bearing upon security or causing fear, they publish it widely; whereas if they were to refer it to the Prophet and to those in authority among them, those of them whose business it is to investigate such matters would ascertain the truth of it. Were it not for the grace of God upon you, and His mercy, you would certainly have gone astray, but for a few.” (4:84)

The verse does not disapprove merely the publishing of an irresponsible rumor or a piece of false news. Rather, it emphasizes that news which affects public security, or is likely to disturb the public mind, or agitate public opinion, should be referred to the proper authorities for them to determine whether immediate publication is or is not desirable in the public interest.

The Quran is very insistent upon the due observance and performance of treaty obligations (5:2; 17:35). As everything that a Muslim does or undertakes is done and undertaken in the name of Allah, these obligations have, as it were, a sacred character. That is why it is said:

“Fulfil the covenant of Allah when you make a covenant; and break not your pledges after making them firm, while you have made Allah your surety. Certainly, Allah knows that which you do.” (16:92).

One element that often leads to differences and disputes concerning the meaning and the carrying into effect of treaty obligations is the type of language that may be employed in expressing the obligations undertaken by the parties. Ambiguity of language which instead of settling differences and promoting accord, gives rise to dispute and controversy with regard to its meaning and construction should be avoided. Such language in the end leads the parties to suspect each other's sincerity and integrity of

purpose. The Quran, therefore, insists that plain words and straightforward language must always be employed for giving expression to agreements that may be arrived at. It is stated that if this course is followed, God will bless the conduct of the parties with beneficence and will eliminate the consequences of their defaults:

“O ye who believe, fear Allah and use the straightforward word. He will bless your words for you and cover up your defaults. Whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, shall surely attain a mighty success.”(33:71-72).

The emphasis is upon use of language which should not be open to conflicting interpretations and thus give rise to differences and disputes.

The objective of Islam in the international sphere is an association of strong and stable states devoted to the maintenance of peace, freedom of conscience, and promotion of human welfare. The object of all treaties, therefore, should be to further these purposes, and a treaty should not be entered into with the intent of weakening or of taking advantage of the weakness of the other party. Subversive methods and exploitation of other peoples carried on under cover of treaties and covenants are, therefore, strongly condemned:

“Be not like her who, after having made it strong, breaks her yarn into pieces. You make your covenants a means of deceit between you, for fear lest one people become more powerful than another...Make not your covenants a means of attaining ulterior purposes; else your foot will slip after it has been firmly established, and you will encounter evil consequences.” (16:93,95).

Treaties should bind people together in beneficent

cooperation and should make them stronger. If made a means of deceit, they would divide and disrupt peoples, and all effort and labor spent on them would be wasted, resulting only in loss.

There is a strong admonition that obligations undertaken by treaty or covenant should not be evaded or repudiated under the temptation of securing some ulterior advantage (16:96). The performance of obligations undertaken is a moral and spiritual duty which secures permanent benefits, whereas any advantage gained through evasion or default in the performance of an obligation will be only temporary and will in the end do harm. This is reinforced with the reminder:

"That which you have shall pass away, but that which is with Allah is lasting. We will certainly give those who are steadfast their reward according to the best of their works." (16:97).

Circumstances may arise, however, under which the conduct of one party to a treaty might make it difficult or impossible for the other party to continue its adherence to the terms of the treaty. If it should be clearly established that the other party to the treaty is determined upon repudiation or breach, a Muslim state may repudiate the treaty, but only after due notice and upon terms which would ensure that no prejudice or disadvantage would be occasioned to the other party by such a repudiation. In other words, so long as an actual breach of the treaty has not taken place, one party to a treaty is not permitted to enter upon military preparations against the other party—even when bad faith is suspected—except after due notice that from a specified date the one party will no longer be bound by the treaty on account of the threatened or clearly intended contravention or breach by the

other party. This would permit appropriate action for the removal of any misunderstanding that might have arisen, or for the renewal of the treaty, or for the conclusion of a new one if this should be found advisable and feasible. In any case, such notice would safeguard the other party against surprise and put it in a position to make the necessary adjustments consequent upon the abrogation of the treaty (8:59).

It is a duty laid upon Muslims to bring about peaceful settlement and adjustment of difficulties and disputes (49:11). If two Muslim states fail to settle their differences through friendly negotiations, and the differences become acute enough to constitute a threat to the maintenance of peace between them, it becomes the duty of other Muslim states to exercise their good offices to bring about a settlement on an equitable basis. Should one of the parties to the dispute be unwilling to avail itself of the good offices of the neutral states, or having done so, be unwilling to accept and to carry out the terms of the settlement proposed, the neutral states must all combine to consider and adopt measures to compel the submission of the recalcitrant state. For this purpose, recourse may be had to the use of force if necessary. When proposing a settlement, the intervening states should keep in view only the original dispute or difference between the parties. Matters unconnected with the dispute should not be raised or discussed in the context of the settlement. When both parties are finally ready to accept the settlement, it should be carried into effect without delay. The intervening states should not raise extraneous matters, such as an indemnity or compensation for the trouble occasioned to them, or for the expenses incurred by them in connection with any action found necessary to procure acceptance or en-

forcement of the settlement; nor should the intervening states seek any advantage for themselves out of the settlement. An award made or a settlement proposed by the intervening states in such a case is described as the command of Allah, and refusal to accept it or to carry it out is described as transgression (49:10).

The Quran lays down the general principle: "The recompense of an injury is a penalty in proportion thereto; but whoso forgives and effects a reform thereby has his reward with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers." (42:41). The Quran specifies very few offences, and for the rest leaves it to a Muslim state to define offence and prescribe penalties therefor. Murder is one of the offences specified, concerning which it is laid down:

"O ye who believe, equitable retribution in the matter of the slain is prescribed for you; exact it from the free man if he is the offender, from the slave if he is the offender, from the woman if she is the offender. If the offender is granted some remission by the heir of the slain person, the agreed penalty should be equitably exacted and should be handsomely discharged. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. Whoso transgresses thereafter, for him there is a grievous chastisement. There is safeguarding of life for you in the law of retribution, O men of understanding, that you may have security." (2:179-180).

Other offences specifically mentioned in the Holy Quran are adultery (24:3); calumny of chaste women (24:5); and theft (5:39). The penalty of adultery is a hundred stripes, and of calumny eighty stripes. Till these penalties were prescribed by the Quran, the Holy Prophet followed the Torah and imposed the penalty of death by

stoning in the case of adultery. One hundred stripes were substituted in accordance with the verse just mentioned.

The penalty for theft or robbery is cutting off the hand of the offender. In practice this penalty was imposed only in extreme cases, in which there were no extenuating circumstances. It has been suggested that though the primary meaning of the expression employed by the Quran in this context is cutting off the hand, the secondary meaning, in accord with Arabic idiom, can be, restricting the activity of the offender, that is to say, imprisonment.

One of the foremost duties of any state is the maintenance of law and order; and though justice must be tempered with mercy, the degree of retribution for an offence must be determined by the degree of the heinousness of the offence. In this respect Islamic values are, in some cases, in serious conflict with the values of modern western society. For instance, today adultery is not only not accounted an offence in the west, it does not involve even the least moral stigma. The result is that the very notion of chastity has disappeared altogether from the west. Indeed, chastity has come to be ridiculed. The institution of marriage has fallen into contempt. Premarital intercourse is the norm. Permissiveness has become a feature of western society. All this is abhorrent to Islam. Adultery attracts a severe physical penalty as the offence is prompted by uncontrolled physical passion. Yet Islam required that such a grave moral and spiritual dereliction, involving not only a severe physical penalty, but the ruin and disgrace of the delinquents, must be proved according to the highest standard of evidence. An imputation of the offence falling short of the standard prescribed itself attracts a similar penalty.

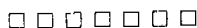
The allied offence of calumniating a chaste woman is

designed to safeguard the honor of chaste women. To treat such a dastardly offence as no more than mere defamation or slander, would be to expose honorable women to extreme suffering.

Theft or robbery is an offence that has always been accounted a grave delinquency because it destroys security of property. In the United Kingdom, down to 1861, theft of property worth more than a shilling was punishable with death. Islam prescribes a severe penalty for theft or robbery, but juristic interpretation has hedged it round with alleviations, so that the rigor of the penalty is attracted only in extreme cases. Hazrat Umar, the Second Khalifa, ruled that no penalty was attracted in a case of the theft of a loaf by a person who was starving, inasmuch as a default on the part of the State in the performance of its obligation of providing the necessaries of life for all citizens had driven the offender to steal. If the offender repents and makes restitution before he is apprehended, no penalty is attracted. (5:35)

Even in case of murder the extreme penalty is not imposed, if the heir of the one slain agrees to a remission (2:179).

Some of these penalties may sound harsh, but when wisely administered, experience has demonstrated their beneficence.



THE PERFECT GUIDANCE

By

Mubashar Ahmed, M.A., LL.B.

A UNIQUE BOOK: GUIDANCE FOR ALL AGES

There are various inspiring and instructional scriptures, but the Holy Quran is unique in its claims, contents and beauty. Each and every word in this Book is the Word of God revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). "*A Messenger from Allah, reciting the pure scriptures. Therein are everlasting commandments.*" (98:3,4). As such the Holy Quran provides the most comprehensive, perfect and the final guidance for humanity for all ages.

It is a fact recorded in history that the teachings of the Holy Quran brought an unprecedented revolution in the underdeveloped and tardy dwellers of the desert of Arabia and made them the leaders of a new civilization in the world in each and every field of life. Even the non-Arabs who accepted and acted upon the commandments of the Holy Quran, enjoyed the same magnificent results. H. G. Weaver, in his book *The Mainspring of Human Progress*, (pp. 105, 118) comments:

"It is to the Saracens that the world of today owes much of its science—mathematics, astronomy, navigation, modern medicine and surgery, scientific agriculture—and their influence led to the discovery and exploration of America. In the world of the Saracens, no authority suppressed scientists, and no policeman harried them, nor did any government take care of them. They opened schools; and from Baghdad to Granada, students flocked to them. Some of these schools grew into great universities, and for hundreds of years they continued to grow. ... Theirs was a spontaneous religion based on a sense of reality, springing from and depending upon the personal self. And for 800 years, during the

period when the greater part of Europe was submerged in the Dark Ages, this religion produced the most brilliant scientific progress and the greatest material prosperity that had ever been known to man."

In the present age, the Holy Quran gives a tremendous hope for the citizens and leaders of the modern world who find themselves baffled with innumerable self-created problems and feel in utter darkness despite all the scientific and technical advancements. The moment the Muslims started going astray from the path shown to them by the Holy Quran, they started depriving themselves of everything that was achieved. Today they are reawakening to the realization that their true progress is not in *Westernization* which aims at fulfilling only materialistic needs while disregarding moral and spiritual matters; they have to seek guidance from the Holy Quran to gain the healthy balance between material and spiritual values.

Furthermore, looking forward several centuries ahead, when we the inhabitants of this planet earth will become one unified nation and through increased scientific knowledge we may discover some unknown forms of life in other parts of the universe, and assuming that there might be an encounter between us and these forms of life and we might be compelled to readjust our global conduct accordingly, even in such drastically changed circumstances, the Holy Quran claims to remain an adequate guidance.

A COMPREHENSIVE CODE OF LIFE FOR ALL LEVELS OF HUMANITY

The Holy Quran gives us a comprehensive code of life that guides and directs each and every aspect of life of an individual as well as society or a nation. Life, death, and

life-after-death are all covered to our entire satisfaction. Anyone who wants to achieve the ultimate goal of perfection and prosperity and wants to have a living relation with God, finds the Holy Quran a perfect book. The role of men and women in society, their mutual dealings under changing circumstances of life in general, relations between the government and the people, employer and the employee, wife and husband, parents and children, and many more topics are discussed and realistic frameworks are presented with amazing insight in human nature. Rules and regulations for fair trade, commerce and economy, for just administration and politics, for conditions at time of peace or war, for the healthy growth of individual and family—are laid down with effective instructions for their implementation on all human levels. Upbringing of children, education, training, continuous struggle against the forces of evil, promoting good morals—tolerance, forgiveness, discipline, truthfulness, courage, love for fellow humans in general and love and respect for neighbors, relatives and elders in particular—are only a few of the commandments of the Holy Quran. In short, there is hardly any sphere of life that the essential guidance is not given to keep us on the right track. It addresses all human beings—low or high, common citizens or VIP's, rich or poor, illiterate or scholarly, saints or sinners, followers or leaders, young or old, men or women, white or black, tan or yellow. It gives us all an equal chance to be successful in life, to be purified, to be enlightened, to be righteous, to be prosperous, to attain the heights of perfection, to enjoy the bliss and to receive peace of mind, to become one with our Lord Who created us all.

A GUIDANCE TO GAIN ALL THE FAVORS OF GOD

In its opening chapter, it gives us the hope—the burning desire—in an ever repeated prayer to remain on the right

path, the path of those who have been abundantly and repeatedly blessed by the Favors of God, the Exalted. Then, throughout the Holy Quran all kinds of favors and blessings of God are brought to our attention again and again. We are encouraged to seek them **all** and not to deny ourselves any one of them. For example, only in one chapter of the Holy Quran, *Ar-Rahman* (The Gracious), along with some mighty prophecies, we are reminded in the most beautiful and effective manner to be worthy of knowledge, learning, reading, thinking over the creation of life, ability of speech, the sun and the moon running in their fixed courses, stemless plants and huge trees obeying the same laws of nature, starry heavens above us and moral laws within, balance and justice, variety of creatures spread over the earth, all kinds of fruits, grains and fragrant plants; then Allah makes us think about the condition of men when they submit or when they try to outreach; geographical factors, lands and waters, and canals that join two oceans full of pearls and corals, lofty ships moving in the sea like high mountains, destruction and decay of everything under the universal laws, and the evercontinuous evolutionary process through which *“every day He reveals Himself in a different state.”* The same Sura continues to tell us about the historical evolution leading mankind into two powerful blocks, the tremendous advancement in human efforts to shoot out into the space, the ultimate destruction of the transgressors and the final accountability of the wrongdoers, and the everlasting rewards of those who submit themselves to their Creator and fear His displeasure and who live in goodness; and the reward of goodness is nothing but goodness. Again and again in this Sura of the Holy Quran a question is posed to us: *“Which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny? Blessed is the name of thy Lord, Master of Glory and Honor.”*

It is important to note that the Holy Quran was revealed 1400 years ago and contains prophecies in regard to some major events of our time that shall help Islam to spread all over the world. It encourages us, therefore, to get fully involved and take full advantage of tremendously vast resources in nature, whether these resources are hidden deep in the oceans, spread over the earth, or high above in the outer space. But at the same time man is guided always to keep in touch with his Lord, the Creator of natural resources, and never ever to forget that ultimately man is accountable to his Lord for whatsoever he does. In other words, the guidance that the Holy Quran gives us is that the achievement of man should not be gained with shortsightedness of materialistic motives—as is the case in the Western Christian civilization and also in the communist countries—but these advancements and achievements should always be subordinate to a higher motive. If we ignore the spiritual aspect of life and do not give it a proper place in our daily lives, then the Holy Quran warns us that we shall be creating a havoc for ourselves, and death, destruction, suffering and complete annihilation shall wait at the end.

PRE-REQUISITES TO GAIN GUIDANCE

The Holy Quran lays down a few prerequisites for success and true prosperity if we really want to be guided. After creating an earnest desire for the right guidance in the opening prayer, the Holy Quran in its very beginning says: *“This is a perfect Book. There is no doubt in it; a guidance for the righteous, who believe in the unseen and spend out of what We have provided for them; and they believe in that which has been revealed to thee, and that which has been revealed before thee, and they have firm faith in which is yet to come. It is they who follow the guidance of their Lord and it is they who shall prosper.”* (2:3-6)

So, on the very outset, Allah the All-Knowing tells us in the Holy Quran that if righteousness is the root of our actions, true prosperity shall definitely be the fruit. After this, the theme of righteousness (*Taqwa*) and prosperity (*Falah*) runs through all the pages of the Holy Quran like an intertwined string that holds the pearls of Allah's favors and blessings together. The Holy Quran thus guides us to live a pious and full life. It teaches us to pray and beseech for the best in this very world and for the best in the hereafter. It does not deny anything good for our body or soul. It gives full consideration for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health of individuals and nations. It encourages both men and women alike to develop all their God-given faculties to their full extent to the best of their use. But most importantly, it is the most detailed and perfect guidance for spiritual advancement ever given to mankind. If someone is unable to perceive and taste the spiritual favors of God in this very life, he or she is *blind* in the terminology of the Holy Quran and such a person shall remain *blind* in the hereafter.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE

Another important feature of the Holy Quran is that it strikes upon a very positive note in all its teachings. A person who accepts the commandments of the Holy Quran forms a definite positive attitude towards life. To compare the Quranic teachings with that of Christianity that claims to offer *Salvation* to mankind may give us an interesting illustration.

The very concept of *Salvation* is based upon a negative attitude towards human nature. The grand structure of Christian salvation is based upon the myth of *Original Sin*. Under the influence of their spiritual leaders like St. Paul and St. Augustine, the Church fathers claim that man's nature is so

corrupt and so evil that he is helpless on his own. The inherently sinful state of human nature is connected with the biblical story of Adam's fall in paradise (Genesis, Chapter 3). Martin Luther and other reformers reaffirmed the sinfulness of even the good Christians. The concept of inherent sinfulness of man is attested by Christian liturgy, traditional beliefs, practices, and literature. After thrusting this heinous concept of human nature, the Christian feels it easy to sell the prescription of *salvation* and *atonement*. But even making a person believe that God incarnated Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, and was put to death on the cursed wood for the sake of man's sins and to get rid of sin one has to believe in Jesus as the son of God who died for the sake of man's sins, and even after performing the ritual of baptizing and symbolically cleansing a person of his or her sin, the practical situation remains such that raises some very valid questions. Even after buying the prescription of "*salvation*" and employing all possible methods of cleansing oneself of the sin, is a Christian really and truly cleansed of the inherent sinfulness? The sad answer is in the negative. Somehow the stigma of sin remains in a Christian mind and blood forever! Whatsoever a young man and a woman do to attain "*salvation*" in his or her lifetime, whatsoever methods they do apply to get rid of this sickness of sin, yet it is impossible for them to be fully healthy and be without sin. The proof is very simple and the evidence is devastating. The proof is that they cannot give birth, according to their own belief, to a child which is without the inherent trait of sin. It is impossible for Christian parents, according to their own doctrines, to attain such a state of salvation that would stop the hereditary flow of sin in the coming generations. If it was possible for a Christian woman and a Christian man, by believing in Jesus Christ who takes away the burden of their sins, to be fully pure of

any stigma of sin in themselves, then the flow of sin through their living bodies should come to an end. But at the birth of every baby the existence of sin in it is always a matter of belief. It follows that there is no way out. Looking at this dismal and bleak picture, we are forced to conclude that either the humanity is doomed for ever, despite the Christian belief that Jesus was hanged for the sake of man's sins, or the very belief in the concept of Original Sin inherent in the nature of every child is false and unfounded.

The Holy Quran is pure of this baseless story of the "Original Sin" and its frustrating consequences and related theory of "salvation". The Holy Quran strikes a very positive note and gives us the good tidings that every child is born pure and is free of any stigma of inherent sin. At the time of his birth he is not accursed and away from God, he is not sinful even if his forefathers did something wrong. At the time of his birth, he is rather in the presence of God and by nature he is inclined to be in perfect relation with his Creator. (Ref: 7:173,174). The Holy Quran very clearly points out that every human soul is innocent and sins of parents or any other previous generation bear no effect on its spiritual progress. By nature, every person has the inherent goodness to recognize the existence of his Lord, the Creator. Like a powerful magnetic force he attracts and is attracted towards Ever Living, Almighty God. On several occasions, the Holy Quran reassures that man is created in the best of forms; "Surely, We have created man in the best make" (95:5).

In short, by giving us a very positive attitude towards the nature of man, the Holy Quran leads us towards prosperity rather than entangling us in the self-created bondage of sin. *Falah* is the positive term used in the Holy Quran which implies to seek success, state of comfort, continued enjoyment

of everlasting happiness, safety, security and prosperity. Christianity's stress on *salvation* is like being in a land which gives the feeling of suffocation, hunger and starvation, where all efforts and resources are spent to get rid of a drastic drought, while the Holy Quran starts with the belief of inherent purity of human soul, and thus gives us a wholesome feeling to breathe in a land of plenty and abundance, and where a continuous struggle (*Jehad*) is necessary to keep the progress going on for ever and to keep the healthy atmosphere clean. Such an attitude towards man's nature and life in general is all the more reinforced in its positiveness when the Holy Quran tells us that all the forces of nature, all the resources present in the universe, all the agents of goodness including all the angels and the Holy Spirit are pressed into service of humanity. Man's status on earth, according to the Holy Quran, is that of a vicegerent of God. Man is given the capability of reflecting the attributes of his Creator. Furthermore, the Holy Quran gives us the most vivid description of God's attributes essential for man to know and gives man the assurance that he could imbibe these attributes so much so that he becomes one with his God. A piece of iron starts glowing and emitting light and heat when it is held long enough in a burning flame, similarly, man becomes a godly person in the sense that he emits warmth and light of understanding, compassion, nobility, wisdom, grace, mercy, justice, honor, patience, truth and tranquility. He becomes a loving servant of God, and a benevolent person towards his fellow beings with all humbleness in his heart and no pride at all. With a free will he submits all of his potentials under the will of God.

THE QURANIC GUIDANCE FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH

One illustration will suffice to prove the perfect guidance that will help the modern world to come out of a nightmare

regarding the physical health of individuals and nations. Alcoholism is a very special disease that is both chronic and incurable. Once a person is afflicted with this disease, he or she must accept the undeniable truth that it will always persist. Not only that, but the alcoholics are seven times as liable to fatal accidents as a person in the general population. They are thirty times more liable to fatal poisoning, sixteen times more liable to death from a fall, and four times more liable to death in a motor vehicle accident. Millions of people living in the Western countries as well as in the communist countries are helpless victims to this disease. The Christian countries like France, Italy, United Kingdom and U.S.A. are among the worst. It is not known with accuracy how many people in the world live with this problem. For the United States alone estimates range from 10 million to 20 million. Almost one million high school and college students in the United States are considered hardcore alcoholics, a number that is rapidly increasing. Many children today have already started to drink by age twelve. Usually they start from 'just tasting' in a socially accepted environment in a Jewish or Christian home and within a few years, they become incurable addicts.

It is unfortunate to find out that many religions have permitted the use of alcohol. Judaism and Christianity have their full share in spreading this disease. To quote from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

"The earliest references in the Bible show that a abundant wine was regarded as a blessing, on a par with ample milk and honey, grain and fruit. The eyes of the Judaeans were to be bright from wine, which also was known to gladden the hearts of man and to bring relief to those who were bitter of heart or ready to perish. In the national religious culture that developed into the Judaism that has survived to the present, drinking was intertwined with all important ceremonial occasions—from the celebration of the eight-day-old boy's circumcision to the toasting of the soul of the departed and, in

between, the wedding, the arrival and departure of every sabbath and festival, and, indeed, any sort of celebration." (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Vol: 1. Page 441.)

The red wine in religious use was eventually perceived as symbolizing the blood of life and, in this spiritual sense, ultimately passed into the Christian Eucharist. And no one denies that drinking from the state of religious rites has passed into drunkenness in common practice. Celebration of Jesus's birthday and sudden rise in the consumption of alcohol at Christmas Eve is a matter worth noting. As a matter of fact, one of the earliest miracles performed by Jesus is that of changing water into wine when the supply of wine had failed in a wedding feast. Whatever the symbolic meaning of this miracle by Jesus may be, one point is very clear: No one can stop a Christian from using alcohol on the happy occasions in his life. There cannot be an effective prohibition; the Bible utterly fails to stop the consumption of liquor and wine which is the root cause of alcoholism.

The Holy Quran simply condemns wine and liquors or any other intoxicant, and eradicates the very cause of alcoholism in a clear commandment. The Holy Quran has brought an effective prohibition matchless in the history of mankind. The Holy Prophet himself never used intoxicating liquors at any period of his life. When these verses of the Holy Quran were revealed: "*O Ye who believe! wine and the game of hazzard and idols and divining arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So shun each one of them that you may prosper.*" (5:91). A proclamation was made by command of the Holy Prophet that wine was prohibited, and people who heard the proclamation emptied their stores of wine immediately, so that wine flowed in the streets of Medina.

FROM CROSS TO KASHMIR

By
Sheikh Abdul Qadir

The discovery concerning the life after crucifixion of Jesus, son of Mary, the Messiah, and his subsequent sojourn to Kashmir, was for the first time proclaimed to the world by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, (Peace be on him) at the close of the nineteenth century of the Christian Era, and more precisely in the book "Jesus in India" written by him in April 1899. It was in the fitness of things that of all persons he alone should have uncovered the veil which generally hung over the post-crucifixion life of Jesus Christ. For Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (Peace be on him) claimed that he had been sent down in the likeness of Jesus son of Mary, and by his coming the prophecy of Jesus regarding his second advent had been fulfilled. To the Western world he gave news of this discovery for the first time when he addressed a small brochure to Queen Victoria of Britain which he named, "*Sitara-i-Qaisarya*" (*The Star of Empress*), (August 1899). He claimed that the discovery of Jesus dying a natural death was founded on divine revelation. The salient points of the great research were:

1. Jesus, when he was put to it, did not die on the cross, and did not yield up the ghost, but was taken down alive in a state of deep swoon.
2. After he had been treated for his wounds that he had suffered on the cross, and had recovered, he hid himself from public appearance, but met his disciples and assured them that he was alive and in flesh and blood.

3. He finally migrated from Palestine.
4. His mission was towards the lost sheep of the House of Israel. At that period in history, a large part of the lost tribes of Israel inhabited in various pockets of those areas of the world which now constitute the countries of Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan (former North-Western India) and Kashmir. It was his mission to preach the Gospel to the lost tribes of the House of Israel and he, therefore, undertook a journey eastward from his native land.
5. Kashmir was the last lap of his journeys, where he arrived to settle down till he lived up to a ripe old age, and when he was one hundred and twenty years old, he died in Srinagar, a town in Kashmir. His mausoleum exists there to this day.
6. To substantiate these discoveries the easiest and surest way is the opening of the vaults of the mausoleum. When these vaults are opened, it will be established beyond doubt, settling all controversy in this regard, by means of evidence available in those vaults, that the holy person resting there is none but Jesus son of Mary, the Messiah (Peace be on him).

These facts should catch the eye and attention of every good Christian. They are possessed of breath-taking importance for him.

From late 19th century onwards, more and more discoveries began to point to the fact that Jesus Christ did not die on the Cross. He was saved from an accursed death.

In a fascinating book, *The Testimony of the Shroud*, (1978), Rodney Hoare presents and examines the evidence for the Shroud's authenticity, from historic documentation to modern forensic science. The conclusions he draws

from the evidence of this, the *Fifth Gospel*, are startling. He shows, for instance, that Christ did not die on the Cross by twentieth-century standards, but was in a coma; that he was entirely man rather than God on earth.

He starts the last chapter of his book thus:

“Monday evening, and perhaps, in the shelter of Nicodemus’s house, the body of Jesus started to breathe properly again; life, as they defined it, had returned. Slowly he recovered consciousness, full of pain, to find Joseph or Nicodemus watching over him. He would have wondered where he was and what had happened.” (p. 110)

He concludes:

“The section in Isaiah which prophesied the plight of the Suffering Servant does not end with death: ‘He was assigned a grave with the wicked, a burial place among the refuse of mankind, though he had done no violence and spoken no word of treachery. Yet the Lord took thought for his tortured servant And healed him who had made himself a sacrifice for sin, so shall he enjoy long life and see his children’s children.’ (Isaiah, 53:9-10). Could Jesus have married and settled down to live in obscurity? Perhaps.”

He further states:

“He may even have gone abroad, and there are traditions that he visited places as wide apart as North America and Pakistan.” (pp. 114-115).



GOOD MORALS

By

Aminullah Khan Salik

Human qualities when applied on the proper occasion, are called morals. Natural inclinations when harnessed by reason, are refined virtues. Yet, if this faculty is not controlled well, it can have ugly dimensions. It can cause a chaotic situation. In such a case, one can suffer individually or socially. The waves can expatiate and this chaotic situation can encircle the society horizontally.

Let us take back-biting for example, which is in other words equivalent to eating a brother's flesh. Bickering, back-biting and conspiratorial behavior can also ruin relationship between individuals and societies.

Propriety of occasion is very essential. A faculty properly manifested, can likewise be universally beneficial. Man needs guidance. In this life of complexities, one wonders about what to do and what not to do. In early ages, problems were only regional. Now they require universal approach. Events of Africa can affect the economy of Europe. A rise in prices of a few commodities would affect the price of other articles. Morals are also inter-related.

Truth is a simple lesson and yet very significant. It is a basic lesson for a school child and it is the exhortation made to the grown up sage. It affects the multifarious life immensely. It has its effects throughout the world today. Not undermining the grave consequences of a falsification even by a humble person, every word spoken or written by a statesman is of utmost significance. It brings about mighty results adversely or favorably. To play foul with one's sentiments is no doubt very injurious. To allure and

not to gratify, is ruthless indeed.

A youth was once leaving with a caravan for a journey afar. His mother enjoined upon him to make truth the conduct of his life. She gave him forty *ashrafees* (a valuable currency) as well. While the caravan was enroute, bandits attacked to loot its riches. One by one, as they snatched the money from the travellers, one bandit asked the youth if he had any money. Though the forty *ashrafees* were well hidden and sewn in the vest, the boy, remembering the good word of his mother, told the marauder about the forty *ashrafees*. The bandit, after hearing the lies from other caravan members concerning their possessions, was wonder-struck by the frankness of the youth. The bandit narrated the whole incident to his gang leader, a very notorious thief. The gang leader too was awe-struck. Being a great decoit throughout his long life of terrorizing and robbing people, he wondered why he could not learn a lesson from the youth who so simply and honestly had told the truth. He was so much impressed by the boy's truthfulness that he immediately repented. After years of blemished and evil life, he turned into an honest man. This simple event proves how truth can be miraculously effective.

Sympathy, patience, goodness, varacity, courage, politeness, meekness, honesty, chastity, search after an Almighty Being, forgiveness, fulfilment of covenants, controlling anger, cleanliness, cooperation, good treatment of employees, justice, sincerity, excelling in doing good, peace-making between people, self control, perseverance, purity, giving true evidence and care of the poor can be enumerated among a few morals.

A few of immoralities include arrogance, haughtiness, niggardliness, extravagance, drinking liquor, lying, suspicion, gambling, indulging in objectionable talk, back-biting,

nick-naming, giving short measure, boasting, defamation, treachery of the eyes, adultery, theft, following that of which one has no knowledge, despair, derision and envy, etc.

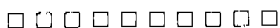
Life with its diversifications has thousands of aspects and so are morals numerous in number. Life, indeed, is a great challenge and yet there are those who meet this challenge and attain perfection.

Morals are of three degrees. The first stage is of reflection, the second of understanding and the third of being selfadmonished. Moral reformation requires three methods.

1. Conception - of the evils of immorality.
2. Repentance - to be ashamed of having such a mode of conduct.
3. Determination - to get rid of such an evil.

Moral upbringing must commence from childhood. Dual character is very reproachable. Laziness ruins a person. There must be an earnest desire and effort to be reformed. Remedy exists for every spiritual ailment. It indeed is a great thing to overcome the temptations of flesh. To be in this world and yet to keep out of it is a thing to be aspired. To face the complexities of life, to overcome the entanglements of this world and yet to lead a life spiritual, is indeed marvellous.

No wonder the greatest miracle is that of morals.



Current Topics and Trends:**ISLAM THROUGH CHRISTIAN EYES**

(Following excerpts are taken from an article entitled *Living with Islam*, by Byron Haines, published in *The Lutheran* magazine of November 19, 1980. The author is director of the Task Force on Christian-Muslim Relations, the National Council of Churches. The editor is indebted to Mrs. Dorothy Andersen of C.W. Post Center, who brought this article to his notice—Editor)

The Christian church has been involved in mission in the Muslim world for more than 150 years. Thus it seems strange that Christians have only recently begun to realize how little they know about Islam. Historical circumstances, of course, are now impinging upon the Christian community in ways that they haven't in the past. What was once something over there is now something that is here.

Christians come to a study of Islam with a certain amount of inherited baggage. We cannot dispel distortions without considering the basic beliefs contained in orthodox Islam.

The word *Islam* means *submission*. This is not submission in the passive sense that one must obey or be punished, but that by being obedient or committed to God's will, one testifies in one's life to the sovereignty of God over the world. The word *Muslim* means the one who performs this act of submission. Islam orients itself around the desire to affirm the authority and power of God over this world.

In speaking about God, Muslims say, "There is no God, but God." By this they refer to the unity of God. No other gods are to be worshipped. The worst sin, according to the Muslim, is idolatry. Muslims also use a phrase about God known as *Bismillah*, which is translated "in the name of God the merciful, the gracious" and begins every Surah (chapter) of the *Qur'an*, except one.

This phrase says something to them about the nature of

this God upon whom they are dependent. The merciful character of God extends into human life and sustains it. The beneficent God is the God who forgives, who uses human error in such a way that it is transformed and becomes a contribution to the working of justice and social order in the human realm.

Islam also describes God in a series of names known as the 99 names of God. These are terms that describe what God does or that indicate some aspect of his character. They are found largely in the Qur'an. In Surah 59, verses 22 through 24 of the Qur'an we read: "He is God than whom there is no other God; who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, most gracious and merciful, is God than whom there is no other God. The sovereign, the holy one, the source of peace, guardian of faith, the exalted, the irresistible, the supreme; glorified be God above the partners they attribute to Him. He is God, the creator, the evolver, the bestower of forms. His are the most beautiful names, all that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies him. He is the mighty and the wise."

These 99 names speak of the nature of God, the way He works and lives and acts in human life and in this world. We also find that these are the very words that we as Christians often use to describe the nature of God.



Muslims also use another phrase to describe God. They refer to God as the *Lord of the world*. This title refers to God's lordship over the mind, heart and soul, over the spiritual world, and over the world which is to come. There is a day of judgment which all people must face. All persons must account for their own sins. That judgment will determine where in the world to come they will reside—in heaven or in hell.

Islam also holds that God is Lord of the physical world, the created world and that he has made human beings his stewards of that world. Muslims take science and technology seriously because these are a part of their stewardship of that physical world. Their history bears this out. The medical science of the early Zoroastrian period was carried on during the Dark Ages of Christians by Muslim scientists. Therefore, when one reads today that Islam is against modernization one must be careful to ascertain what aspects of modernization are being opposed.

While Muslims believe that God is vitally interested in the world, God is, in their view, completely other-worldly. He cannot be a part of that which he has given. This introduces the second basic concept of Islam—the concept of prophethood and the role of Muhammed. God revealed his will for people. The channel for that revelation was the prophet Muhammed. Muhammed was born in 570 A.D. and died in 632 A.D. He first received his revelations in and around the city of Mecca in about 610 A.D. Revelations continued until Muhammed's death in 632.

Muslims understand Muhammed to be only a man. He was not perfect, but this did not prevent God from choosing him to reveal to the people of Mecca a particular message: There is no God but God and Muhammed is his messenger.

Muslim authorities estimate that several hundred idolatrous, profitable religions were carried on in an area of Mecca at that time. Prostitution was common. Slavery was practised. The prophet's first revelation was a call to the people of Mecca to reject this idolatry and return to the worship of the one true God. In the rejection of that idolatry, they were also to reject the evil social practices of the city.

This message was not well-received for it threatened the welfare of the rich. Because of oppression by the Quraish, a

leading tribe in the city of Mecca, a time came when it appeared that the results of the revelation Muhammed had received and proclaimed in that city were to be obliterated. At this moment of crisis, people from a city some 210 miles to the north of Mecca asked Muhammed to come to their city and become their "city manager". This was the city of Medina, which came to be known as the city of Muhammed.

Muslims regard this event in the same way that the Israelites regard the Exodus—a divine intrusion into history whereby the true community of God, at the very moment when it would appear that everything was lost, suddenly is rescued. The people of Islam understand this migration from the city of Mecca to the city of Medina to be that focal point in their history where God's definitive act in a miraculous way brought the community to life and made its success in this world possible. So important is that particular migration that the Muslim calendar begins on the anniversary of that migration. All of their history is dated according to that initial intervention of God in the history of his people. In Medina, Islam found a reception that enabled Muhammed to bring Mecca and the whole of Saudi Arabia into the fold of the Muslim community.

Muhammed thus plays a key role in the understanding of the people of Islam, primarily because he was chosen by God to be the revealer of God's will.

As the channel of revelation the prophet exemplified, within human limits, the kind of obedience that all people should render unto God. Consequently, all the things the prophet said and did have been written down and codified into a body of tradition known as the *Hadith*. This tradition along with, but subordinate to the revelation of God in the *Qur'an* becomes authoritative for Muslims as they determine how it is they shall witness to God in this world.

Muslim community. This is essential to the understanding of a man like Ayatollah Khomeini.

Muslims also understand themselves to be worshipping a God who revealed himself first to Adam, then to Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and finally to Muhammed. Muslims, along with Jews and Christians, belong in a category which Muslims call "the people of the book" —people whose prophets have revealed the word of God, which except for the corruptions of Jews and Christians would be the same whether one picked up the Torah of Moses, the Gospel of Jesus or the Qur'an of Muhammed. For this reason Muslims understand themselves to be brothers and sisters with Jews and Christians because all three have their origin in the Abrahamic covenant with God. Indeed Muhammed understood Islam to be the confirmation of the revelation that was given in these other traditions.

Confirming this is one thing. But how does one account for the differences in these revelations? Muslims simply say that Jews and Christians have corrupted their own Scriptures by inserting into them their own doctrinal interests. Muslims believe that Christians have been influenced unduly by the apostle Paul and various historical factors. Had these corruptions not occurred the revelations would be the same. In this situation, say the Muslims, it is the Qur'an that, fortunately for human beings, sets the record straight by both confirming and correcting the records of the earlier revelations.

Muslims revere Jesus as one of their prophets. In the Qur'an Jesus is referred to as the Messiah 12 times. He is referred to as the perfect man. As a result of the esteem that Islam renders to Jesus, Muslims are very perplexed as to why the Christian church has undertaken such a missionary enterprise against Islam. From their point of view, Mus-

lims and Christians are both involved in witnessing to the same God. Since they show respect to Jesus and to the Christian faith, why don't Christians show respect to Muhammed and to Islam?

There is a distinction between Muslim and Christian understandings of revelation that must be kept in mind. Christians speak of the Word of God as being Jesus Christ, a person, while Muslims speak of the word of God as being the Qur'an, a book. In comparative terms, it is not a question of Muhammed vs. Christ, or the Qur'an over the Bible. The direct parallels are between the Qur'an and Jesus and between Muhammed and the Bible. By keeping this distinction in mind, one will have a better understanding of some of the theological issues when Muslims and Christians seek to explore their beliefs together.

Such an undertaking is important because Muslims desire to live at peace with Christians. From the orthodox Islamic point of view, this is what God commands. Their efforts in this direction have their orientation in an understanding of God that is shaped by the Qur'an.



By understanding the commonalities and differences between the two communities there is hope of looking beyond the human hypocrisy, self-interest and unfaithfulness that corrupt and pervert believers in both religious communities—to the God that both religious communities praise.

This hope will enable Christians and Muslims to treat each other fairly and honestly with love and respect and to work together for solutions to the problems which confront them in the world today.

MUSLIM SUNRISE WRITERS GUILD ANNOUNCEMENT

An advisory meeting was held at Nasir Mosque in New York on Sunday, July 26, 1981, to consider the organization of the proposed Guild for writers of the Jamaat. Some of the objectives of the Guild shall be to support and assist the *Muslim Sunrise* magazine with articles and programs for promotion and distribution, as to help enable it to become a leading voice of the Islamic Renaissance to the Western people, to organize and conduct beneficial programs to encourage a spirit of Islamic competition, scholarly debates, and academic excellence, and to recognize achievement by arranging for advanced individual studies in the United States for qualified applicants.

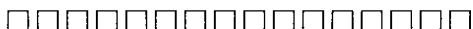
Mubashar Ahmed, delegated by the Board of Directors to organize the Guild was in the chair and receiving the comments of the following: Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir, Imam Masood Jehlumi, Muhammad Sadiq, Nuruddin A. Latif, Jalaluddin A. Latif, and Yahya Sharif. An outline of the Bylaws of the proposed Guild were discussed and agreed upon. A meeting of charter members will be scheduled at the forthcoming Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., *Insha Allah*.

Every Ahmadi writer is encouraged to indicate his or her interest in active participation by submitting a formal application for the membership of the Guild. The application should include information on the applicant's

formal and Islamic education, professional and academic achievements, publications and special interests. Please mail your application to:

Mubashar Ahmad, Managing Editor
The Muslim Sunrise
2141 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

For further information, call (301)468-1850.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

To the Governing Board, Muslim Sunrise Writers Guild.

Assalamo Alaikum

I respectfully request membership in the Guild. If elected, I pledge to support and further the Objectives with the gifts that Almighty Allah Al-Aleem has bestowed upon me in honor of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani, *Alaihis Salaam*, and his Khalifa, the *Ameerul Momineen and Commander-in-Chief of the Jihad of the Pen*.

Signed _____ Date _____

Name _____ Jamaat _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Education High School _____ Year graduated _____

Location _____ Honors _____

College _____ Degree(s) _____

Location _____ Major _____

Languages Spoken _____ Written _____

Islamic Education _____

Education & Literary Service to Jamaat: _____

Professional & Academic Achievements and Memberships: _____

Books & Articles Published: _____

Special Interest/Research: _____
