



Ark Books

Name of Book : **What Prophet Muhammad Offered to Humanity**

Author's Name : **Prof. Ruqaia Taha Alalwani**

Translated by : **Dr. Adil Jarrar - Dr. Raida Jarrar**

Editor : **Hasan Kurt**

Page Layout : **Mürettibhane**

Cover Level : **Yunus Karaaslan**

*Print & Skin*

Akpınar Huzur Yay. Dağ. Paz. Tic. Ltd. Şti.

Çatalçeşme Sk. Yücer Han No:46/1

Fatih / İSTANBUL

Matbaa Sertifika No: 44713

Not for sale, For Distribution  
May Allah accept this from us all.  
© Özgü Publications, 2020

Yayıncı Sertifika No: 13562  
ISBN: 0-2-479-85999-8779/2020

Address:

**Özgü Yayıncılık ve Tanıtım Hizmetleri San. Tic. Ltd. Şti.**  
Yerebatan Cad. Salkımsöğüt Sok. No: 4 Kat: 3, Cağaloğlu/İstanbul

Tel.: 0212 511 75 52

info@arkkitap.com - www.arkkitap.com

# WHAT PROPHET MUHAMMAD OFFERED TO HUMANITY

PROF. RUQAIA TAHA ALALWANI

*Translated by:*

Dr. Adil Jarrar  
Dr. Raida Jarrar



## Prof. Dr. RUQAIA TAHA ALALWANI

Prof. Dr. Al-Alwani is a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Bahrain. She is a well-known and established academic researcher and activist in various fields. She is the first female researcher to be awarded many international awards for her works and achievements, among them; the Moderation Writer Award presented by the World Forum of Moderation in the year 2013, the *Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud* International Award for the Prophetic *Sunnah* and Islamic Studies in its first session in 2005, and others. She has participated in a number of international conferences and symposia related to Islam, *Quranic* studies, women's and family issues. She is also a board member of many different scientific organizations. Her research focuses on Qur'anic studies, Islamic jurisprudence, the relationship between civil and religious laws in the field of family, women and Islamic civilization. She has written and composed a wide range of methodological books and scientific researches both in Arabic and English on *Tadbur al-Qur'an*, and issues of women and family. She is in the process of publishing volumes of the interpretation of the chapters of the Holy Qur'an which are currently being printed.

<http://www.drruqaia.com>

Email: [drruqaia@yahoo.com](mailto:drruqaia@yahoo.com)

@Prof.Ruqaia Al-Alwani <http://twitter.com/drruqaia>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation for the efforts of the volunteers involved in the translation of this work. Such efforts have come to reflect on their love of the Prophet Muhammad SAWS. Particular mention of Dr. Raida Jarrar and Mr. Adel Jarrar must be made. Special thanks to Mr. Subhi Gosheh, Mrs. Rima Chihab, Mrs. Sana Ali, Mrs. Ghada Ghafaji and Mrs. Malika slouie are also due. May Allah reward them good.

November 2020



# Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	5
INTRODUCTION .....	11
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY.....	13
MECHANISMS OF RESEARCH .....	15
IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY AND ITS UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION .....	17
REFERENCE BOOKS AND PRIOR STUDIES.....	19
SECTIONS OF THE STUDY .....	27

## CHAPTER I

### THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD BEFORE AND AFTER THE MESSAGE OF THE NOBLE PROPHET (SAWS)

INTRODUCTION .....	31
FIRST TOPIC: WOMEN IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE .....	33
SECOND TOPIC: WOMEN IN THE SASSANID EMPIRE .....	41
THIRD TOPIC: WOMEN DURING THE PRE-ISLAMIC ERA.....	43
FOURTH TOPIC: STATUS OF WOMEN DURING THE ERA OF THE PROPHET (SAWS) .....	53

**CHAPTER II**  
**SLAVERY CONDITIONS BEFORE AND**  
**AFTER THE PROPHET’S PBUH MESSAGE**

PREFACE..... 67

FIRST TOPIC:  
SLAVERY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE ..... 69

SECOND TOPIC:  
SLAVERY AMONG THE ARABS ..... 71

THIRD TOPIC:  
THE HOLY PROPHET (PBUH) AND SLAVERY..... 73

**CHAPTER III**  
**RELATIONS WITH PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT**  
**FAITH BEFORE AND AFTER THE MESSAGE OF**  
**THE HOLY PROPHET, PBUH**

FIRST TOPIC:  
IN THE PERSIAN STATE ..... 87

SECOND TOPIC:  
IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE ..... 89

THIRD TOPIC:  
ARABS BEFORE ISLAM AND TREATMENT OF EARLY MUSLIMS ..... 95

FOURTH TOPIC:  
THE HOLY PROPHET’S TREATMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT  
FAITH ..... 97

THE PROPHET’S TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS..... 131

THE PROPHET AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ..... 141

**CHAPTER IV**  
**HUMAN CIVILIZATION BEFORE AND AFTER**  
**THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)**

FIRST TOPIC:  
ARAB CIVILIZATION BEFORE THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET  
(PBUH)..... 167

SECOND TOPIC:	
ARAB CIVILIZATION AFTER THE MESSAGE OF THE NOBLE PROPHET PBUH .....	171
THIRD TOPIC:	
FIELDS OF MUSLIM CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CIVILIZATION.....	195
The Route of Andalusia.....	203
The Route of Sicily.....	206
Arrival of the Crusaders to the Islamic East .....	207
Trade between the East and the West.....	208
FOURTH TOPIC:	
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION.....	209

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT THE MESSAGE OF THE NOBLE PROPHET CAN OFFER THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

PREFACE.....	217
FIRST TOPIC:	
THE FAMILY AS AN ENTITY.....	221
VIEW OF DIVINE RELIGIONS ON HOMOSEXUALITY .....	223
WHAT CAN THE PROPHETIC BIOGRAPHY OFFER TO TODAY'S FAMILIES?.....	235
SECOND TOPIC:	
GLOBAL PREJUDICE AND EXTREMISM.....	243
HOW CAN THE PROPHETIC SUNNAH PROTECT THE WORLD AGAINST PREJUDICE?.....	251

## CHAPTER VI

### FUTURE PROCEDURAL STEPS FOR PRESENTING THE PERSONALITY OF THE NOBLE PROPHET REGIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

FIRST TOPIC:	
PROMOTING AWARENESS THROUGH EXAMPLE .....	275
SECOND TOPIC:	
CONTEMPORARY MEANS .....	283
1. Embassies of Muslim Countries.....	283

2. Activating the Role of Educational Institutions in Presenting the Prophetic Biography .....	284
3. School Curriculum .....	288
4. Launching the Prophetic Encyclopedia in Foreign Languages .....	290
5. Media Institutions .....	292
CONCLUSION & RESULTS.....	295
REFERENCES .....	299

## INTRODUCTION

All praise to Allah and prayers and blessings of Allah upon His Messenger.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this study is to set an integrated paradigm by presenting the personality traits of the Prophet Muhammad (Prayers and Blessings of Allah be upon Him) to the contemporary world. It assiduously adopts a scientific approach characterized by objectivity while avoiding – as much as possible – excessive argumentation, defensiveness or vindication in the presentation of the material.

Undoubtedly, many Western thinkers and Muslim scholars sought to study the biography of the noble Prophet, peace be upon him. Yet, many of them treated his biography and Sunnah (the Prophet's life and legacy) as spiritual sermons and religious guidance texts unrelated to modern human issues of urbanization, science, civilization, or reform for mankind.

---

1. Prayers and Blessings of Allah be upon Him is used commonly by Muslims when Prophets are mentioned as a sign of respect and as a testimony to their prophecy. The acronym PBUH (peace be upon him) is sometimes used after the Prophet's name to shorten the expression.

However, the Prophet (PBUH) was attentive to basic social, political, religious, and historical issues of humanity. This is clear in the Holy Quran which records many of the facts and events of the Prophet's biography, as well as many Hadeeths (the Prophet's words or actions as narrated by his companions) and in biography books. Therefore, a deep knowledge of the jurisprudence in the Prophet's biography (PBUH) as well as deep cognizance of modern life and its challenges is needed to give justice to this topic.

Our study attempts to move the discourse about the Prophet's biography (PBUH) away from defensiveness and rebuttals, towards a presentation of the Prophetic strategies and applied principles in dealing with all issues of humanity whether past, present, or future.

The cognitive frame of what the Prophet's biography has offered to humanity, and what it can offer today, is absent from many previous studies. Thus, this study seeks to set a paradigm that links the Prophet's (PBUH) methodology of effecting change and reform, through his biography, to the problems of the world of today. This is done through a study of the jurisprudence in the Prophet's biography and its application as a way of life.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

**T**his study attempts to use a novel and original way for presenting the personality of the Prophet (PBUH), focusing on some of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) achievements for humanity. In addition, this study reveals the lessons and strategic thought extracted from the Prophet's, peace be upon him, biography and their applicability to our contemporary life.

This study adopts the **deductive reasoning approach** in presenting the personality of the Prophet (PBUH). In this approach, premises are linked with conclusions in projecting information and presenting non-controversial facts. Hence, results are only valid if the premises are true.

Before the Prophetic mission, certain historical and social circumstances existed in the world. After the call to Islam, tremendous indisputable changes took place. A comparison between the before and after picture can reveal the magnitude of the noble Prophet's achievements in effecting cultural change and human reform; achievements recognized as distinctive and remarkable by many thought leaders, both past and present.

The adoption of such a holistic approach, without delving into detailed evidence, or an event by event account of the Prophet's life and Sunnah

will, God willing, clear much of the cloudiness of vision and correct the faulty perceptions with regard to the personality of the Prophet (PBUH).

If we ponder the texts of the Holy Quran and the Prophetic Sunnah, we don't find much focus on the personal traits of the Prophet (PBUH), or many specific examples about his many merits. We do, however, find a focus on the essence of the Prophetic mission and its benefits for the human being, the community, and the universe. Thus, the recipient, regardless of his religion or background, can visualize the power of the message to achieve the goals which humanity aspires to nowadays.

Throughout the various eras of Islam, we see an obvious reverence among the different segments of society towards the person of the noble Prophet (PBUH); among believers and non-believers alike.

Moreover, this study adopts an inter-disciplinary approach<sup>2</sup> that uses the results and indicators of psychological, social, and comparative religion studies. This allows a serious scientific discourse with "the other" employing contemporary language while adhering to authenticity of topic at the same time.

---

2. Spanning multiple disciplines.

## MECHANISMS OF RESEARCH

**A**ny researcher in the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) finds a tremendous amount of historical facts through which he can perceive the merits, glorious deeds, and attributes of the noble Prophet (PBUH). However, when addressing a non-Muslim, we should not rely on details recorded in the Islamic books of biography and Hadeeths, as the authenticity of these details may be disputed by non-believers. In addition, delving into excessive detail sometimes impedes the arrival to a general comprehensive image and rarely allows for a clear understanding of the precise relationship between all these details. Thus, the non-Muslim recipient may suspect subjectivity in the stories presented, and may attribute it to an author's personal love for the Prophet (PBUH) and nothing more.

Therefore, our study does not depend on the Hadeeths describing the Prophet's (PBUH) attributes, morals, tolerance, fairness, and mercy as the basis for presenting his personality (PBUH). Rather, it focuses on reviewing the state of the world before his call – a non-controversial topic among all intellectuals and researchers - and the changes that occurred as a result of his call. **Thus, it provides an objective scientific presentation free from subjective emotional tones and allows the unimpeded delivery of informa-**

**tion to any mind free from the ills of intolerance and prejudice. This allows fair judgment based on facts without confusing the recipient with overstatements, exaggerations, and excruciating detail.**

The study employs the following mechanisms:

- Direct reference to the writings of veteran objective Western scholars and intellectuals, and not to their translated works, to ensure scientific accuracy, deep scrutiny, and integrity when quoting them.
- Avoidance of judgments on facts and events stated in this study to eliminate any potential partiality, and to allow the recipient to judge and choose freely.
- Employment of comparative analysis and reference to sacred texts to present the views of other monotheistic religions on issues under discussion.
- Providing short biographies for the Western scholars and intellectuals quoted in the study.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY AND ITS UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

**T**his study stands apart from other studies on the personality of the Prophet (PBUH) through its novel approach and contribution to a cognitive evolution and a strategic perspective not clearly apparent in some previous studies.

Much of the contemporary research on the personality of the noble Prophet (PBUH), the nature of his mission, the personal aspects of his life, his behaviors, and his merits, is written by Islamic writers, and therefore may not be free from the emotional tone at the expense of the scientific presentation methodology. The discourse usually takes on a defensive tone with regard to the Prophet's biography and Sunnah, and adopts the methodology of response to falsehoods and suspicions directed to various aspects of his biography (PBUH). Thus, it loses focus on the intended recipients, i.e. non-Muslims.

Our study does not follow this defensive methodology. Rather, in response to current human circumstances which require an objective scientific presentation of Islam, the Prophet's teachings, and the traits of his personality (PBUH), we present facts and reflect on them, without any attempt to impose a viewpoint on the recipient.

Moreover, the study avoids an act by act discussion of the Prophet's, peace be upon him, biography, as this imposes artificial limits on the achievements of the Prophet (PBUH). His teachings, PBUH, are not limited to time, place, or era –as many Muslim scholars think. Thus, the study concentrates on the principles behind the actions and the foundations upon which he effected the monumental changes; thereby highlighting their applicability to today's world. This clearly reflects the globalism of the Prophetic mission and its continuous validity throughout the ages. It highlights how the Prophetic biography has the ability to address the current and future problems of the world, once the viewpoint by which it is analyzed and implemented is adjusted.

Hence, our intention is to attempt to present an integrated study and develop an intellectual dialogue with the West that goes beyond all comparative analysis, defensive ideas, and accusations; a positive dialogue on the Prophetic biography which discusses its civilizational aspects and creative contributions to the evolution of human thought and wisdom. This provides the world an opportunity to understand the human values in the Prophetic biography and Sunnah, and their applicability to intellectual, psychological, behavioral, and civilizational aspects of life. The world can then realize the everlasting contribution of the Prophet's (PBUH) personality to mankind through its ability to revolutionize social, cultural, and religious behavior.

In response for the urgent need for this type of study and the scarcity of studies adopting this methodology, we present this effort. **As far as the author is aware, this study is considered one of the first writings that follow this novel methodology of presenting the biography of the noble Prophet (PBUH).**

It goes without saying that such a methodology involves complications and difficulties. It requires deep exploration of the different approaches in previously presented material, thorough research into the knowledge and ideas which resulted from the application of the prophetic actions, a knowledge of the current world, its issues and crises, and cognizance of the variables of the international community.

## REFERENCE BOOKS AND PRIOR STUDIES

**T**he studies that address the personality of the noble Prophet (PBUH), in Islamic and Western literature, recent and past, are numerous. Moreover, the approaches followed by researchers and scholars are abundant as well. The effort that has gone into understanding the important aspects of his call, mission, and glorious deeds is enormous. Therefore, the researcher in this topic usually finds a great fortune of literature in various languages and multiple methodologies.

This study focuses primarily on literature by Western writers and intellectuals who studied the life of the Prophet (PBUH), and presented it in various ways. Many of these were known by their objectivity and scientific presentation styles free from fanaticism and personal analysis of events based on prior thoughts or tendencies.

Among the most prominent reference material for our study are the writings of the well-known writer Karen Armstrong.<sup>3</sup> Armstrong speaks

---

3. Karen Armstrong is a catholic nun who read the world's religions profoundly and made extensive comparisons between them. She became a writer focused on religious, philosophical, and literary studies and achieved great renown for

up for Islam, and endeavors to confute the fake accusations, misperceptions, and false thoughts about Islam that are widely spread in some Western societies.<sup>4</sup>

She reveals the bare lies and abhorrent abominations against Islam reflected in the positions of many Western politicians, clerics, intellectuals, and the media; positions that stem from their spirit of hostility against Islam and their ignorance about it. Armstrong argues that their words are mere fabrications and machinations far from any sense of truth and objectivity, dominated by hostile and fanatic emotions, and the frantic desire to alienate the Islamic heritage and mission, distort the Arab-Muslim character, and offend Muslims.

Armstrong attempts, through her writings, to analyze the motivations for this prejudiced Western perspective about Islam. She presents some of the factors which contributed to the emergence of such perspective: like fear from the spread of Islam, extreme ignorance about its teachings, and the acts of violence and extremism in some contemporary Islamic societies submerged by economic, political, and social problems. The writer sees that such acts are caused by other conditions and factors and that Islam can never be a reason or motivation for violence.

Armstrong believes that Western media has a prominent role in perpetuating this shallow perspective. Hence, she concludes with some important facts through which she addresses the societies of the West, emphasizing that **Islam is a divine religion that delivers the values of monotheism, justice, decency, compassion, and respect for humanity.**

Many other Western historians and writers agree with Armstrong. Among these writers is Bruce B. Lawrence, the well-known Irish writ-

---

her objective research that was free of the ills of rancor and hatred, and for her keenness to unmask and reveal the facts and defend them, even if they opposed her cultural, intellectual, and religious beliefs.

4. *Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2000), *Islam: A Short History* (2000), *Muhammad: A Prophet For Our Time* (2006).

er.<sup>5</sup> In his book “Shattering the Myth: Islam beyond Violence”, he states that the media is the reason behind the hostile Western perspective about Islam and the noble Prophet (PBUH) as it spares no effort in describing Muslims as extremists and terrorists. The writer believes that time has come for the West to view Islam, its teachings, and the personality of its Prophet objectively and reasonably.<sup>6</sup> “The Qur’an: A Biography (Books That Changed the World)” is one of his most prominent books. It presents an impartial perspective about the teachings of the Qur’an and its human and moral values.

Will Durant’s<sup>7</sup> study of the human civilization from the dawn of history to the end of Napoleon’s era is considered a unique and outstanding work of literature. It enabled countless students and researchers to understand human history from a comprehensive philosophical perspective which gave every aspect of human life the attention, scrutiny, and exploration it deserves. Thus, his book, “The Story of Civilization” became a comprehensive history reference for all aspects of intellectual and functional human activity within an objective framework that seeks truth and retains impartiality. In the preface of the twelfth part of his book, Durant says: “I wrote this book to introduce the complete (Story of Civilization) away from any subjective tendencies to the extent possible. In writing this book, I observed the entire history of mankind as one comprehensive unit whose parts complement

- 
5. Professor of Religion and Humanities at Duke University; a master of history who wrote 12 books. Most of his books discuss Islam objectively and oppose the shallow perspectives about the teachings of this religion and the huge wealth found in the Qur’an. He’s the author of: (including *New Faiths, Old Fears: Muslims & Other Asian Immigrants in American Religious Life*)
  6. Objectivity means focusing the study and exploration on the phenomenon without having bias for personal values, principles, beliefs, and tendencies. It contrasts with subjectivity which means expressing one’s own perceptions. Absolute objectivity is not possible.
  7. Durant was born in 1885 and died in 1981. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1968 and the Medal of Freedom in 1977. He spent more than 50 years of his life writing his series, *The Story of Civilization*, in eleven volumes.

each another.” He dedicated the thirteenth part of his book to the rise of Islam and the contribution of Islamic civilization in all its ups and downs.<sup>8</sup>

Among the important references were the writings of the Irish author and global novelist Bernard Shaw, the Nobel laureate in literature. Shaw believes that **Islam is the only religion capable of accommodating all stages of life in all ages, and that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) should be called the Savior of Humanity**. He believes that a person like the Prophet, peace be upon him, would be able to solve the problems of the contemporary world if he were in power.<sup>9</sup>

Another important reference book is: “People of Islam...the Qur’anic Muhammad, Islam as a religion and community” by Luis Gardier, the French contemporary author.<sup>10</sup> In his books, he provides an extensive study of the Islamic world to prove that Islam is the doctrine for the salvation of the lost and anguished humanity, that it is valid for all times and places, and that it is a religion and a lifestyle.

Moreover, he discusses how Muslims lived their spiritual values throughout their long history, and how these values were steadfast in their lives throughout the evolution of social and economic circumstances. The author often refers to the writings of Ibn Khaldun and the early Arab scholars. He reviewed the Mu’allaqat (The Suspended Odes or The Hanging Poems) which reflect the bright literary history of the Arabs, and whose contents reveal the noble Arab attributes; such as patience, courage, chivalry, pride, dignity, defending the aggrieved, and hospitality.

---

8. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, translated by Muhammad Badran. Writing, Translation, and Publication Committee Publishing. Second edition, Egypt, 1964, p. 13. See also: Will Durant, *Heroes of History: Summary of the Story of Civilization*, translated by: Samir El Kaaki, Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi, Beirut, 2003.

9. George Bernard Shaw, *The Genuine Islam*, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.

10. A French contemporary thought leader specializing in Islamic thought and civilization; His interest in Islamic community is reflected in many of his French writings: *The Islamic Metropolis* and *Islam, religion and community*. He visited many Arab territories and lectured in various universities in Morocco, Algeria, and Cairo.

Gardier also believes the role of women was prominent in the Islamic era; some women were famous for their prudence, perceptiveness, and righteousness.<sup>11</sup>

We also reference the book of the well-known historian Hodgson Marshall<sup>12</sup> entitled: “The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization”, which consists of three parts. In this book, the author tries to review the historical, social, and political achievements of the Islamic civilization. In the first part of the book, he discusses the state of Arabs before the Prophetic mission, emphasizing the immensity of the qualitative evolution that the mission of the noble Prophet (PBUH) achieved.

The books of John Esposito<sup>13</sup> were among the important reference books for this study. In one of his books: “The Islamic Threat, Myth or Reality?”,<sup>14</sup> he provides an extensive and integrated analysis that combines historical presentation, geographical surveys, and a structural analysis of most Islamic movements and organizations in the world. In addition, the book discusses the reformist attempts to re-interpret the basic principles of Is-

- 
11. Luis Gardier, *The Influence of Islam on the Arab Mentality*, translated by: Khalil Ahmed Khalil. Dar Al Fikr Allebnani, Beirut, 1992. See also: *The Philosophy of Religious Thought between Islam and Christianity*, translated by: Sobhi As-Saleh, Dar Alelm Lilmalayin, Beirut.
  12. Marshall G. S. Hodgson lived between the years 1922-1968. He is a famous American historian and sociologist with numerous writings in medieval European history. His opinions about Islam, its civilization, and the nature of its relationship with the West were bold and objective. The *Venture of Islam* with its three parts is the most famous among his works. It was said that he converted into Islam. See his biography on Wikipedia and in: Marshall G. S. Hodgson (Edited, with an Introduction and Conclusion, by Edmund Burke III) *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam and World History* (Cambridge 1993).
  13. John Esposito, an American researcher specializing in the history of Islam and Muslims. He is one of the most experienced scholars on the movement of political Islam in the contemporary world.
  14. John L. Esposito, translated by: Qasim Abdo Wasim, Dar Al Shorouq, Cairo, 2002.

lam in order to deduce new and up-to-date solutions for the problems facing Muslims in the contemporary world.

Moreover, the author refutes the false claims and accusations against Islam before and after the attacks of 9/11. He was able, through evidence and proof, to introduce a better image of Islam; one that is much closer to the original. Esposito emphasizes the importance of Islam as a global religion and ideological power embraced by more than one fifth of the world's population, as well as its perpetual vitality and influence over an Islamic world that extends from Africa to Southeastern Asia. He warns, with the dawn of the twenty-first century, against filling the gap caused by the end of the Cold War with exaggerated fears from Islam, often described as an "Evil Empire" engaged in war with the New World Order!

The author poses other numerous questions, such as: Does the West have common interests and values with the Islamic world, or is there a clash of global visions looming on the horizon? Is the trend of Islamic movements towards liberation and democracy in the Islamic world just a tactical means for a specific purpose? How will the obligations of Islamic societies be towards pluralism, human rights, status of women and minorities? How can the US policy convert the specter of the Islamist threat into a follow-up process for a common global future?

Other important books are the writings of Leopold Weiss<sup>15</sup> (Muhammad

- 
15. "Leopold Weiss" is Austrian with Jewish origins. He studied philosophy and art at the University of Vienna; then he switched to the press and became a reporter in the Arab and Muslim East. He stayed in Jerusalem for a while; then he visited Cairo. After his conversion to Islam, Muhammad Asad performed pilgrimage and joined Omar Al Mukhtar in his combats. He travelled to Pakistan and met the premier Muslim poet Muhammad Iqbal. He became the head of the Institute of Islamic Studies in Lahore where he wrote books that portrayed him one of the brightest Muslim thinkers in the modern era. One of his most famous writings is the exceptional book: *Islam at the Crossroads*. He also wrote, *The Road to Mecca*, and translated the Holy Qur'an and Sahih Al Bukhari into English.

Asad) who attempts to clarify the meaning of Sunnah, its significance in Islamic jurisdiction, the extent of its authentication, the nature of its relationship with the Muslim, and the consequences of this relationship throughout history. In his book “Islam at the Crossroads”,<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Asad writes that the Sunnah isn’t just a conglomerate of behavioral lexicon; but is a composite unit and a comprehensive interdependent program of action that applies to the life of the Muslim in all its details and aspects. He states that the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) can guide the Muslim throughout his life and experiences. The Sunnah is the sum of the most profound moral, practical, personal, and social advice, and that its applicability across ages and circumstances is its most meaningful aspect.

This study also references many other writings on the tolerance of Islam, and research on the extremism found in Christianity and Judaism. It is a grave mistake to ignore the long civilizational history of Islam, and to consider only the actions of an extremist minority as a representation of this religion.

---

16. Muhammad Asad, *Islam at The Crossroads*, translated by: Amr Faroukh, sixth edition, Dar Alelm Lilmalayin, Beirut, 1965.



## SECTIONS OF THE STUDY

**T**he study follows an ascending order; a brick by brick construction. It consists of six chapters with an introduction and a conclusion.

The first chapter discusses the general status of women before and after the call of the Prophet (PBUH). It is divided into sections: the first on women in the Persian Empire, the second focuses on women in the Roman Empire, the third on Arab women in the pre-Islamic era, while the fourth is on the status of women in the era of the noble Prophet (PBUH).

The second chapter discusses slavery conditions before and after the Prophetic mission. Likewise, it is divided into sections: the first on slaves in the Persian Empire; the second on slaves of the Roman Empire; the third on slavery conditions in the pre-Islamic era; while the fourth discusses the status after the Prophetic mission.

The third chapter discusses ideological freedom (freedom to choose one's religion) throughout the world before and after the Prophetic mission. The chapter is divided into sections: the first on the Persian Empire; the second on the Roman Empire; the third on Arabs before Islam; while the fourth discusses freedom of religion after the mission of the noble Prophet

(PBUH). Moreover, the chapter discusses the principles for treatment of believers of other religions, i.e. justice, equality, and freedom, and how these principles were practiced by the noble Prophet (PBUH). It also discusses the fulfillment of covenants and conventions and Islamic international relations.

The fourth chapter discusses the cultural and civilizational status of Arabs before and after the noble Prophet's (PBUH) call. It is also divided into sections: the first on Arabs before Islam; the second after Islam; the third discusses the changes between the two periods; while the fourth discusses some fields of Islamic civilizational contribution.

The fifth chapter discusses what the biography of the noble Prophet can offer in today's world. It includes an applied study of two issues: the first deals with the family as an institution and the challenges it faces in our world today. The study identifies the dangers of homosexuality on the family and society. It also introduces some steps for dealing with moral and behavioral deviation taken from the biography of the Prophet (PBUH).

The second issue is fanaticism and extremism, and how dangerous they are socially and psychologically. The study identifies how they can be cured through the analysis of some situations in the Prophetic (PBUH) biography, and their extrapolation to our living reality.

The final chapter introduces a vision and a future perception, as well as some practical strategic steps for presenting the personality of the Prophet (PBUH) to the world locally and internationally. It is divided into two sections: the first on example and practical behavior, while the second discusses contemporary means; such as the role of the embassies of Muslim countries throughout the world, validating the role of educational institutions by introducing the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) through the instructional curricula, launching the project of the Prophetic encyclopedia in foreign languages, and finally the role of media institutions.

Finally, the conclusion is a brief summary of the most important outcomes and recommendations of the study.

# CHAPTER I

---

**THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD  
BEFORE AND AFTER THE MESSAGE OF  
THE NOBLE PROPHET (SAWS)**



## INTRODUCTION

**I**t is difficult to apprehend the extent of the qualitative and civilization-al changes that the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) caused without an in-depth investigation of the social, political and cultural situation prior to his message, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula and its surroundings; the launching area for his call. On this the writer Francesco Gabrieli writes:

“It is impossible to deal with Muhammad and his achievement without first learning something about the land, the people, the society and the national tradition into which he was born, and which he partly revolutionized or altered profoundly...”<sup>1</sup>

From what we know, the characteristics of administrative and legislative rule were absent in the Arabian Peninsula; each tribe had its own rules and laws. The North of the Arab Peninsula and its South were areas of religious and political conflicts; direct extensions of the fierce wars between

---

1. Francesco Gabrieli, *Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam*, World University Library, Italy, 1968. p. 25.

the two great powers of the time, namely the Byzantine and the Persian Empires. The Northeast was under the control of the Persian Empire. The South was a theatre for shifting alliances. This situation had an impact on all aspects of life: social, political and cultural.

In this regard Professor Thomas Arnold notes:

“It is important to remember the peculiar character of the Arab society at that time. There was absence of any organized administration or judicial system, such as a government. Each tribe formed a departed and absolutely independent body, and this independence extended itself to the individual members of the tribe, each of whom recognized the authority or leadership of his chief only as being the exponent of a public opinion, which he himself happened to share.

## FIRST TOPIC

### WOMEN IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**A**ccording to Greek law, a free woman had limited rights. She was deprived of inheritance, education and the right to divorce. On the other hand, women slaves had more rights; to practice art, singing and philosophy and to have discussions with men.

During the Roman era, women enjoyed more rights but stayed under a man's authority: her owner's authority if she was a slave and her husband's or father's if she was free. A married woman submitted to her husband's authority or lived with her family and stayed under their control. However, some women of the elite classes enjoyed prestigious positions in society; some became judges or nuns, and others earned their own wealth.

Under Roman law, women were treated as children or fools and were considered incompetent. The Roman law in the "Twelve Tablets" listed the reasons for incompetence as youth, madness and femininity.

The head of the family had the right to sell whoever was under his authority. The introduction of the Twelve Tablets law however restricted the

selling rights to three times for the son. In other words, if the father sold his son and bought him back again, and repeated this three times, the son automatically became free from his father's control. This was not the case for the daughters however. A girl remained under the control of her family until death. Such authority was extended to wives as well and included right of sale, humiliation and even murder.

“Throughout most of the history of the Roman Republic marriage transferred a woman from the authority of her father to the authority of her husband or her husband's father or grandfather, if he were alive. The senior father was the pater families who had total control over all members of his family. In theory that control extended even to life and death, but in reality it was limited to economic matters. The pater families owned and controlled all of the family's wealth. Any money or property a woman possessed at the time of her marriage passed to the control of the pater families of her new husband's family. When trying to work out what the lives of Roman women were really like, you should be at least as critical of ancient sources as you are of modern media coverage of celebrities. Every type of evidence has to be sifted and looked at from different angles if we hope to catch the essence of Roman women, and end up with some kind of understanding of their everyday lives.”<sup>2</sup>

Women of the elite classes in Roman society did enjoy great respect and were able to participate in family and social affairs. However, the poetry and verses praising upper class women in the Roman era do not describe the real conditions for all women. In general women moved from a father's control to that of a husband. They had no right to acquire or manage their wealth, regardless of social stature.

In the lower classes of society, women faced various kinds of violence, humiliation and harsh treatment. This was expected in a primitive environment in a state of constant warfare, where justice fell by the wayside

---

2. Suzanne Dixon: *Roman Women: Following the Clues*.

and the language of power and tyranny ruled. Thus, women as the weaker sex were oppressed and suppressed, protective laws and social assistance programs were absent and domestic violence and wife beating was normal practice.

“A man may chastise his wife and beat her for her own correction; for she is of his household, and therefore the lord may chastise his own.”<sup>3</sup>

During the rule of Justinian women were given the right to own property if they gained money from work or received it from another source. However, if the money was obtained from the head of the family, a woman had no right to use it without his approval.

Illicit relationships between married men and women were the norm and that led to the spread of moral decay in the Roman Empire.

“It is known for sure that married men and women had affairs - even after the emperor Augustus made them illegal. But the Roman orgy is a modern invention (not even Juvenal thought of such a thing).”<sup>4</sup>

In the seventh century the Roman Empire reached a state of such weakness that it encouraged the Persian Empire in the East to attack its territory and occupy Egypt. Thereafter Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, was subjected to a difficult economic boycott with all supplies

- 
3. Coulton, G. G. *Medieval Panorama*. Cambridge: University Press, 1938. p. 615, 617, 636. *Women at Work in Medieval Europe*. Madeleine Pelner Cosman. New York: Facts on File, 2000. *Women and Christianity*. Mary T. Malone. Ottawa: Novalis, 2000. *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*. Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation, no.1. Edited by Alice-Mary Talbot. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996. *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook*. Edited by Emilie Amt. New York: Rutledge, 1993. *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*. Edited by Joel T. Rosenthal. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990. *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England 450-1500*. By Henrietta Leyser. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.
  4. Mary Lefkowitz and Maure, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*, (Johns Hopkins, 1992).

routes cut off. To make matters worse severe drought prevailed and diseases spread.

The conditions for women did not improve appreciably after the Roman Empire adopted the Christian faith. In her book, "The Gospel According to Women", Armstrong outlines the church's position towards women:

"The advent of Christianity was not good news to women at all. The guilt associated with sex and sexual repression put women in an unbearable situation. **All cultures considered women as lower grade humans; as property of men with no independent rights. They were considered weaker than men mentally and spiritually.** .... The belief that virginity takes one to the kingdom of heaven contributed to this situation."<sup>5</sup>

The view that women were the tool of the devil; the source of evil and seduction, and thus responsible for the spread of corruption and deviation, continued. The Romans adopted the opinions of the early churchmen towards women. Saint Irenaeus, who lived in the second half of the second century<sup>6</sup>, discussed this philosophy in his book, "Against Heresies", considering that the first woman, Eve, brought down death and evil for herself and for the entire human race through her disobedience.

"Having become disobedient, she Eve was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race."<sup>7</sup>

Saint Terlotian (150-220 AD) who played a major role in Christian theological philosophy went on to say that women; Eve and her daughters after her, were the devil's gateway. Eve was the first to dispute revelation and the one who persuaded Adam to disobey, as without her help the Devil would not have been able to attack so easily. She destroyed God's image represented in Man. Because of her violation and disobedience, death came to mankind. Even the son of God could not escape from it.

---

5. Karen Armstrong, *The Gospel according to Woman*, Oxford, 1986.

6. Encarta Cd, Irenaeus.

7. Schmidt, *Ibid*, p. 41.

“You Eve are the devil’s gateway ....you are the first deserter of the divine law. You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of your desert that is death, even the Son of God had to die.”<sup>8</sup>

The early Church believed that women, by nature, were made for sin and seduction. They were the source of all evil and temptation. Such views were expressed in various writings and literature of that time. Blame for various disasters and tragedies that hit the world, even floods, was laid squarely at women’s door.<sup>9</sup>

Henceforth, it was believed that the marital relationship was a necessary evil and that virginity was the optimal condition.

In his first message on marriage and virginity, Saint Paul wrote:

“In reference to what you wrote me, it is better for a man not to touch a woman. However, to avoid adultery, let each man have his wife and each woman her husband. The man has to fulfill his woman’s rights and the woman has to do the same. The woman has no power over her body as it belongs to her husband. Man also has no power over his body as it is his wife’s. Neither of you has the right to deny each other, unless through agreement between the two of you and only for a while to allow time for prayer. Then return to normal marital relationship so that you not lose self control and fall in the Devil’s trap. I say this to you not as an order but rather as a license. My wish is to see all people celibate like me, but God has provided each human being with a specific capability. I say for those who are unmarried or widowed that it is better for them to stay like me. But if they are unable to exercise self control they should get married. Marriage is better than burning up with desire.”<sup>10</sup>

It is also reported that Saint Paul said

- 
8. Schmidt, p. 41.
  9. These are the views of Saint Augustine.
  10. First message: Corinthus 9-1/7.

“He who allows his daughter to get married does a good thing and he who doesn’t allow it performs a better deed.... It is good for the man to stay a bachelor unless he is scared of falling in sin.”

This strict viewpoint by Saint Paul in relation to marriage was widely accepted by many church elders to the extent that the Mendiolanense Community, at the end of the fourth century, expelled the monk Jovenian from the church because of his opposition to Paul’s claim that celibacy and virginity were better than marriage.<sup>11</sup> Also, the Alvisa Community in Spain issued a decision prohibiting marriage for senior church monks.

A critical review of the historical era which produced such virginal tendencies shows that it may have been a reaction against the clouds of moral decay under the Roman pagan environment. The morally decadent environment may have fueled monasticism and celibacy as an exaggerated defense mechanism.

In summary, the moral decay which eroded the Roman Empire’s body, often referred to as “moral rot phenomenon”, was considered by many historians as the main reason for its downfall. One such manifestation of this decay was the treatment of women. Women were under the full authority of men, and were considered the property of their husbands. Divorce was not allowed regardless of the situation between the spouses. Religion, as well as law, decreed that spouses stay together to keep the marital rope intact. It was considered disgraceful and shameful for a man or woman to marry again after their spouse dies. Remarriage was considered a major sin in Christianity and second marriages were referred to as “polite adultery.”<sup>12</sup>

---

11. Ali Abd-ElWahid, *the Views of Judaism and Christianity on Bachelorhood*, Azhar Magazine, Muharram 1379 H. July 1959, P. 33. The phrase is taken from Westermarck when discussing the Mendiolanense Society.

12. For all the sayings of the prominent Saints, see Karen Armstrong, *The Gospel According to Woman*, (London: Elm Tree Books, 1986), pp. 52-62. See also Nancy van Vuuren, *The Subversion of Women as Practiced by Churches, Witch-Hunters, and Other Sexists* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press) pp. 28-30.

This outlook did not change even after the winds of the reformist movement blew to revolutionize Christian theological philosophy. Their impact did not reach marriage, family relations, or the viewpoint on women. In this respect Martin Luther, leader of the reform movement, noted that it was rather difficult to talk about Eve without feeling shame for what she did, i.e. the sin in seducing Adam.

“We can hardly speak of her without shame.”<sup>13</sup>

---

13. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, Vol 1 of *Luther's Works*, trans; George Schick, ed; Jaroslav Pelikan, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958, pp. 118-119.



## SECOND TOPIC

### WOMEN IN THE SASSANID EMPIRE

**P**ersian women were despised before the era of Zoroaster. They were even considered filthy during their menstruating period. They were not allowed to co-mingle with others and were isolated within small tents erected outside the city. The husband had absolute authority over his wife including the right to kill her. Polygamy was widely spread and without any limitations.<sup>14</sup> However, women of the royal classes did enjoy freedom and rights. Several queens sat on the throne at different periods of the Empire's life.<sup>15</sup>

Incestuous marriage was also widely spread. Examples of such marriage were known throughout the history of the Sasanian era; such as Bahram Ju-

---

14. Arthur Cotterell, *From Aristotle to Zoroaster*, 1998. Dodgeon M. H., and Lieu S. N. C., *The Roman Eastern Frontiers and the Persian Wars (AD 226-363); A Documentary History*, London (1991), pp. 24, 67, 184, 197 and 307. Sandra Mackey. *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation*. Penguin Group, 1996.

15. *First Iranian queen regnant who ruled Iran over Sassanid empire*. Persian Journal, Iran. Sept 2 2005. [http://www.iranian.ws/iran\\_news/publish/article\\_](http://www.iranian.ws/iran_news/publish/article_)

bain and Gesteseb prior to his adoption of Christianity. This was not considered a sin but a good deed which brings men closer to God.<sup>16</sup>

Zoroaster introduced some important change to the position of women in the Persian society. They received the right to choose their husbands and oppose their fathers in this choice, the freedom of divorce, as well as the right to own property and manage the financial affairs of their husbands if so authorized. However, this improved situation did not last long and when the Zoroaster era ended women returned back to their previous abysmal state. Persian tradition further decreed that women be humiliated as a tool of the Devil and a source of evil.

- 
16. Lawless and Cameron (1994) *Studies in Ancient Persia*, Thomas Nelson, South Melbourne.  
Olmstead, A.T., (1948) *History of the Persian Empire*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Burn, ARR. (1984) *Persia and the Greeks*, Duckworth, London.  
Dandemaev, M. A. and Lukonin, V. G. (1989) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

## THIRD TOPIC

### WOMEN DURING THE PRE-ISLAMIC ERA

**T**here are different views with regard to the situation of women during the pre-Islamic era as the exact conditions of this period are still ambiguous and references are few and far between. However, we can sense a near consensus that women in that era were subjected to suffering and abuse. Studies describe widespread objectionable practices including infanticide, depriving women of inheritance, inheritance of the father's wife after his death, polygamy without limitations, and divorce without control or restriction. The Arabs found justifications for such practices and traditions. The harsh desert environment and rough life contributed to the nomadic character of these societies and forced the Arabs to adopt special lifestyles. The tribe's life was characterized by instability and continuous travel in search of whatever limited means of living could be found in the desert. This difficult environment opened the way for a chain of defensive practices to protect the limited resources; practices which eventually evolved into steadfast traditions.

Of such practices was the absolute loyalty to the tribe and using all available means, including polygamy, to beget more sons in order to protect the

tribal entity and increase its strength.<sup>17</sup> Women as the weaker sex did not contribute much to the tribe's strength and therefore had less value than the males. Another factor which contributed to the Arab negative viewpoint on women was the brutal warfare between the Arab tribes: a large number of men were killed and the women taken into captivity and slavery (a source of shame to the proud Arabs). In fact some of the tribal attacks were for the sole purpose of taking women captives and humiliating the defeated tribe.

The French Orientalist Rodinson<sup>18</sup> says in describing the situation of the weak classes in Mecca at that time:

“The poor, the young and the honest were suffering from upstart arrogance.”<sup>19</sup>

The constancy and invariability of the desert environment helped such traditions to continue across generations and to gain strength and popularity.<sup>20</sup> The harsh life was reflected in the rough treatment in of women and other vulnerable elements in the society.

In summary, we can say that the pre-Islamic society was a male dominated society characterized by continuous warfare and drought periods in harsh desert conditions.

The viewpoint of the pre-Islamic Arab society towards women was not only based on the requirements of the harsh environment but was influenced by what was inherited from previous nations and societies with whom the Arabs had ties such as the Persians, the Indians, the Romans and the Kildanians.<sup>21</sup>

---

17. Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, Rutledge, London, 2003, p. 115.

18. Maxime Rodinson, the well known French Orientalist, 1914-2004 AD. His first book (1960) discusses the Prophet's (PBUH) life and social achievements. See translation in Free Wikipedia – Maxime Rodinson.

19. Maxime Rodinson, *Muhammad*, trans: Anne Carter, Pantheon Books. New York, 1980. p. 36.

20. Al Duri, previous reference.

21. Zahia Kaddura, *Populism and its Social and Political impact in Islamic Life in*

The Arabs were linked to other Semitic nations through language, origin and geographic area. The inhabitants of the Arab peninsula were not all Arabs but were intermingled with refugees and remnants of conquerors and slaves from different races and faiths such as Persians, Indians and Romans. Therefore, the pre-Islamic Arabs were not devoid of all culture. The Yemeni Arabs for example had an important role in creating the Arab civilization.<sup>22</sup>

People of other religions such as Jews and Christians were living alongside Arabs in the Peninsula. Yathrib (now called AlMadeena) was one of the gathering points for many of the Jewish tribes that migrated from Byzantine Syria since the first and second centuries. Migration of Jews to the Arabian Peninsula increased following the failure of the Jewish rebellion against Roman rule in the year 70 AD. Similar migrations followed in the period between 132 and 135 AD. The Jewish influence in Yathrib was apparent in the economic, political and cultural spheres.<sup>23</sup> Jews inhabited many other villages such as Khaibar, Fadak, Wadi al Qura and Taymaa.<sup>24</sup>

Jews who lived in the Arab land assimilated the Bedouin characteristics. They were greatly affected by the Arab way of life to the extent that many of them adopted an Arabic dialect over their Hebrew language.<sup>25</sup> They al-

---

the First Abbasid Era, Lebanese Book, Beirut, 1972, 28, Most people in the Byzantine state have Semitic ancestry.

22. See Abdul Aziz Thaalibi, previous reference, Page 67-106.
23. Akram Diyâ alUmare, *Madianan Society at the Time of the Prophet*, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, Virginia, 1991, Vol 1, p. 44. See also: Francesco Gabrieli, *The Arabs: A Compact History*, Trans: Savator Attanasio, Greenwood Press, USA, 1957, p. 16.
24. Israel and Livinson, *History of Jews in Arab Lands pre and post Islam*, P'timad Publishing, Egypt, 1927 AD, page 14.
25. Jews existed in Iraq since the Babylonian era and the Ashurian wars in Syria. Jews existed in Yemen since the Fourth Century AD. Judaism was the official religion of Yemen at one point. As to Arabia, there are reports of Jews migrating there since the days of Moses and David. The Jews were mainly in Yathrib (AlMadeena) and worked mainly in commerce and industry. They played a more active role than Christians in the Arab Peninsula. See Saad Zaghlul Abd

so adopted the tribal ways of life and took an interest in poetry. Some of their well-known poets are Kaab bin al Ashraf, Shuraih bin Omran, AlRabee ibn abi al Aqeeq, and others.<sup>26</sup>

Arabs also took on several Jewish traditions such as the practice of magic and sorcery. Jews were expert magicians and Arabs used to approach them for spells.<sup>27</sup> Many Arab tribes acknowledged the superiority of the Jews in science and knowledge and respected them as a “people of the Book” (i.e. having a Divine message). It was the Jews who foretold of the coming of Mohammad based on the information in their Holy book, the Torah.<sup>28</sup>

The Influence of neighboring nations on each other cannot be ignored. Archaeological investigations show that the pre-Islam Arabs were not living in isolation.<sup>29</sup> Some of the Hejaz Arabs even converted to Judaism including some Arab tribes around Mecca such as Kenanah, Bani al Harith bin Kaab and Bani Kenda. Also some from the tribes of Aws and the Khazraj converted to the religion of their Jewish neighbors in Yathrib.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, some of the teaching of the Torah spread among the Arabs, including the views on women as guilty of the original sin in seducing Adam to eat what God forbade.<sup>31</sup>

AlHameed, History of Arabs before Islam, Arab Nahda publishing, Beirut, 1975, 359 onward.

26. Akram Diyaa AlOmari, *Civil Society at the time of the Prophet*, PBUH, Islamic University, Madeena, 1403H/1983AD, 57 onwards.
27. Some Jews wrote poetry in Arabic such as Samuel, Kaab bin AlAshraf, Sammak, and others. See, *Influence of Jews in the Arabic Peninsula Society and how they were Influenced by it*, Jawad Ali, *History of Arabs before Islam*, Dar Al Elm for Millions, Beirut, 1976, part 6, 560 onward. See also Carl Brokleman, *History of Arab Literature*, Dar AlMaaref, Beirut, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, part 1, 121.
28. Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad..Prophet for our time*.
29. Jawad Ali, previous reference.
30. AlBakri, Glossary of Nations and Places, Reviewed by Mustafa AlSaqa, League of Writing, Translation and Publishing, Egypt, 1945 AD, part I, page 29.
31. Menachem M. Brayer, *the Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature: A Psycho-social Perspective* (Hoboken, N. J: Ktav Publishing House, 1986) p. 239.

In Genesis we are told that Eve ate from the forbidden tree based on advice from the snake:

“The snake was the craftiest of all the animals that God created. The snake said to the woman:”It is true that God told you not to eat from all paradise trees?” The woman said to the snake: “We eat from all the paradise tree fruit except that of the tree in the center of paradise as God told us to avoid it lest we die.” The snake said to the woman: “You will not die but God knows that the day you eat from the fruit of that tree your eyes will be opened wide and you will become like God knowing good from evil.” The woman saw that the tree looked enticing to eat and believed that it would grant knowledge. Thus she took of its fruits and ate it and gave her husband who ate as well.”

Hence God punished the woman according to that sin.

The Lord said to the woman: “Why did you do that?” The woman replied: “The snake seduced me.” The Lord said: “I will increase your weariness when you become pregnant and you will give birth with pain and feel lonesome when you become a slave to your husband.”<sup>32</sup>

Eve’s daughters inherited that sin. The theme of woman’s seduction and her sin as well as her ability to tempt man is repeated many times in the Old Testament.<sup>33</sup>

Judaism was not the only religion that appeared in the Arab land. Christianity was also there particularly in Syria where heads of tribes as well as

Susan W. Schneider, *Jewish and Female* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984) p. 237. Clara M. Henning, “*Cannon Law and the Battle of the Sexes*” in Rosemary R. Ruether, ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) p. 272.

32. Genesis 7-2:3.

33. See; Leonard J. Swidler, *Women in Judaism: the Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1976) p. 115. Louis M. Epstein, *The Jewish Marriage Contract* (New York: Arno Press, 1973) p. 149.

Arab rulers of the Ghassasenah and others were converts.<sup>34</sup> There were also Christians in Mecca.<sup>35</sup> The call to Christianity increased in the Arab land during the Roman persecution era prior to conversion of the official Roman Empire to Christianity. Many monks were forced to flee and settle in the Arab peninsula. These monks appeared frequently in the markets and communities and preached the Christian faith, reminding people of the resurrection and Day of Judgment.<sup>36</sup>

Thus efforts combined to form this culturally inherited view toward women in the Arab tribal mentality. Arabs were well known for the sanctity of their customs and inherited traditions. This reverence for the ways of their forefathers became a barrier between them and the acceptance of Islam in its early days. The reason for their survival and uniqueness as nation lay in these traditions. Thus, a struggle began between the polytheists and the followers of the new call who found the stubborn attachment to tradition a form of blind imitation to be rejected.<sup>37</sup>

Notwithstanding the above, some women of the elite classes in the pre-Islamic era had high positions and enjoyed some civil rights such as the choice of a husband. However most were forced into marriage.<sup>38</sup> References quote that many women were characterized by wisdom and sound opinions to the extent that their tribes took on the mother's name (instead of the father's) such as Mazyaha, Bageelah and Bahelah tribes.

---

34. The Arab converts did not adopt the Roman Orthodox Christianity but followed the Eastern Church which was opposed to the Romans. The Romans considered the Eastern sects heretics. The Eastern Christians concentrated more on the Old Testament instead of the Bibles and were known as Jacobites, i.e. believers of the one nature of Christ.

35. Many Christians lived in pre-Islamic Mecca, mostly from the remnants of refugees, slaves or traders. This may be one of the reasons the Polytheists accused the Prophet PBUH of copying his religion from the Christians.

36. See also. Yaqut AlHamawi, previous reference, part 5, 266 and Ahmad Ameen, previous reference, 27.

37. For more on this please see AlDuri, previous reference 40.

38. *Allsaba in Tamyeez Assahaba*, part 7, page 613.

Some women assumed professions and practiced trade for financial gain. Others engaged in fortune telling and witchcraft. Some practiced medicine, midwifery, wet nursing or female circumcision. Others were beauticians. Such work was performed for a fee and women were able to amass personal fortunes.<sup>39</sup>

Marriage, for men, was wide open without limitations as was divorce. Men had the right to divorce and to restore back their wives whenever they wanted. In case of the husband's death the woman stayed home for a whole year and refrained from wearing perfume or new clothes, from combing her hair or trimming her fingernails.<sup>40</sup>

In general women in pre-Islamic times were subjected to tremendous suffering in many aspects of life, except in the rare case where the woman was of prominent social or economic status. This, however, varied by tribe and depended on the economic status of the woman well as her personal characteristics as in the case of Khadija (the Prophet's, (SAWS), wife) who was a respected merchant in Quraish.<sup>41</sup>

Women and children in Jahiliah (pre-Islam) were also denied inheritance. The continuous travel, numerous wars, and the absence of a central authority did not allow for restoring rights or application of law and order. Women and children were deprived of inheritance because of their inability to assume responsibility in defending the tribe. Rights were closely connected with the extent of the role assumed in the protection and defense of the big family which is the tribe.<sup>42</sup> This overrode factors of fami-

---

39. AlHawafi, pervious reference, page 399.

40. AlBukhari (5337) and Muslim (1489).

41. Abu Abdallah Mohammad Ismail AlBukhari, previous reference , part 5, 2197. See also the quote: "In pre-Islamic times a woman was considered nothing, until God decreed our rights in Islam", part 4, 1866. Narrated also by Abu AlHusain Muslim bin AlHajaj AlQushairi (261), Sahih Muslim, Reviewed by Mohammad Fual Abd AlBaki, Tradition Revival House, Beirut, part 2, 1108.

42. A tribe is a social unit comprising several family trees which may be interconnected. It is also a self-contained integrated political and economic unit. Mu-

ly kinship and social relationship. The tribe normally assumed all religious and political duties.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, the general prevailing situation of the time was to deny the female of inheritance completely and this was widespread practice among the various Arab tribes. The justification was that women were in need of special protection in a harsh environment characterized by constant attacks and warfare and that only the man can assume such role.

In her book, “Gospel According to Women”, Karen Armstrong says:

“We find that some women in the dawn of Islam enjoyed a great deal of freedom and that Islam started the practice of “the Harem” only after its interaction with Byzantine Christianity which treated its women thus.”<sup>44</sup>

We do not see the necessity for generalization with regard to the issue of female infanticide. There is no scientific evidence to show a clear shortage in percentage of females in comparison with males in pre-Islamic Arab communities. This clearly shows that female infanticide was not common among the Arab tribes.

The free Encyclopedia states:

“In pre-Islamic Arabia the roles of the genders was never explicitly defined, and varied widely among the numerous tribes. For example, in the prosperous southern region of the Arabian Peninsula the religious edicts of Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism held sway among the Sabians and Himyarites, whereas in cities such as Makkah, the city where the prophet

---

hammad Ali Kattan, *A Study of the Badia, Country, and City Societies*, Dar Al-Jeel, Cairo, 1979AD, 73.

43. However, it is said that the first people to give women in Jahiliya equal inheritance was a man called Thu AlMajased AlYashkari bin Jasham bin Habib. See also Almad Mahmoud AlShafii: *Inheritance in Islam*, University Cultural Establishment, Egypt, 1983AD, page 19.

44. K. Armstrong, *The Gospel According to Woman*, Em Tree Books, London, 1986, pp. 2-3.

of Islam, Muhammad, was born, a tribal set of rights was in place, in particular amongst the Bedouin, which varied from tribe to tribe. Thus there was no single definition of the roles played, and rights held, by women prior to the advent of Islam. There were instances where women held high positions of power and authority; there were also patterns of homicidal abuse of women, including instances of men killing female infants considered to be a liability.”<sup>45</sup>

---

45. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender\\_roles\\_in\\_Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_roles_in_Islam)



## FOURTH TOPIC

### STATUS OF WOMEN DURING THE ERA OF THE PROPHET (SAWS)

**T**he Era of the Prophecy and the dawn of Islam were characterized by the birth of faith-based legislative systems and the emergence of new values in the Arab society: values of succor for the weak and oppressed and human equality between all members of the community without distinction in all its forms.

The polytheists of Quraish resisted these new principles which they perceived as a revolution against their inherited social, political and tribal system; a system revered and sanctified despite all its injustices and flaws, being the system of their fathers and forefathers. Nonetheless, the Islamic call succeeded in the eradication of many abnormal practices towards women and other vulnerable members of society. This was accomplished by declaring equality and rights for all human beings with no distinction. Differences in class, sex, race, color, and wealth were ignored. The only allowable difference between people was in their degree of piety: an acquired rather than inherited quality.

The Holy Qur'an, in more than one place, emphasizes the unity of origin for women and men:

*[O MANKIND! Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women.<sup>1</sup> And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand [your rights] from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Verily, God is ever watchful over you!]* AlNisaa 1

There is no reference whatsoever in the Qur'an to the "original sin" by Eve (or even Adam) passed on to their children:

*[But Satan caused them both to stumble therein, and thus brought about the loss of their erstwhile state. And so We said: "Down with you, [and be henceforth] enemies unto one another; and on earth you shall have your abode and your livelihood for a while!"]* AlBaqara 36

Both Adam and Eve committed a sin and but God guided Adam to the way of repentance and forgave them both:

*[Thereupon Adam received words [of guidance] from his Sustainer, and He accepted his repentance: for, verily, He alone is the-Acceptor of Repentance, the Dispenser of Grace.]* AlBaqara 37

In general the Qura'nic message for Adam and his children revolves around the following principles:

- Human beings are honored beings.

*[AND LO! Thy Sustainer said unto the angels: "Behold, I am about to establish upon earth one who shall inherit it." They said: "Wilt Thou place on it such as will spread corruption thereon and shed blood -whereas it is we who extol Thy limitless glory, and praise Thee, and hallow Thy name?" [God] answered: "Verily, I know that which you do not know."]* AlBaqara 30

- Humans have a tendency to succumb to desire and seduction.

*[But Satan caused them both to stumble therein]* AlBaqara  
36

But human beings also have the capability to resist and rise above their desires:

*[Thereafter, [however,] his Sustainer elected him [for His grace], and accepted his repentance, and bestowed His guidance upon him]* Taha 122

Because of this quality God gave Man dominion over Earth. This dominion is for both men and women. They are both accountable for this responsibility as they come from one origin:

*[O MANKIND! Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women.1 And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand [your rights] from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Verily, God is ever watchful over you!]* AlNisaa 1

In this regard, Sir Thomas Arnold<sup>46</sup> says:

“No Arab – he argued- has offered to his nation more precious advantages than those I bring you. I offer you happiness in this world and in the life to come.”<sup>47</sup>

---

46. Thomas Arnold, the well-known English historian (1842-1795 AD), one of his most famous book is “*The Call to Islam*” where he critiques the misconceptions about the spread of Islam by the sword and contends that Islam spread because of its great principles.

47. Thomas Arnold, *The spread of Islam in the World*, Goodword books, India, 2003, p. 13.

Thus, the Arabian Peninsula witnessed an ideological and social transformation; more like a mutation or revolution in modern terminology as the well known historian Karen Armstrong indicates:

“...in fact the emancipation of women was dear to the Prophet’s heart. We must remember what life had been like for women in the pre-Islamic period when female infanticide was the norm and when women had no rights at all. Like slaves, women were treated as an inferior species, who had no legal existence. In such a primitive world, the very idea that a woman could be a witness or could inherit anything in her own right was astonishing. We must recall that in Christian Europe, women had to wait until the nineteenth century before they had anything similar: even then, the law remained heavily weighted towards men.”<sup>48</sup>

The Qur’an started by condemning strongly the attitude of some tribes with regard to the birth of females; i.e. female infanticide. This started the change of the society from a patriarchal one to one based on cooperation and solidarity between the two sexes: man and woman. The Qur’an also attacked all forms of social injustice that fell upon helpless people such as slaves, children and women. It declared the principle of equality to uproot all such practices. The teachings of Islam caused a huge leap in the social and legislative stature of women and removed the signs of the prevailing injustices. It declared an **equality of integration and not of equivalence** as each sex has its own unique characteristics.

In another verse the Almighty emphasizes Man’s responsibility and ties it to righteousness which is the foundation for the role that both men and women are entrusted with.

*[Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed messages for all who are endowed with insight,*

---

48. Karen Armstrong.

*[and] who remember God when they stand, and when they sit, and when they lie down to sleep, and [thus] reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: "O our Sustainer! Thou hast not created [aught of] this without meaning and purpose. Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! Keep us safe, then, from suffering through fire!*

*"O our Sustainer! Whomsoever Thou shalt commit to the fire, him, verily, wilt Thou have brought to disgrace [in this world]; and such evildoers will have none to succour them.*

*"O our Sustainer! Behold, we heard a voice call [us] unto faith, 'Believe in your Sustainer!' - and so we came to believe. O our Sustainer! Forgive us, then, our sins, and efface our bad deeds; and let us die the death of the truly virtuous!*

*"And, O our Sustainer, grant us that which Thou hast promised us through Thy apostles, and disgrace us not on Resurrection Day! Verily, Thou never failest to fulfill Thy promise!"*

*And thus does their Sustainer answer their prayer: "I shall not lose sight of the labour of any of you who labours [in My way], be it man or woman: each of you is an issue of the other. Hence, as for those who forsake the domain of evil, and are driven from their homelands, and suffer hurt in My cause, and fight [for it], and are slain - I shall most certainly efface their bad deeds, and shall most certainly bring them into gardens through which running waters flow, as a reward from God: for with God is the most beautiful of rewards."]* Al Imran 190-195

In the above verses, the goal and purpose for human existence is defined. Man is responsible for acknowledging God's oneness and worshipping him alone. The verses also define that good deeds of various kinds are rewardable acts of worship for men and women.<sup>49</sup> The Almighty says:

---

49. Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women, Islam and the State", *Middle East Report*, No. 173, Gender and Politics. (Nov. - Dec., 1991), pp. 9-14. John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, p.99, 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press, 2005. *Fatima Mernis-*

*[As for anyone - be it man or woman - who does righteous deeds, and is a believer withal - him shall We most certainly cause to live a good life.] Al Nahl 97*

Islam guards rights as well as responsibilities. For every right a human being enjoys, it is his duty to guard this right for others. Islam also calls for honoring women and treating them well so that they can fulfill their role.

Under this respectful and inclusive viewpoint on women in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Muslim women flourished in various fields. They played important roles in the establishment and construction of the Muslim nation. Muslim society did not justify any kind of preferential treatment based on sex with concern to duties, responsibilities or rewards.

In describing this great leap in the status of women, the well known Orientalist Watt Montgomery<sup>50</sup> says:

“It is true that Islam is still, in many ways, a man’s religion. But I think I’ve found evidence in some of the early sources that seems to show that Muhammad made things better for women. It appears that in some parts of Arabia, notably in Mecca, a matrilineal system was in the process of being replaced by a patrilineal one at the time of Muhammad. Growing prosperity caused by a shifting of trade routes was accompanied by a growth in individualism. Men were amassing considerable personal wealth and wanted to be sure that this would be inherited by their own actual sons, and not simply by an extended family of their sisters’ sons. This led to deterioration in the rights of women. At the time Islam began, the conditions of women were terrible - they had no right to own property, were supposed to be the property of the man, and if the man died everything went to his sons.

---

*si, Women in Muslim History: Traditional Perspectives and New Strategies, From Women’s Rebellion and Islamic Memory 1996 Zed Books, Ltd.*

50. The well known Orientalist Walt Montgomery, 1909-2006 AD, is considered one of the most famous Orientalists specializing the Islamic History in the West. He has a number of books on Islam and the Prophet PBUH of which is *Mohammad in Mecca, Mohammad as a Prophet* and *Man of State*.

Muhammad improved things quite a lot. By instituting rights of property ownership, inheritance, education and divorce, he gave women certain basic safeguards. Set in such historical context the Prophet can be seen as a figure who testified on behalf of women's rights."<sup>51</sup>

The Prophet (SAWS) encouraged Muslim women to seek knowledge. He made it a duty on every Muslim. He said (SAWS) : (Seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim).

i.e. each individual: man and woman. Education is the basic factor for the advancement of any nation. Thus, many Muslim female figures emerged who contributed to the preparation of generations of scientists and scholars. They were led by the Mothers of Believers (the Prophet's (SAWS) wives) such as Aysha and Um Salama and Hafsa, God bless them all. Muslim women also had a prominent role in war.

Across the centuries, history has immortalized the names of several women as witnesses for the scientific and cultural status of women in the Islamic era. This fact was not denied by historians. Writer Fatima AlMernisi says:

"The first decades of Islam, as we have seen, are very eloquent on women's contribution at that time and produce models of femininity like the active businesswoman Khadija, or the first shari'a-maker A'isha, the Prophet's third wife, or women who exercised political power within the Muslim civilization. Data on women in the first decades of Islam is vital since conservative regimes and fundamentalists base their policies on women in Muslim tradition. Sakina Shihabi's editing of the comments of Imam Ibn 'Asakir's special volume on women, *Tarikh Dimashq* (History of Damascus), is probably one of the best examples of this research. This text contains 196 biographies of famous Muslim women who either lived in or visited Damascus and it gave Ibn 'Asakir an opportunity to summarize all ex-

---

51. Interview: William Montgomery (Watt), *The Coracle*, the Iona Community, summer 2000, issue 3:51, pp. 8-11.

isting data until his time (12th century AD) on some of the most active and forceful women of our civilization. The volume on women is the last of an 80-volume history of Damascus, the editing of which Sakina Shihabi made her life's work. She carried out what is called in Arabic *tahqiq* (literally 'investigation') which means that she did extensive background research so that the modern reader could identify, by a simple glance at the reference at the bottom of the page, all names and events quoted. She explains her motives, since most of the rest of the volumes are still in manuscript form, for prioritizing the text on women: 'I preferred to bring alive Imam Ibn 'Asakir's volume on women ... because it highlights a dimension of our Muslim civilization which is still totally obscure, that concerning women'. She summarizes the importance of the work by saying that Ibn 'Asakir's women' makes vibrant five centuries of the political, social, literary and religious life of our civilization."<sup>52</sup>

The progressive nature of Islam appears in its encouragement for the education for women in opposition to existing laws and traditions of the time. Athen's Laws, which were considered by historians as the most democratic of ancient times, limited education to males and closed it completely for females. Aristotle, stated in his book, "Politics", that nature did not provide women with any significant mental readiness, therefore they should only be prepared for home, nursery and maternal affairs. Aristotle was not expressing his personal opinion but rather recording public opinion and practices in Athens; considered the most civilized democratic nation in the pre-Islamic world.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, when Plato, in his Platonian City, decreed the principles of equality between men and women and the right to education, culture and employment for both, his opinions were ridiculed by other Athens scholars,

---

52. *Fatima Mernissi, Women in Muslim History: Traditional Perspectives and New Strategies, From Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory.* 1996 Zed Books, Ltd.

53. Dobbs, D. 3.1996, *Family Matters: Aristotle's Appreciation of Women and the Plural Structure of Society, American Political Science Review* Volume 90, Number 1, March 1996.

philosophers, and poets to the extent that Aristofan, the Dean of Greek comedian poets wrote two comedies to ridicule his opinions: “The female parliament” and “Plutos”. One of the stars of the plays was quoted as saying: “It is not proper for a woman to waste her time on education and culture since her basic duties, which should consume her time, effort and philosophy should not go beyond raising kids , housekeeping, provision of family needs and economizing family expenditure.”<sup>54</sup>

At the end of the seventeenth century A.D. some faint voices rose in Europe calling for the education of women within very narrow boundaries. These calls were led by the scholar Fenelon<sup>55</sup> in his book, titled “L’Education des Filles”, which appeared in 1680 A.D. However, such calls did not receive any appreciable response from most European nations of that time.

In view of the openness of Islamic societies, it was inevitable that the rising role of women witnessed in the early decades of Islam should become influenced by the backward views of women in other cultures and civilizations. This is especially true during the decades of recession in the Muslim countries and the invasions and wars that the Islamic countries were subjected to. The result was the intrusion of several traditions and behaviors foreign to Islam and far removed from the essence of its teachings. Backward ideas on the nature of women and their role in the community became widespread in the Muslim societies.

This influence appeared clearly in the new attitudes of some Muslims towards women; such as depriving women from the right of education in the name of religion. This led to the spread of ignorance and myths among

---

54. Mohammad Mitwali Asha’rawi, *Fatawas*, Modern Library, Egypt, 2001 AD, p. 207.

55. François Fénelon 1651-1715, French theological scholar and writer whose works include: *The existence of God in English* and *Raising Girls*. See translation in: François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon.” *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, 2nd ed. Gale Research, 1998.

a rising numbers of uneducated women who became easy prey for superstitions, witchcraft and other warped beliefs and behaviors.

Thus, the status of women in the Muslim community became governed by imported deviant behaviors that had lost their historical significance at the expense of Islam which came to eradicate such habits and behaviors. Unfortunately the situation has continued to worsen until the present time. Some modern Western writers and scholars use the current abysmal circumstances for Muslim women as proof of the backwardness of Islam and Muslims and use the excuse of “liberating women” as false justification for their aggressive and imperialistic policies in Muslim countries.

“In the Middle East, the treatment of women provided Europeans with an excuse to declare the inferiority of Muslims and their religion, and also justification for Europe’s imperialist and colonialist policies and practices.”<sup>56</sup>

A large number of the injustices inflicted on women in Muslim societies are the result of imported foreign ideas and habits or from a misinterpretation by Muslims of some Qur’anic verses or Hadeeths.<sup>57</sup>

On this John Esposito<sup>58</sup> says:

- 
56. Wiebke Walther, *In Islam Women From Medieval To Modern Times*, Markus Wiener Publishing New York, 1993, p. 8.
  57. A number of contemporary writers and scholars warned against the mixing of traditions and religion: Mohammad Gazali, *Women Affairs between Stagnant and Imported Traditions*, Dar ASHuruq, Beirut and Cairo, 1410H/1991AD, Marwan Ibrahim AlQaisi, *Muslim Women between Fatwas and Current Practices*, Islamic Institute for Education, Science and Culture, Morocco, 1411H/1991AD, 19, AbdAllah Fahd AlNufaisi, *In the Saddle of the Word*”, Kuwait, 1411H/1991AD, 164 onwards. See also Amira El Azhary Sonbol, *Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islam in History*, Syracuse University Press, New York, 1996, p. 34.
  58. Professor John Esposito, Professor of International Relations and Islamic Studies, Georgetown University, Born in 1940 AD. He has a number of studies on Islam including: *The Islamic World: Past and Present*, *The Oxford Encyclopedia for Modern Islamic World* in 4 parts, *Oxford Islamic Dictionary*, *Islam and the West after 9/11*, and *What Everyone Should Know about Islam*.

“The study of women in Islam and Muslim society is complex, reflecting the diverse and varied realities of Muslim women and Muslim societies throughout the ages. Alongside ideals embodied in the Qur’an and the traditions (hadith) of Muhammad, one must look at the actual condition of Muslim women in diverse time periods and sociohistorical contexts. The status of women in Islam was profoundly affected not only by the fact that Islamic belief interacted with and was informed by diverse cultures, but also, and of equal importance, that the primary interpreters of Islamic law and tradition were men (religious scholars or ulama) from those cultures.”<sup>59</sup>

In summary we can say that whatever is falsely linked to Islam in terms of deviant behavior or erroneous interpretations of Qur’anic or Sunnah texts by some Muslims; all of this cannot hide the fact that not a single Islamic text or ruling denigrates women in any way, shape or form.

---

59. Yvonne Haddad and John Esposito. *Islam, Gender, and Social Change*, Published 1998. Oxford University Press. pp. 163.



## CHAPTER II

---

SLAVERY CONDITIONS BEFORE AND  
AFTER THE PROPHET'S PBUH MESSAGE



## PREFACE

Slavery is an economic and political system, practiced by Man since ancient times. For Arabs and others, slavery was a pillar of the economy, and their personal lives depended heavily on slaves. According to the free encyclopedia Wikipedia:

“Slavery is a social-economic system under which certain persons – known as slaves – are deprived of their personal freedom and compelled to provide their labor or services without compensation. The term also refers to the status or condition of those persons who are treated as the property of another person or household. Slaves are held against their will from the time of their capture, purchase, or birth, and are deprived of the right to leave, to refuse work, or to receive compensation in return for their labor. As such, slavery is one form of free labor.”<sup>1</sup>

Some historians believe that the institution of slavery dates back to the second century B.C. in Han China. It has been a feature of all ancient civilizations since and most of their famous historical landmarks, temples and other memorable structures are the result of the hard labor of their slaves.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery>.

2. *Britannica Cd*, Slavery.

The institution of slavery was adopted by societies as diverse as ancient Assyria, Babylonia, China, Egypt, India, Persia, and Mesopotamia, in classical Greece, Rome, Africa, the Islamic world and among the New World Indians. At the time of Christ, there were probably between two and three million slaves in Italy, making up 35 to 40 percent of the population.

The ancient Egyptians used slaves for the construction of royal palaces and pyramids as well as in fighting their wars. In ancient Greece, slavery was the norm to the extent that most residents of the city of Athens, notwithstanding its democratic system, were slaves. This is clear from the writings of Homer: *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Greek society was divided into masters and slaves. The “masters” believed that slaves, who did most of the work, were created to service them, and thus treated them with contempt. They considered them as property to be bought and sold. The main source of slaves was war, where prisoners and the people of the conquered countries were taken as slaves. Another source was piracy on the open seas. The Greek pirates kidnapped travelers from the peaceful populations on the African and European shores, and sold them as slaves in their markets. The owners treated slaves as personal property; mortgaging, selling and disposing of them without any accountability.

Other sources were debt default, where the women and children were sold into slavery to pay their debts. Also homeless children, civil prisoners (as punishment for their crimes), people selling themselves off to escape poverty, and offspring of slaves (considered slaves even if their fathers were free); all these formed abundant sources for the slavery-dependent Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup>

---

3. Rodriguez, Junius P., ed., *The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery* (1997).

4. Islam came when slavery was widespread in the Arabian Peninsula, and laid down the framework and laws to improve treatment of slaves and encourage their emancipation. Freeing a slave was the Islamic expiation for many sins, as a means to end the trade and prepare the ground for a gradual prohibition of slavery. By the end of the Prophet’s life, PBUH, the number of slaves had decreased significantly. However this trend was soon reversed with the Islamic conquests and the growing number of war prisoners.

## FIRST TOPIC

### SLAVERY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**T**he Roman society started off as an agricultural society and slowly developed into a trade society where only the dominant upper classes enjoyed the rights of citizenship. The rest of the population were poor slaves with no rights. The Romans mistreated and humiliated their slaves as well as the people under their reign. They ignored basic human rights and public freedoms. The Roman Emperor represented the state and thus had absolute powers and the right to interfere in all public and private affairs, including family relationships.<sup>5</sup>

The slaves had no rights whatsoever. They did not have the right to marry or have families. Roman law also decreed that slaves had to protect their master against any attack. If they failed to do so, they were sentenced to death.<sup>6</sup>

- 
5. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Roman Empire: The Paradox of Power* [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/empire\\_03.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/empire_03.shtml)  
*Human Rights in Roman Law Countries*, Charles de Visscher, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 243, Essential Human Rights (Jan., 1946), pp. 53-59.
  6. *Slavery in the Roman Empire* by RH Barrow (Barnes & Noble, 1998). *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* by KR Bradley (Oxford

The State had the right to take into slavery anyone who did not pay tax or did not show up for a summons. In addition, criminals and rebels were fair target for enslavement by the state. As in the Greek society, slaves were treated as property, with the owner having the total freedom to buy, sell, or even kill them.

Much the same situation existed in Gaelic societies (the populations of France and the Italian Alps). If any inhabitant of the lower Rhine River married a slave they signed themselves into slavery or servitude. The same fate met a free woman who married a slave. She lost her freedom, and received a punishment.

This situation continued even after the Romans adopted Christianity. Saint Paul decreed that slaves had a *Christian obligation* to submit to their masters. He ordered them to obey their masters in *the same way* they obey Christ. He said in his letter to the Ephesians:

“O Servants! Obey your masters in body, with fear and showing complete and perfect fidelity, as you would for Christ...do not serve with the *eye to please people*, but as the servants of Christ, working as per the will of God, serve from the *heart*; service with good intention as to the Lord and not to men. Whatever good one does, he will get from his Lord, whether slave or free.<sup>7</sup>

St. Peter and other Fathers of the Church endorsed this commandment stating that the state of slavery was as a result of God’s wrath and was an expiation for human sins.

---

University Press, 1987). *Slavery and Society at Rome* by KR Bradley (Cambridge University Press, 1994; Spanish translation 1998)

7. *The Bible, Paul’s letter to the Ephesians*, chapter VI.

## SECOND TOPIC

### SLAVERY AMONG THE ARABS

Slavery was widespread among Arabs before Islam, its supply fed by the uninterrupted tribal wars in the Arabian Peninsula with the victors taking the defeated people as slaves. Slavery was a tool in the power struggle among Arabs. When a weak tribe met a strong tribe, it surrendered to the strong tribe and its members became its slaves.

The Arab commercial convoys would head out of the Arabian peninsula towards the Levant, led by the Arab elites and serviced by the slaves (women and men) brought from Africa as prisoners of war. The slaves would stand guard, set up the tents, water and feed the camels and perform other arduous tasks that their masters deemed beneath them.

Mastery was over body and mind: the slave followed his master in religion and belief. He or she did not have the right to independent thought. The Master had absolute freedom to act as he wished with his slave as he owned him completely.



## THIRD TOPIC

### THE HOLY PROPHET (PBUH) AND SLAVERY

**T**he Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, from the start of his message, established the principle of human equality. His message was for all; masters and slaves without discrimination or distinction. According to the free encyclopedia Wikipedia:

“Slavery was prevalent in Rome during the Roman Empire. The slaves built the monuments and structures of the great civilizations of the ancient world. Slavery was rooted in these ancient civilizations. In the seventh century, Islam came and one of its first priorities was to call for the humane treatment for the slaves and for the abolition of slavery. The Prophet, peace be upon him, instructed Muslims to treat their slaves well and show them kindness. For the first time in human history, slaves received human rights.”

The texts of the Quran honor human beings regardless of origin, tribe and color. God says:

*[NOW, INDEED, We have conferred dignity on the children of Adam, and borne them over land and sea, and provided for them*

*sustenance out of the good things of life, and favoured them far above most of Our creation.] Al Isra 70*

A call for human dignity regardless of race, social standing or color....

The Prophet, PBUH, was aware of the impact of such a call in a society based on class distinctions and racial discrimination. It was a call which would strip away the authority of the Arab elites over their slaves and concubines, and would eliminate the ancient class system which provided free labor to the Arabian market.

The Holy Prophet, PBUH, stressed that Islam was a universal religion, and that God had sent him as an act of mercy to the whole world without exception.

*[And [thus, O Prophet,] We have sent thee as [an evidence of Our] grace towards all the world.] Al Anbiyaa 107*

And:

*[HALLOWED is He who from on high, step by step, has bestowed upon His servant the standard by which to discern the true from the false, so that to all the world it might be a warning] Al Furqan 1*

*[O MANKIND! Worship your Sustainer, who has created you and those who lived before you, so that you might remain conscious of Him] Al Baqarah 21*

It is thus understandable that the first to answer the call to Islam and welcome the call to equality were the slaves and the oppressed people of Mecca. They found their dreams and lost humanity in Islam.

Bilal bin Rabah was one of the first to enter Islam. His family came from Ethiopia, but he was born in Mecca thirty years before the Prophetic mission. He was a slave to Umayya Bin Khalaf Al-Qurashi who refused

to allow him to become a Muslim, thereby exercising his absolute control over Bilal's mind and body. Bilal insisted and therefore was subjected to all manner of torture to make him renounce Islam. However he was steadfast and refused to bow down. Umayya then ordered his slaves to lay Bilal on the hot sand and put heavy stones on his body so that he could not move. They would follow that with whipping under the hot Meccan midday sun. Despite all this, Bilal would repeat "Ahad! Ahad! (One God! One God!)", thereby infuriating his master even further.

Later, Bilal was among the emancipated slaves freed by Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, who also bought other slaves and granted them freedom to save them from the torture and abuse that befell them when they converted to Islam.

In describing Bilal's trials, Sir Thomas Arnold says:

"He had been cruelly tortured by being exposed, day after day, to the scorching rays of the sun, stretched out on his back, with an enormous stone on his stomach... After his conversion he expended the greater part of his fortune on the purchase of Muslim slaves who were persecuted by their masters on account of their adherence to the teaching of Muhammad."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps this quick response to the Islamic call by the slaves and the poor of Mecca, is the best proof for the humanitarian principles of this religion. The Arabs knew that Islam could cause a massive social revolution, so they killed the converts and tortured them in a desperate attempt to maintain their way of life.

The biography of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, gives many examples of his position with regards to slavery. His teachings and actions were intended to eradicate the disease of racism and abolish the caste system in his society. The emancipation of slaves was one of the greatest acts of worship in the new religion he brought forth.

---

8. Thomas Arnold, p. 12.

The famous historian Arnold Joseph Toynbee<sup>9</sup> says:

“The extinction of race consciousness between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.”<sup>10</sup>

To stress this requirement, Islam laid down several provisions regarding the rights of slaves, which include:

1. That slavery is related to physical work and not to the mind. The slave works for his master and obeys him in matters of work, but he is free in his thought and his choice of religion. He is not obliged to follow his master in such matters. The master cannot ask his slave to commit a sin or to kill a soul unjustly, and the slave has the right to object and to oppose his master in such matters.
2. No framework for treating prisoners of war existed before Islam. War prisoners were taken as slaves from the moment of their capture. Islam ruled that only the ruler could decide on their enslavement. This decision was to be made only after a prison exchange is discussed between the two warring sides. The war prisoners could also be pardoned and set free, or granted their freedom for a ransom paid to the Muslims.

*[Then (choose to release them) either (as) a favour (shown to them), or after receiving) ransom, until the war throws down its load of arms] Muhammad 4*

This is what the Prophet, peace be upon him, did with the prisoners of Badr. He granted them freedom in return for teaching Muslims to read and write.

---

9. Arnold Joseph Toynbee, 1889-1975.

10. A. J. Toynbee, *CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL*, New York, 1948, p. 205.

3. Equality between slaves and masters in many things, as stated in the Hadeeth:

*Samra said, the Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Whoever kills his slave we will kill him and whoever cuts off his slave's nose, we will cut off his nose."*

Also, according to Musnad Ahmed:

*"Ibn Omar called his boy to set him free him and said: "I get no benefit from him. I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, say: 'Whoever slaps his servant, his expiation is to liberate him.'"*<sup>11</sup>

Islam took virtuousness to a new standard which is piety, and made it the standard in judging people. Allah says:

*[O mankind, we have created you from a male and a female and made you into races and tribes, so that you may identify one another. Surely the noblest of you, in Allah's sight, is the one who is most pious of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Awar] Hujurat 13*

In accordance with this Qur'anic teaching, the Prophet, peace be upon him, allowed his cousin, the lady Zainab bint Jahsh to marry his slave Zaid, and appointed Zaid as the leader of the Muslim army fighting the Romans in Mo'ta.

He also assigned several high level functions to Bilal (an ex-slave), the greatest of which was as keeper of the call to prayer. Other responsibilities assigned to Bilal were: setting up the Prophet's, peace be upon him, tent, supervision of his expenses, collecting alms from the Muslims, custody of war spoils, giving gifts for delegations and visitors, and supervision of supplies for the army during travel.

---

11. Musnad Ahmad, *Musnad Abdu Allah Bin Omar*, no 4553.

*Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid narrated the following Hadeeth: "I saw Abu Thar Al-Ghifari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak. We asked him about that (i.e. why both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied, "Once I abused a man and he complained about me to the Prophet, peace be upon him. The Prophet asked me, 'Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?' and added, 'Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (do their hard job).'"*<sup>12</sup>

Thus, Islam buried racism and the class system. It decreed that all humans were brothers in humanity and that the closest of them to God were the most pious and most beneficial to His worshipers.

Islam prohibited overworking slaves and provided the most progressive legislation for equality by requiring for slaves the same standard of food and clothing as their masters.

While Islam's long-term goal was to abolish slavery, it did not do so through a strict prohibition. This might not have been practically achievable in the slave-dependent economies of the time.<sup>13</sup> However it improved appreciably the conditions for slaves and laid down several laws to ensure equality and human rights for all.<sup>14</sup> Islam's other contribution was its ruling that the liberation of slaves as an act

---

12. Narrated by Bukhari, Chapter on Faith, no 29.

13. Michael Bonner, *Poverty and Economics in the Qur'an*, Journal of Interdisciplinary History, xxxv:3 (Winter, 2005), 391-406.

14. *Encyclopedia of Islam Online*. Ed. P.J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs. Brill Academic Publishers.

of piety and an expiation for many sins.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Islam contributed to the abolition of slavery by drying up its sources and opening the gates wide open for the freedom of the slaves.

The historian Louis Bernard says:<sup>16</sup>

“Qur’anic legislation, subsequently confirmed and elaborated in the Holy Law, brought two major changes to ancient slavery which were to have far-reaching effects. One of these was the presumption of freedom; the other, the ban on the enslavement of free persons except in strictly defined circumstances.”<sup>17</sup>

Islamic law permits a slave to ransom himself with consent from his master through a contract known as “mukataba”. Mukataba is a contract between a master and a slave whereby the slave pays a certain sum of money during a specific time period to his master in exchange for his freedom.

As stated in the Qur’an:

*[And those of your slaves who wish to enter the contract of kitabah (emancipation by paying money) contract kitabah with them, if you recognize some good of them. And give them out of the wealth of Allah that he has given to you.] Annur 33*

Islam also decreed that helping slaves pay their mukataba debts was a legitimate expenditure for Islamic tax (Zakat). Allah says:

- 
15. Hassan Ibrahim Hassan, op. cit, c. 1, 193. Gordon, M., *Slavery in the Arab World* (1989)
  16. Senior Jewish historian who specialized in the history of the Middle East. He was born in London in 1916. Senior critics believe him to be the most influential contemporary historian. Many of his writings are on Islam including: *Race and Color in Islam, the Arabs in History, Islam from the Reign of Mohammed to the fall of Constantinople, The Jews of Islam*, and other books. See his biography in: *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, Vol. 1: pp. 719-720. London.
  17. Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, Oxford Univ Press 1994.

*[The offerings given for the sake of God are [meant] only for the poor and the needy, and those who are in charge thereof, and those whose hearts are to be won over, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage, and [for] those who are overburdened with debts, and [for every struggle] in God's cause, and [for] the wayfarer: [this is] an ordinance from God – and God is all-knowing, wise.] AlTawba 60*

4. Slaves have the right to independent lodging and marriage and other social and moral freedoms. They have a right to good treatment. They have a right to executive jobs and issuing Fatwa (Islamic rulings). After freedom, slaves enjoy full civil, political and citizenship rights and can occupy any office within the Islamic government. Examples of this abound in Islamic history and include the Mamluks who ruled Egypt for almost 260 years after their freedom.

The historian John Esposito says:

“Within Islamic jurisprudence, slaves are able to occupy any office within the Islamic government, and instances of this in history include the Mamluks who ruled Egypt for almost 260 years and the Eunuchs (castrated human males) who have held military and administrative positions of note. They are also able to marry, own property, and lead the Muslim congregational prayers (the five daily ritual prayers). ..slavery would be theoretically abolished with the expansion of Islam. Islam’s reforms seriously limited the supply of new slaves....”<sup>18</sup>

After completing the Farewell pilgrimage (last pilgrimage before his death), Muhammad, peace be upon him, delivered a famous speech known as *the Farewell Sermon*, at Mount Arafat east of Mecca. In this sermon, he, peace be upon him, advised his followers from the Arab tribes not to follow certain pre-Islamic customs. He declared:

---

18. Esposito, John (1998). *Islam: The Straight Path*. Oxford University Press.

*O people, your God is one and your father is one (Adam)..... that an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab (Ajami) nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action.*<sup>19</sup>

This Last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is passed on to every Muslim in every corner of the world through all possible means of communication. Indeed the meanings found in this sermon are astounding, touching upon the most important rights that human beings have over each other. Though the Prophet's soul has left this world, his words are still alive in our hearts.

These meanings were reflected in the social life fabric of the Islamic state for many centuries. Many of the Abbasid Caliphs mothers were Romanian, Persian or Turk.<sup>20</sup> Examples are the Abbasid Caliphs Al Muntaser Billah, Al Mu'tazz Billah, and Al Mu'tamed al Allah. Most of these ladies had great power and authority even in the affairs of government and politics. Many sons of Caliphs (princes) were known by their Christian mothers.<sup>21</sup> The numbers of Turk slaves increased appreciably during Al Mu'tasim's era. He depended on them in state affairs, politics and government.

It is clear to any researcher on the history of slavery that Islam led the way, through its teachings and humanitarian legislation, for reform

- 
19. Musnad Ahmad, *Musnad Al Ansar*, no 22391.
  20. C. E. Bosworth, *Barbarian Incursions: The Coming Of The Turks Into The Islamic World*, Bruno Cassirer Publishers Ltd, Oxford, 1973, p. 4.
  21. See under the title, *Sons of Nobles from Christian Mothers*, Abu Ali Ahmed ibn Omar Ben Rastha 360 H, Alaalaq AlNafeesa, Arab Heritage Revival House, Beirut, 1988, part 7, 213. Ibn Abd Rabbo, previous citation, part 2, 48. See also: Hassan Zein, *The Legal Status of Christians and Jews in Islamic Lands until the Ottoman Conquest*, Modern Thought Publishing, Beirut, 1988, page 153 et seq. Al-Hibri, Azizah Y. (2003). *An Islamic Perspective on Domestic Violence*, 27 Fordham International Law Journal 195.

in the conditions of slavery and the emancipation of slaves and that these principles were practiced by the Prophet, peace be upon him, and were dominant values in the Muslim communities for centuries.

According to the Free Encyclopedia:

“In the 15th century, Some African states played a role in the slave trade. They would sell their captives or prisoners of war to European buyers. The focus of European trade in African slaves shifted from import to Europe to slave transports directly to tropical colonies in the Americas.

In 1444 the first slave market created in Portugal was for the sale of imported African slaves. Between 700-800 slaves were annually imported from the west coast of Africa or were kidnapped from among their relatives in Central Africa.

During 16th century the Spaniards were the first Europeans to use African slaves in the New World’s islands, where the native population starved themselves rather than work for the Spanish. The natives were also used as forced labor in agriculture. In 1619, the first hordes of the African slaves reached North America.

Towards the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the crossing of the Atlantic to the Americas with slaves laid out in rows in the holds of ships, was only one element of the well-known triangular trade engaged in by Portuguese, Dutch, French and British. The Atlantic slave trade peaked in the late 18th century, when the largest number of slaves was captured through raiding expeditions into the interior of West Africa.

Although slavery was illegal inside the Netherlands it flourished in the Dutch Empire, and helped support the economy.

The imperial powers: France, Spain, Britain, Portugal, the Netherlands and a few others, built worldwide empires based primarily on plantation agriculture farmed by slaves imported from Africa. However, these countries, for political reasons, took care to minimize the presence of slavery in their homelands.

In 1792 Denmark was the first European country to abolish the slave trade, followed by Britain and America within a span of a few years.

In the eighteen hundreds, an article appended to the Definitive Peace Treaty addressed the issue of slavery. It reaffirmed the Declaration of the Powers, on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, on the 8th of February 1815 (Which also formed ACT, No. XV. of the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna) and stated that the governments of the contracting parties should “without loss of time, ... [find] the most effectual measures for the entire and definitive abolition of a Commerce so odious, and so strongly condemned by the laws of religion and of nature.”

All European countries upheld the Slave Trade Abolition Treaty and slavery in the French colonies was finally abolished, followed by the Netherlands, However, in the republics of South America with the exception of Brazil, slavery remained until 1888.

The U.S. Constitution provided for the abolition of slavery in 1865. In the early 19th century, most of the slaves were stationed in the Southern states of the United States of America. In 1906 the League of Nations held the International Slavery Convention and agreed to prevent the slave trade and to the abolition of slavery in its various forms. These decisions were confirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations in 1948.”

According to the famous historian Louis Bernard the comparison between what Islam has achieved in improving the treatment of slaves and the cruel treatment of slaves over centuries in the Atlantic region and the Western world in general, shows that the Western world should feel ashamed. What is said on the subject of slaves applies also to issues raised by the West about polygamy, autocracy, etc.

“We must study the history of Atlantic slavery and expose this great shame in the history of the Western world and the Americas north and south in all its horror. This is a task which falls upon us as Westerners, and in which others may and should join us. In contrast, however, even to men-

tion - let alone discuss or explore - the existence of slavery in non-Western societies is denounced as evidence of racism and of imperialistic designs. The same applies to other delicate topics as polygamy, autocracy, and the like. The range of taboos is very wide.”<sup>22</sup>

The well known Orientalist Hamilton Jeb<sup>23</sup> confirms that Islam contributed greatly to humanitarian issues and came closest (in comparison with other systems) to achieving equality and eliminating ethnic and racial discrimination. There is no other society that has this wonderful record of equality, providing opportunities and encouraging cooperation between various genders.<sup>24</sup>

He also says that Islam decreed emancipation for slaves. It came to societies which heavily depended on slavery, prohibited the cruel practices and left only what is permissible even today in terms of prisoners of war and their deployment in servitude of the conquering combatants.

Islam pioneered the laws that made it a government duty to free slaves and use government funds to ransom slaves from their owners. This responsibility spreads across both the public and private sectors down to individuals through Zakat and legislation on expiation of sins. Whether it is enough or not, it was the most progressive legislation on slavery of its time and none of the world’s nations have presented anything better thus far.

---

22. B. Lewis, *Other People’s History, in Islam and the West*, New York: Oxford University Press 1993.

23. The famous Scottish Orientalist Hamilton Jeb lived in the period between (1895 - 1971). He is the author of several books on Arabs and Islam: *Ibn Battuta, Encyclopedia of Islam*, etc... See his biography in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press (2004).

24. H.A.R. Gibb, *WHITHER ISLAM: a Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World*, Rutledge, New York, 2000, p. 379.

## CHAPTER III

---

RELATIONS WITH PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT  
FAITH BEFORE AND AFTER THE MESSAGE OF  
THE HOLY PROPHET, PBUH



## FIRST TOPIC

### IN THE PERSIAN STATE

**T**he Persians persecuted people of different faith: Jews, Christians, Sabians (star worshippers), Buddhists and Matoyens and tortured them by fire. The destruction of houses of worship was common as were massacres at the hands of Persian soldiers.

Although the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527-565) paid 440 thousand pieces of gold to keep peace with the Persians, in 540 AD, King Khosrau the First broke the 532 AD “eternal” peace treaty with the Romans and invaded Syria, where he temporarily besieged the city of Antioch and robbed the various Byzantine cities on his route back to Persia.<sup>1</sup>

According to the free encyclopedia, Shapur II (310-379) instituted a harsh religious policy and during his reign, the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism called “Avesta” were completed. Heretics and apostates of the Zoroastrian religion were punished and Christians were persecuted.

---

1. *The Making of Byzantium, 600-1025*, by Mark Wittow, University of California Press, 1996, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: Rhetoric and Revolt in Byzantium*, by David Michael Olster, 1993, *A History of the Persians*, volume 1, third edition, Chapter XLII, by Sir Percy Sykes, 1951.

#### WHAT PROPHET MUHAMMAD OFFERED TO HUMANITY

The persecution of Christians was a reaction against the religion espoused by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (324-337). However Shapur II, like Shapur I before him, was friendly towards the Jews who lived in relative freedom and enjoyed many benefits under his reign.

## SECOND TOPIC

### IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**E**arly Christians were subjected to horrific persecution by the Roman Empire during the first three centuries A.D. The Roman Empire – deep in the grips of its pagan beliefs - considered Christianity an illegal religion and subjected its followers to extreme violence and cruelty, which led to the migration of large numbers of Christians to regions far away from the reach of the Romans.

When Emperor Diocletian took power in 248 A.D. religious persecution reached its peak to the extent that the Coptic Church referred to this era as “the era of martyrs.”

The situation turned around completely after the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337 AD) recognized Christianity as a legitimate religion in the Milan decree of 313. After Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, the persecution turned to the Pagans. Their temples were closed, their idols smashed and strict laws were enacted against them.<sup>2</sup>

---

2. Aland, Kurt (ed.) 1990. *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*. 3rd edition, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.  
From *Christianity; its Origin and Beliefs*, by Irfan Abdul Hamid Fattah, Ammar Publishing House, Jordan 2000 AD, p. 61.

In 323 AD Bishop Arius announced a revolution against the deification of Christ and affirmed Christ's humanity and that the Father alone is God, hence the description of his followers as Monotheists. His views caused a serious crisis in the Byzantine Empire and required the intervention of the Emperor Constantine, who first sided with Arius then switched to the side of the Church and its men, calling for the convening of the Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 AD. The Council decided to expel Arius and his followers, considered them heretics, and confirmed their conviction in the doctrine of the Trinity.

However, the conflict did not end there. Each party used drastic measures including torture, murder and exile to force people to follow their ideology. The Byzantines also faced unrest from the Pagans especially during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Great (378-395 AD), who issued a decree invalidating Pagan worship and outlawing sacrifices, burning incense, fortune-telling ... etc..

The Bishops went further and destroyed Pagan temples; converting some of them into churches; such as the Serapium Temple for the God Serapis in 391 AD. The famous English historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794)<sup>3</sup> believes that the famous library of Alexandria was attached to this temple, and that it was burned down by the Patriarch of Alexandria at the time.<sup>4</sup>

The Byzantine Christians began to establish houses of worship with their own distinct identity, derived from the Greco-Roman Pagan cultural roots but with a spiritual dimension to represent the teachings of Christianity. The Byzantine Emperors held both secular and religious authority at this stage.<sup>5</sup>

---

3. In his book, *the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Womersley, David P, also see Gibbon, Edward, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 22, H.C.G. and Matthew; Brian Harrison, eds. (Oxford: 2004), 8-18.

4. Womersley, *ibid*, 8-18.

5. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume IX, Jonathan Kirsch, *God against the Gods*; Linda Woodhead, *An Introduction to Christianity*, The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia.

However, the Bishops of the Byzantine Church in the Eastern regions stressed the necessity of keeping the ecclesiastical authority in the hands of the Church in order to adjudicate in matters of faith and religious rituals. This was made clear when controversy erupted around the issue of erecting monuments, statues and icons and continued over a span of more than a century. From that point on a clear split was forged between the Eastern Greek Orthodox Church and the Western Roman church in terms of doctrine, modes of worship and rituals, and living practices.

The animosity between the two camps took a drastic turn when the Emperor Dadjnos issued the following declaration against Eastern Christians:

- Their churches should be demolished and removed from existence.
- All their holy books must be burned.
- All their staff in the government must be expelled.
- Slaves who remain Eastern Christian will not be set free.
- Everyone must offer sacrifices and incense to the Gods. Anyone who violates the orders of the Empire exposes himself to the most severe punishment and torment up to death.

Indeed, immediately following the issuance of this declaration, a wave of persecutions took place all over the Empire. Church leaders were imprisoned; many killed, and temples for idols were reconstructed.

The Christian church in the Islamic East remained for centuries - under the rule of Colonial Byzantine - oppressed and accused of heresy. The churches and monasteries were routinely pillaged. The split that occurred in the “Chalcedon” convention in 451 AD and the creation of “Emperor Rule doctrine” in the Roman Church reinforced the animosity towards Eastern Christians and increased the level of transgressions.

The continued persecution of the Eastern Orthodox Christians led them to revolt against the Catholic Church and the Byzantine Empire whom they considered as occupiers. Many Eastern Christian leaders fled to deserts,

mountains and caves. As discussed above, this period is referred to as the “Era of Martyrs”<sup>6</sup> in the Eastern Churches chronicles.

Historian Mikhail Alsrbyani writes: “The Emperor did not listen to the complaints of the Bishops whose churches were pillaged and plundered ....The evil Romans looted our churches and accused us without pity or justice so the Lord avenged us by sending the sons of Ishmael to save us from their hand. The Arabs allowed us to practice our faith freely, and we lived in peace.”

Bishop Alnaqyusi, in describing the emancipation of Copts from the Romans at the hands of Muslim conquerors, says:

“The Lord who protects Truth, did not neglect the world. He ruled against the oppressors. He showed them no mercy for daring to transgress against Him. He left them to the Ismailis (Saracens) to deal with them. They then went on to conquer all of Egypt. ‘Amr ibn al-Aas gained strength every day and levied taxes, but did not take any of the church’s money. He did not loot or steal but maintained the churches throughout his days. The Bishop Benjamin, the Patriarch of Egyptians, entered Alexandria thirteen years after his escape from the Romans, and visited all its churches, and people said: ‘Is this exile?’ The triumph of Islam was due to the injustice of King Hercules and his persecution of Orthodox Christians. The Roman perished for this reason, and the Muslims prevailed in Egypt. Father Benjamin gave a speech in the Monastery of Macarius and said: ‘I’ve found in Alexandria the escape and tranquility I was seeking after the persecutions and injustice of the Romans.’”<sup>7</sup>

---

6. John AlNaqyusi, *History of Egypt from a Coptic Viewpoint for the Islamic Conquest*. Translated and reviewed by Dr. Omar Sabir Abdul Jalil, House of Ain, Cairo 2001 AD. Pages 201-22. The writer is known for his extreme prejudice as evidenced in other parts of his book.

7. John AlNaqyusi, *History of Egypt from a Coptic Viewpoint for the Islamic Conquest*. Translated and reviewed by Dr. Omar Sabir Abdul Jalil, House of Ain, Cairo 2001 AD. Pages 201-22. The writer is known for his extreme prejudice as evidenced in other parts of his book.

According to the free encyclopedia Wikipedia:

“After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, the Arab Muslims came forth from the Arabian Peninsula to spread Islam throughout the known world. They set the finest examples in virtue and human values. The Egyptian welcomed the Muslims who saved them from the injustice of the Romans after the long decades of oppression. When the Byzantines were defeated against the Muslim Army in 641 AD, a treaty was signed, known as the “Treaty of Alexandria” which gave the Romans one year to evacuate Alexandria never to return. The commander Amr ibn al-Aas entered Alexandria in 642 AD and wrote to the Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab describing the city. After a short period of Muslim control of the city, the Byzantines counter-attacked to regain it. However, Amr Ibn El-Aas later defeated them and re-entered Alexandria in the summer of 646 AD. He was welcomed warmly by the Copts under the leadership of Patriarch Benjamin. Thus the Byzantine state lost its richest state forever.”<sup>8</sup>

Gustave Le Bon states: “Egypt was forced to adopt Christianity, but reached the lowest degrees of decadence which ended only with the Arab conquest. Misery and injustice was everywhere in Egypt, the scene of religious conflict of that time. Its people were fighting and damning each other because of their religious differences. Consumed by religious divisions and hatred of its tyrannical rulers, Egypt was awaiting its hour of freedom from the clutches of Constantinople’s Emperors.”<sup>9</sup>

- 
8. See <http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki>. Also see Adam Mitz: *The Islamic Civilization in the Fourteenth Century H*, part 1, page 63, translated by Dr. Muhammad Abdul Hadi Abu Rida , Cairo, 1981. Carl Brokleman: *The History of Islamic People*, translated by Amin Fares page 360.
  9. Gustave LeBon, *The Arab Civilization*, translated by Adel Zu’aiter, Revival of Books, Science Publishing House, Egypt, Second Edition, 1956 AD, page 336. Also see: Tawfeeq Attaweel, *The Story of Religious Persecution in Christianity and Islam*, Published by Alzahraa Publishing, Cairo, 1991 AD, page 123.



## THIRD TOPIC

### ARABS BEFORE ISLAM AND TREATMENT OF EARLY MUSLIMS

**Q**uraish (the Prophet's PBUH tribe) received the call to Islam, a religion in total contradiction to that of their ancestors, with various rejection and condemnation methods. They used torture and persecution to suppress the call in Mecca. In describing this repression and torture, Sir Thomas Arnold says:

“The hostility of Quraish to the new faith increased in bitterness as they watched the increase in the numbers of its adherents. They realized that the triumph of the new teaching meant the destruction of their national religion and ways of worship, and a loss of wealth and power for them as guardians of the sacred Ka’bah ..... The (Muslim) poor who had no protector and the slaves had to endure the cruelest persecution; they were imprisoned and tortured in order to induce them to recant.”<sup>10</sup>

The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, stayed thirteen years in Mecca calling people peacefully to Islam, withstanding all kinds of abuse, perse-

---

10. Thomas Arnold, *ibid*, p. 14.

cution and a cruel blockade by the polytheists in Mecca and its surroundings. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, then urged his followers (especially the weak and the slaves) to escape and flee to Ethiopia whose King Nejashi was known for the kindness, justice and the religious freedom he afforded his subjects.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the murder, torture, economic blockade, intellectual terrorism and social oppression, Quraish did not succeed in achieving their goals. Thus, they decided to kill the Prophet, peace be upon him. This prompted him to migrate to Madeena especially after receiving God's revelation authorizing him to do so.

---

11. John Bagot Glubb, *The life and Times of Muhammad*, Hodder, London, 1970, page 119.

## FOURTH TOPIC

### THE HOLY PROPHET'S TREATMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT FAITH

**T**he Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, in his dealings with individuals or nations, presented a model of justice, freedom and high regard for human dignity and life. This, at a time when power was the language of the day and conflict between individuals and nations dominated the scene.

Since the early days of the call to Islam, the Prophet, peace be upon him, presented clear and open rules of engagement between Muslims and non-Muslims. These prophetic teachings can be summarized as follows:

**First:** the rejection of stereotypes and generalizations in judging others. The Qur'an did not view non-Muslims as one homogeneous group to be treated equally. Thus, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is determined based on multiple criteria.

This is confirmed by the many references in the Qur'an to a class, or a group, or subset, etc.. Such terminology clearly demonstrates the absence of stereotyping and places an emphasis on differentiation. Examples include:

*[If the followers of the Bible would but attain to [true] faith and God-consciousness, We should indeed efface their [previous] bad deeds, and indeed bring them into gardens of bliss.]*

Al-Ma'idah 65

*[And there are among them unlettered people who have no real knowledge of the divine writ, [following] only wishful beliefs and depending on nothing but conjecture.]* Al Baqarah 78

*[AND AMONG the followers of earlier revelation there is many a one who, if thou entrust him with a treasure, will [faithfully] restore it to thee; and there is among them many a one who, if thou entrust him with a tiny gold coin, will not restore it to thee unless thou keep standing over him – which is an outcome of their assertion, “No blame can attach to us [for anything that we may do] with regard to these unlettered folk”: and [so] they tell a lie about God, being well aware [that it is a lie].]* AL Imran 75

*[[But] they are not all alike: among the followers of earlier revelation there are upright people, who recite God's messages throughout the night, and prostrate themselves [before Him].]*

Al Imran 113

*[And, behold, among the followers of earlier revelation there are indeed such as [truly] believe in God, and in that which has been bestowed from on high upon you as well as in that which has been bestowed upon them. Standing in awe of God, they do not barter away God's messages for a trifling gain. They shall have their reward with their Sustainer – for, behold, God is swift in reckoning!]* Al Imran 199

*[AND AMONG the folk of Moses there have been people who would guide [others] in the way of the truth and act justly in its light]* Al Araf 159

When the Qur'an talks about the negative qualities of Jews and Christians, the texts are very specific and precise and refer to a subset and not the whole group:

*[And, behold, there are indeed some among them who distort the Bible with their tongues, so as to make you think that [what they say] is from the Bible, the while it is not from the Bible; and who say, "This is from God," the while it is not from God: and thus do they tell a lie about God, being well aware [that it is a lie].] Al Imran 78*

*[Some of the followers of earlier revelation would love to lead you astray: yet none do they lead astray but themselves, and perceive it not.] Al Imran 69*

All the above Qur'anic texts dispel stereotypes about relationships with others. Non-Muslims are not one type and should not be treated in the same way; even when it seems that most of them act similarly at certain times or in specific situations.

The Qur'an as practiced by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, warns Muslims about the danger of generalization and discrimination based on religion or race. This is the essence of fairness and justice, which is sorely missed in today's political systems and regimes which claim to be based on equality and justice.

Studies have shown the dangers of profiling and its role in misleading human perception and cognitive processes. The inevitable result is more aggressive behavior and dangerous interactions. Many individuals who depend on the stereotypical image as a framework for cognitive behavior discriminate against others without distinction or differentiation.<sup>12</sup>

The basis of categorization into Muslims and non-Muslims, therefore, is limited to role and function definition and the identification of rights and duties of each category in the Islamic state.

**Second:** The principle of equality in humanity. Before Islam, societal interactions were based on class differences as well as wealth and privilege

---

12. John M. Darely and Russell H. Fazio, *Expectancy Confirmation Processes Arising in the Social Interaction Sequence*, American Psychologist, vol. 35, no. 10 (October 1980), pp. 867-881.

of lineage and race. Islam eliminated the caste system and viewed all people as equals in humanity.

Equality of humans as sons of Adam is established in Islam. Man is the highest-ranking of all God's creatures

*[We have honored the sons of Adam.]* Al-Israa

Human beings are honored for being sons of Adam regardless of religious affiliation, class, race, sex, or color.

**Third:** freedom of thought, beliefs and religion without coercion. Man should think, evaluate and then take the responsibility to choose his beliefs and religion without force or coercion.<sup>13</sup>

*It is reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas (ra) that Allah's Messenger, when he sent Mu'aaz (ra) to Yemen, said: "You are going to a people who are from the People of the Book: So the first thing to which you call them should be the testimony that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah." - And in another narration: "that they testify to the Oneness of Allah." - "And if they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has made compulsory upon them five prayers every day and night. And if they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has made incumbent upon them a charity (Zakah) which is to be taken from the rich among them and given to their poor. And if they obey you in that then be careful not to take the best of their wealth (as Zakah), and be careful of the supplication of those who have suffered injustice, for there is no obstacle between their prayer and Allah. (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)<sup>14</sup>*

---

13. Ahmad AlMukhzinji, *Islamic Equity and Tolerance, The call of Right*, Islamic Conference, Year 6, No 67, Shawal 1407H/Jul 1987, pages 24-25.

14. AlBukhari, AlMaghazi, no 4000. Translation from <http://www.islamicweb.com/beliefs/creed/abdulwahab/KT1-chap-03.htm>

Most of Yemen at that time was Jewish, but they entered Islam voluntarily without coercion. Similarly many of AlMadeena's Jews entered Islam at a time when Islam was weak<sup>15</sup> and endured hardship from their families and relatives. The Prophet's, peace be upon him, biography does not include a single incident where someone was compelled to leave his religion or was forcibly converted to Islam.

**Fourth:** the belief that it is God's intention, in His wisdom, for people to have different views and religions:

*[He could surely have made all mankind one single community: but [He willed it otherwise] Hud 118*

The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him did not have an issue with diversity and difference, as the Qur'anic revelation acknowledged its inevitability between humans.

*[And had thy Sustainer so willed, He could surely have made all mankind one single community: but [He willed it otherwise, and so] they continue to hold divergent views [all of them,] save those upon whom thy Sustainer has bestowed His grace. And to this end has He created them [all].] Hud 118*

Scholars tell us that the meaning of "divergent views" in the above verse means **different religions**. People have different faiths: Jews, Christians, Sabians, etc...<sup>16</sup>

The position of the Qur'an and the Sunnah towards people of different faith is to recognize them, not as a "the other" in the Western sense of

---

15. For example Zeid Bin Saanah, Asad bin Saaya AlQarhi, Thaalaba bin Saaya, Asad bin Obaid...See margin in Hidayah's AlHiyari, reference P. 73.

16. Abu Jaafar Mohammad bin Jarir AlTabari, *Explanation by Tabari*, Thought Publishing House, Beirut, 1405H, part 12, page 141. Also see Abu AlFidaa Ismael ben Kathir, *Explanation by Ibn Kathir*, Thought Publishing House, Beirut, 1401 H, part 2, page 466.

the word, but as people of a recognized religion and as equals before God. Recognition is the foundation upon which dialogue is built. There cannot be a meaningful dialogue without recognition of the diversity and multiplicity of views in any community in this one big world.

Allah says:

*[VERILY, those who have attained to faith [in this divine writ], as well as those who follow the Jewish faith, and the Christians, and the Sabians – all who believe in God and the Last Day and do righteous deeds – shall have their reward with their Sustainer; and no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve.]*  
Al Baqara 62

Thus the principle was established by the Qur'an and applied by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him; that peace and harmony between people is the norm and that war and conflict are extraordinary events entered into only when necessary.

This vision lies at the root of every relationship and is reflected at all levels; the individual, family, community, society and the state, up to international relations.

The world is not an arena for conflict where the strong prevail, but is a consistent whole made up of different parts. The teachings of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, were not lofty ideals rooted in fantasy but applicable principles demonstrated throughout his life and after his death. This constitutes the Islamic vision of the world as presented by the Qur'an. Thus, the Prophet's, peace be upon him, policies, attitudes and actions towards others - individuals and nations - form the framework for a system of values and normative principles, with a central goal of achieving universal peace.

It is not a "Pax Romana" type of peace; where power creates rights and protects them, and humans are divided into free people and slaves. It is a

system governed by the values of justice, equality and freedom, advocating the ethics of trust, honesty and truth.

**Fifth:** the principle of humanitarian acquaintance. The Qur'an considers the human race as one family descendant from one father, Adam, joined by slavery to God.

*[O MANKIND! Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand [your rights] from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Verily, God is ever watchful over you!] AnNisa 1*

*The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) addressed the people signifying that concept during the last Hajj pilgrimage, saying: "O People! Your God is one; your father is one; no preference exists for an Arab over non-Arab or of a non-Arab over an Arab or for a red man over a black man or a black man over a red man except by righteousness. Verily the most honored of you is the most righteous."<sup>17</sup>*

Islam outlines the relationship with non-Muslims in two clear Ayas of the Qur'an; considered the constitution for a Muslim's relationship with others:

*[As for such [of the unbelievers] as do not fight against you on account of [your] faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for, verily, God loves those who act equitably. God only forbids you to turn in friendship towards such as fight against you because of [your] faith, and drive you forth from your homelands, or aid [others]*

---

17. Already referenced. <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/anecdotes1.asp> with some adaptation.

*in driving you forth: and as for those [from among you] who turn towards them in friendship, it is they, they who are truly wrongdoers!] Al Mumtahanah 8-9*

**Sixth:** The independence of humans and the freedom to choose faith, personal habits, and way of life in harmony with the essence of Man; spirit, mind and virtue. God Almighty will judge us on the Day of Resurrection and rule upon our differences. As he says to His Messenger:

*[Because of this, then, summon [all mankind], and pursue the right course, as thou hast been bidden [by God]; and do not follow their likes and dislikes, but say:*

*“I believe in whatever revelation God has bestowed from on high; and I am bidden to bring about equity in your mutual views. God is our Sustainer as well as your Sustainer. To us shall be accounted our deeds, and to you, your deeds. Let there be no contention between us and you: God will bring us all together – for with Him is all journeys’ end.”] Ash-Shura 15.*

**Seventh:** Human dignity is a right for all humans

*Historians report that when a funeral of a Jew passed before Prophet Muhammad [peace and blessings be upon him], as a sign of respect he stood up. In doing this, he showed respect and shared in the feeling of sorrow with Jewish family and community. “Why did you stand up for a Jewish funeral?” he was asked. The Prophet replied: “Is it not a human soul?”<sup>18</sup>*

**Eighth:** Faith that God’s justice is for all; Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This should not be overlooked:

---

18. Bukhari, Chapter on Funerals – *Standing up for a Jewish Funeral Procession*. No 1229. Also by Muslim – Chapter on Funerals – *Standing for a Procession*, No 1596. Also AlTirmithi, Chapter on Funerals, No 1895.

*[O YOU who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do] Al Ma' idah 8*

From this Aya, the foundations and principles governing Islamic justice emerge, as applied by the Prophet, peace be upon him, in his relationships with individuals, groups or states.

The most important of these governing principles are:

#### JUSTICE

Everyone has rights, regardless of religion. Allah has commanded the faithful to commit themselves to this value even with enemies, God said:

*[O YOU who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do] Al Ma' idah 8*

Thus the principle of fairness and justice applies to friend and foe.

*[BEHOLD, We have bestowed upon thee from on high this divine writ, setting forth the truth, so that thou mayest judge between people in accordance with what God has taught thee. Hence, do no contend with those who are false to their trust] An Nisa 105*

*The incident involved a person called Tu'mah or Bashir ibn Ubayriq of the Banu Zafar tribe of the Ansar. This man stole an*

*Ansari's coat of mail. While the investigation was in progress, he put the coat of mail in the house of a Jew. Its owner approached the Prophet (peace be on him) and expressed his suspicion about Tu'mah. But Tu'mah, his kinsmen and many of the Banu Zafar colluded to ascribe the guilt to the Jew. When the Jew concerned was asked about the matter he pleaded that he was not guilty. Tu'mah's supporters, on the other hand, waged a vigorous propaganda campaign to save Tu'mah's skin. They argued that the wicked Jew, who had denied the Truth and disbelieved in God and the Prophet (peace be on him), was absolutely untrustworthy, and his statement ought to be rejected outright. The Prophet (peace be on him) was about to decide the case against the Jew on formal grounds and to censure the plaintiff for slandering Banu Ubayriq, but before he could do so, the whole matter was laid bare by a revelation from God.<sup>19</sup>*

The practice of the Prophet, peace be upon him, reinforced the principle of justice when he ruled for the Jew against the Muslim. Therefore religious differences, even enmity, are never a barrier to justice. This is a high moral value which should be emphasized in all discussions on Islamic fairness.

*[As for such [of the unbelievers] as do not fight against you on account of [your] faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for, verily, God loves those who act equitably] Al Mumtahanah 8*

Tabari says in the interpretation of this verse: "The most accurate explanation of this verse is that God does not forbid us to deal justly and with

---

19. AlTirmithi. He said it was a strange Hadeeth with a weak chain of reference. Chapter on *Explanation of the Qur'an through the Prophet*, peace be upon him. No 2962. Translation from <http://islamicstudies.info/reference.php?sura=4&verse=105>.

compassion with all those who do not fight us on account of our religion. God's words [do not fight against you on account of [your] faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands] is general and does not exclude anyone except those who fight or drive Muslims from their homes.<sup>20</sup>

The prohibition in the verses below is for those who believe there is no possibility of coexistence and see a need to exclude those who disagree with them so that they can reign supreme. This refers to the disbelievers of Quraish who wanted to stop the new religion and stood in the way of delivering God's message. They drove the believers out of their homes and deprived them of their possessions. As the Almighty said:

*[God only forbids you to turn in friendship towards such as fight against you because of [your] faith, and drive you forth from your homelands, or aid [others] in driving you forth: and as for those [from among you] who turn towards them in friendship, it is they, they who are truly wrongdoers!] Al Mumtahanah 9*

The Qur'an, on more than one occasion, highlights the positive traits that characterize some Jews and Christians. This is the biggest proof of the equity and fairness in Islam

*[AND AMONG the folk of Moses there have been people who would guide [others] in the way of the truth and act justly in its light] Al Araf 159*

*[O YOU who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in upholding equity, bearing witness to the truth for the sake of God, even though it be against your own selves or your parents and kinsfolk. Whether the person concerned be rich or poor, God's claim takes precedence over [the claims of] either of them. Do not, then, follow your own desires, lest you swerve from justice:*

---

20. *Qur'an Interpretation by AlTabari.* part 28 page 66.

*for if you distort [the truth] or refuse to testify, behold, God is indeed aware of all that you do!]* AnNisa 135

Following desires may lead one to wrong his enemies by word or deed or to slander them unjustly and turn others away from them. The Qur'anic texts and the Sunnah clearly prohibit this and consider it a transgression.

A review of the Qur'anic texts which discuss the fabrications of the infidels and their attacks on God Almighty and the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the other Prophets of God, will notice an absence (in the Qur'anic response) of a direct attack against specific individuals. Rather it is a condemnation of their wrong beliefs and practices. This high moral is reflected in the Sunnah of the Prophet (his words and actions), peace be upon him.

*[O YOU who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do]* Al Ma' idah 8

Justice and equality for all: near and far, supporters and detractors, Muslim and non-Muslim is an Islamic principle. Injustice is absolutely forbidden in all cases. It is not permissible for anyone to oppress or wrong anyone, regardless of reason.<sup>21</sup>

*'Abdullah ibn Rawaha said, "The Prophet, peace be upon him, received Khaibar as bounty from God. He allowed them (its people) to stay as they were and sent me to them. I said:"O tribe of Jews! By Allah, you are the most hateful to me of Allah's creation, but it does not prompt me to deal unjustly with you. What*

---

21. Ibn Taymiya, *Righteousness*, Reviewed by Mohammad Rashad Salem, Imam Mohammad Bin Suud University press, Madeena, 1403H, Part 2, page 247.

*you offer me as a bribe is forbidden. We will not touch it.” They said, “Justice is what supports the heavens and the earth. We will take it. Now leave us”<sup>22</sup>*

This meaning is also in the words of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, when describing the justice and sincerity of King Nejashi (a Christian King).

*When Mohammed PBUH saw the persecution to which his followers were subjected to in Mecca, he told them to find safe haven in northern Ethiopia, Abyssinia, where they would “find a king there who does not wrong anyone.”<sup>23</sup>*

The Muslims accordingly went to Abyssinia, never questioning the wisdom of taking refuge with a Christian.

The Prophet himself, peace be upon him, did not have any qualms about seeking asylum with a Christian king and attributing justice to him. His companions understood and applied this principle in their lives and dealings. Religious differences did not stand in the way of praise where it was due.

*When Mustawrid Al-Qurashi was sitting with ‘Amr ibn al-’Aas, he said, “I heard the Prophet say, “The Hour will come when the Romans will be in the majority.” Amr asked him, “What are you saying?” He said, “I am repeating that which I heard from the Prophet.” Amr said, “If you say this, it is true, because they have four good characteristics: they are the most able to cope with tribulation, the quickest to recover after disaster and to*

---

22. *Musnad Ahmed, Musnad Jabir bin Abdallah*, no 14425.

23. Abu Arrabea Sulaiman bin Musa AlKalaii AlAndalusi. *The Prophets and the Caliphs Wars*. Reviewed by Mohammad Kamal Eddin, House of Books, Beirut, 1997, part1, page 240, translation from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_in\\_Ethiopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Ethiopia).

*return to the fight after defeat, and are the best as far as treating the poor, weak and orphans is concerned. They have a fifth characteristic which is very good; they do not allow themselves to be oppressed by their kings.*"<sup>24</sup>

One of the requirements of justice and fairness to others is to accept truth when it comes from them: what is known today as objectivity, impartiality and neutrality in the presentation of the facts or when discussing others. The goal of the believer is to arrive at the truth, regardless of who says it. The Prophet, peace be upon him, gave the best example of this.

*Abdullah bin Yasar tells us that a Jewish man came to the Prophet and said: "Verily, you (Muslims) commit Shirk,<sup>25</sup> for you say: "As Allah wills AND as you will;" and you say: "By the Ka'bah!" And so the Prophet ordered whoever wanted to state an oath to say: "By the Lord of the Ka'bah" and to say: "As Allah wills, THEN as you will."*<sup>26</sup>

*Narrated by Masruq: 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that a Jewish woman came to her and mentioned the punishment in the grave, saying to her, "May Allah protect you from the punishment in the grave." A'isha then asked Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) about the punishment of the grave. He said, "Yes, (there is) punishment in the grave." A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) added, "After that I never saw Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) praying without seeking refuge with Allah from the punishment in the grave."*<sup>27</sup>

---

24. Muslim, *Tribulations and Signs of the End of the World*, No 5158, translation from [http://www.islaam.net/main/display\\_article\\_printview.php?id=635](http://www.islaam.net/main/display_article_printview.php?id=635)

25. Association with God.

26. Nasaii, *Sunan AlNasaii, Faith and Warnings*, by Ahmed 43/45, No 27093, Al-Hakem 297/4, reviewed by AlThahabi. Translation from <http://islaminitown-words.blogspot.com/2009/11/revisiting-problem-of-islamic.html>

27. Translation from <http://ipcbblogger.net/rehana/?p=727>.

In the area of International relations, all agreements, treaties and covenants must be drafted on the basis of achieving justice for all parties, and the prohibition of injustice to all including minorities. This provides a major guarantee for all; individuals, groups and nations and elevates the value of justice above all other considerations.

It should be noted here that Jihad in Islam is a method for the Islamic nation to achieve justice and peace. Jihad is not an end in itself; whether it is in a defensive or offensive war; but is carried out by the Islamic State in the context of protection of the nation and the application of justice.

#### EQUALITY

Humanity comes from one source: Adam, peace be upon him; the father of mankind. The Qur'an confirms the single source principle at the start of Surat AlNisaa and also in the verse below from Surat AlHujurat:

*[O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware]* Al Hujurat 13

The texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah ignite a sense of fraternal kinship between humans throughout the ages and urge acquaintance among the sons of Adam. This leads to interdependence and cooperation for mutual benefit and to spreading love and harmony between humans.

The Qur'an also states that differences are a human reality, and that humans, in addition to a common origin, share a common goal, which is acquaintance between the different races and tribes. Thus, the purpose of the division of human race into tribes and nations is acquaintance not separation: cooperation not struggle. The only real valid Islamic differentiator between humans is their level of piety and their good deeds which benefit those around them. God Almighty is the Lord of all humanity and He

watches over this human fraternity, and calls upon all of us to safeguard it and work towards the good of all mankind.

*[O MANKIND! Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand [your rights] from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Verily, God is ever watchful over you!]* AnNisa 1

The Biography of the Prophet, peace be upon him, is the best example of the application of these principles.

*Ibn Hibbaan (3828) narrated from Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave a speech on the day of the conquest of Makkah. He praised and glorified Allah then he said: "To proceed: O people, Allah has taken away from you the pride in ancestry of Jahiliyyah. O people, people are of two types, the righteous and pious one who is dear to his Lord and the wretched evildoer who is worthless before his Lord. All humans come from Adam and Adam comes from Earth."*<sup>28</sup>

Thus there is no legitimacy or tolerance for racial or national discrimination. Islam, as demonstrated by the actions of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, eliminates all reasons for hatred, enmity, and struggle between people regardless of religion.

The differences between humans are a sign of the greatness of God, and the manifestation of splendor in His creation.

---

28. Also narrated by AlTirmithi, *Chapter on Explanation of the Qur'an through the Hadeeth*, No 3193. Translation from <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/pda/ref/118336>.

*[And among his wonders is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colors: for in this, behold, there are messages indeed for all who are possessed of [innate] knowledge!] Ar Rum 22*

The diversity in tongues referred to in the verse does not only mean language and dialect differences but also the variety in methods of communication, meanings, ideas and perceptions.

God created people who are different from each other ethnically, socially, culturally and linguistically, but are basically “one nation” of humans:

*AND [know that] all mankind were once but one single community, and only later did they begin to hold divergent views. And had it not been for a decree that had already gone forth from thy Sustainer, all their differences would indeed have been settled [from the outset]. Yunus 19*

Thus differences do not affect the unity of the human race.

The intellectual differences between human beings are as old as the existence of Man on this Earth. The differentiation process began as Man began looking at the Universe, wondering at its majesty, and puzzling about its creation.<sup>29</sup> Man is inherently curious and has the ability to change and diversify. This has resulted in different life styles and different perceptions about the Universe and how to exist in it. Diversity is thus the reason for advancement and continuation of life.

While diversity is inevitable, it does not necessarily mean absolute repulsion, denial of the other and abolition of their existence. It means the need to recognize that diversity is necessary to achieve the interaction be-

---

29. Muhammad Abu Zahra: *The History of Argument*. Arabic Thought Publishing House, P. 7.

tween various perceptions and ideas. Thus, it is not a destructive agent, but rather a constructive one which stimulates thought, ideas and intellectual exchange.

It is natural that some ideas converge while others lead to discord. Hence, the need for dialogue, discussion and debate to bring the divergent points of view closer.

Sir Thomas Arnold writes:

“Again, the equality in Islam of all believers and the common brotherhood of all Muslims, which suffered no distinctions between Arab and non-Arab, between free and slave, to exist among the faithful, was an idea that ran directly counter to the proud clan-feeling of the Arab.....indeed, the fundamental principles in the teaching of Muhammad were a protest against much that the Arabs had hitherto most highly valued.”<sup>30</sup>

The unity of the human race requires full equality among all its members; which means equal opportunity and fundamental human rights enjoyed by all. Differences are then related to individual effort and distinction in achievement, as well as capabilities for educational attainment and self-improvement.

The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, did not discriminate between people on the basis of ethnicity or race. He did not accept any situation which would detract from the fundamental rights of Muslims, and did not enter or participate in any international agreement - in the form of a treaty, alliance, or Convention - which violated the principle of equality, included terms which reinforced racial segregation, or encouraged a group or a State to practice a policy of persecution against others; all of which could result in conflict, disputes, or war and could endanger peace and harmony among nations.

Every citizen is equal by law: a Divine law not subject to compromise:

---

30. Arnold, p. 43.

*[BEHOLD, God bids you to deliver all that you have been entrusted with unto those who are entitled thereto, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice. Verily, most excellent is what God exhorts you to do: verily, God is all-hearing, all-seeing!]* AnNisa 58

This verse, orders the delivery of a trust to its rightful owner, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and the application of justice when ruling between people, without discrimination due to religion, race, culture, gender, or color. The believers are commanded to be steadfast witnesses for justice, in every situation:

*[O YOU who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do]* Al Ma' idah 8

Every citizen has the right to own property, inherit, buy, sell, etc..... .  
On this, Karen Armstrong writes:

“Social justice was therefore the crucial virtue of Islam. Muslims were commanded as their first duty to build a community (ummah) characterized by practical compassion, in which there was a fair distribution of wealth.”<sup>31</sup>

Non-Muslims have a right to jobs, and have access to all open positions including senior leadership positions.

Some Western historians express admiration when they note the large number of non-Muslims workers in the Islamic state. Adam Mitz, a Western historian states:

---

31. Karen Armstrong, *Islam a Short History*, ibid, p. 6.

“One of the things we admire is the large number of non-Muslims workers and people of authority in the Islamic state. Historical facts show that when Muslims conquered Egypt they kept the Byzantine workers, of which was Minas, who was assigned to oversee the Northern region of Egypt, and the famous “Athanasius” who held positions in the Egyptian government during the reign of the Umayyads and even achieved the status of Head of Collections in Alexandria. Muawiyah, the first Umayyad Caliph, employed a Christian writer named Sargon. During the reign of the Abbasids we saw a lot of Christian ministers, including Nasr bin Aaron and Esa bin Nastoras. This practice continued down to the Ottoman Empire where different jobs were assigned to non-Muslims. In fact most of the Ottoman ambassadors in foreign countries were Christians.”<sup>32</sup>

Thus the values established by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, were translated into actual practice governing individual and social behaviors, as well as policies and international relations of the subsequent Muslim Caliphs.

The spirit of tolerance inherent in Islam emanates from its anti-discrimination principles and its promotion of friendliness and compassion among human beings to cleanse the community from racial hatred and religious persecution.

Tolerance in Islam means that each individual in the nation has the freedom to choose his faith and to practice his religion and that people of different religions are equal before the law of the state.<sup>33</sup>

The spirit of tolerance appears in the courteous treatment and care for all neighbors and the compassion and charity prevalent in Muslim society. All this is necessary for the survival of any society or nation. This behavior has extended roots deep in Islamic history.

---

32. Adam Mitz, *Islamic Civilization in the Fourth Century H.* Translated by Muhammad Abdul Hadi Abu Reda, College of Arts, Cairo University, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 1957 A.D., Part 1, page 57.

33. Ali Hassan AlKharbootli, *Islam and People of other Religions*, Higher Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, Book 49, 1969 A.D., page 95.

Muslims have allowed qualified individuals, regardless of religion, to occupy social and functional roles in the Islamic state, all in the context of equal opportunities. Islam opened the way for such gifted individuals to reach all levels and positions, ranging from clerks to ministers. No limitations were placed on the movement of non-Muslims in the arena of economic and financial activity. This has led to the enrichment of the Islamic civilization, through the considerable contribution of non-Muslims throughout history.

The courts of the Abbasids witnessed discussions in defense of Christianity such as what took place in the court of Muawiya and Abdul Malik, when Timothy the Patriarch of Nestorians presented a message (preserved to this day) in 781 AD in defense of Christianity against the Mahdi. We also have a letter from AlKindi containing details of a debate in the Year 819 AD, in the presence of the Caliph Maamun, on the merits of Islam versus Christianity.<sup>34</sup>

Under Islamic rule, Jews and Christians lived on their farms and rural homes, practiced their cultural and religious traditions, and maintained their native languages: Aramaic and Syriac language in Syria and Iraq, Persian in Persia, and the Coptic language in Egypt. In cities, Christians and Jews held important positions in finance, the court and the private sector, and enjoyed the freedom, leniency and compassion afforded by the Islamic community.

These values were reflected in various aspects of life in the Islamic state for centuries. Non-Muslims, who lived in the Islamic state, as people of a Holy Book, were bound to the Muslims by ties and covenants. Islam does not give religious freedom only to leave non-Muslims isolated or treated as outcasts but rather considers non-Muslims an integral part of the community and affords them an atmosphere of social participation, affection, and courtesy. Islam further stipulates that their food is Halal (allowed) for Muslims, and that Muslims food is Halal for them, thereby encouraging meal sharing and exchange of visits.

---

34. Emad Eddin Khalil, *The Muslim and the Other, A Historical Perspective*, Islamic Knowledge Magazine, Issue 33, Washington.

There is no doubt that this treatment led to peace and harmony between the members of the community and the state. The basic principle in any relationship is justice and peace. War is only entered to if there is an attack, treason, violation of treaties, the threat of aggression, or if a group forcefully prohibits the call to Islam or stands in the way of freedom of belief.

*Ali ibn Abi Talib tells us that one evening a Jew who had given a loan to the Prophet came to Muhammad, Peace and Blessings be upon him, and demanded his loan back. He shook the Prophet and was harsh with him. The Prophet said that he did not have the loan amount yet and that it was still early for the payback. Then he asked the man if he would wait a while and be patient. The man refused and said that he would not leave Muhammad's side until he was paid back. So the Prophet, Peace and Blessings be upon him, sat with him - all night - in the mosque. The Companions were all the while threatening the Jew (for daring to "imprisoning" their Prophet). But the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "My God has prohibited me from wronging someone with whom I have a treaty or anyone else." In the morning, when everyone came for the morning prayer, they were surprised to see the Prophet, Peace and Blessings be upon him, sitting with this stranger. After the prayer they asked him about this man. The Prophet, Peace and Blessings be upon him, explained the situation as though he was sitting with a guest. Then the Jew said: "Oh Messenger of God. I swear by God that I did not come for my money. I only wanted to see if you fit the description of the final Prophet in the Torah - that he is gentle and kind even to those who are harsh. And I have found the description to be true - in you." So the man entered Islam. Peace and Blessings be upon Muhammad.<sup>35</sup>*

*Mohammed bin Ali bin Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib said that a Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him,*

---

35. Al-Naisaburi, Previously referenced, Part 2, page 678, No 4242.

*and said that his people had entered Islam and thereafter became poorer. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said that he had nothing more to spend. A Jew behind the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, offered to give a loan to the Prophet, peace be upon him, who agreed and gave it to the Bedouin to give to his people. Then the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, went to a funeral. After they put the deceased in his grave, the Jew came and asked Muhammad, peace be upon him, to pay back the loan saying that the Prophet's family (Bani Abd Muttaleb) were always late in repayment. Omar bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I would break your nose if not for the sanctity of the occasion." The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him said: "O Omar it is better for you to ask him to ask in a better way and to ask me to repay him in a better way." He ordered Omar to offer the Jew some supplies in repayment and to increase the repayment to atone for his threat to the Jew.*

*Omar offered the repayment. The Jew was satisfied and Omar gave him what the Prophet, peace be upon him, ordered. The Jew then told Omar that they had previously witnessed in Mohammad's character (PBUH) all that was described in Moses' book except tolerance. But that, through this incident, the Prophet's, peace be upon him, tolerance was demonstrated clearly. He then said: "I testify there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is his messenger and be my witness for this and for presenting half of what I own to those who believe in Mohammad." Omar advised the Jew to make the offer to the smaller group around the Prophet, peace be upon him, and not to the entire group of believers.*

*Later, the Jew died, and the Prophet, peace be upon him, marched in his funeral carrying his coffin on his right shoulder while Ali carried it on his left.<sup>36</sup>*

---

36. Quoted by Al-Hakem in his supplement of the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim. He said that it is well referenced. See the supplement, part 2 p 37. Also Ali

## FREEDOM

This value emanates from the other values of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and rests on the recognition of intrinsic human freedom. Humans are free, and any denial of this basic right comes as a result of aggression and the desire to control others to achieve certain benefits.

Freedom is governed by the values of justice, equality and general moral values. On the level of individuals and societies, the policy of the Prophet, peace be upon him, was not to impose Islam by coercion or to force people to change their religion. There are tens of Qur'anic verses that stress this great value.

*[And [thus it is:] had thy Sustainer so willed, all those who live on earth would surely have attained to faith, all of them: dost thou, then, think that thou couldst compel people to believe,] Yunus 99*

*[THERE SHALL BE no coercion in matters of faith. Distinct has now become the right way from [the way of] error] Al Baqara 256*

*[Unto you, your moral law, and unto me, mine!] Al Kafirun 109*

Thus Islam is a religion that tolerates diversity of religions without any infringement on political, human and economic rights. All of these rights are guaranteed through the spirit and the principles of Islam.

Although Islam is the final religion, its approach is to address the mind and the pure basic human instinct, while stressing that conviction is reached by presenting evidence, without any coercion.

This approach is the most likely to succeed and to find resonance with people of other religions; it is a call to find common ground between religions:

---

Bin Abi Bakr AlHaithami, *Grouped Supplements*, Arab Book Publishing House, Cairo 1407 H, Part 8, p. 40. See also Ibn Hayyan book Part 1 p 521, Al-Baihaqi, *Great Sunnah*, verses Part 6 p 52, Ibn Al-Jusieih *Zad el Maad* Part 1 page 66.

*[Say: "O followers of earlier revelation! Come unto that tenet which we and you hold in common: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall not ascribe divinity to aught beside Him, and that we shall not take human beings for our lords beside God."*

*And if they turn away, then say: "Bear witness that it is we who have surrendered ourselves unto Him.]"* Al Imran 64

*[And do not argue with the followers of earlier revelation otherwise than in a most kindly manner – unless it be such of them as are bent on evildoing -and say: "We believe in that which has been bestowed from on high upon us, as well as that which has been bestowed upon you: for our God and your God is one and the same, and it is unto Him that We [all] surrender ourselves."]* Al Ankabut 46

The acceptance of other religions and their followers in Islam does not mean the acceptance of atheism or polytheism; it simply means that every individual is held responsible for this own choice, as Allah said:

*[And say: "The truth [has now come] from your Sustainer: let, then, him who wills, believe in it, and let him who wills, reject it."]* Al Kahf 29

There is no other way to call people to believe except through calm and free dialogue, leaving it to God to judge everyone on Judgment day.

*[Verily, as for those who have attained to faith [in this divine writ], and those who follow the Jewish faith, and the Sabians, and the Christians, and the Magians, [on the one hand,] and those who are bent on ascribing divinity to aught but God, [on the other,] – verily, God will decide between them on Resurrection Day: for, behold, God is witness unto everything.]* Al Hajj 17

The freedom bestowed upon man includes his full responsibility for the choice he makes after being presented with all the evidence.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) refused to punish anyone for preferring his chosen religion over Islam regardless of that religion.

*An example of this was the case of Suhail Ibn Amr.<sup>37</sup> When Mecca was conquered by the Muslims he sent his son Abdullah to ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his father's safety. When Abdullah met the Prophet (peace be upon him) he asked: "Do you guarantee the safety of my father?" He answered: "Yes, let him show himself, he has too much reason and honor to reject Islam." Abdullah went back and informed his father who became free to come and go but refused to convert to Islam. He eventually accompanied the army of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the battle (Ghazwah) of Honain and fought with him (while still a polytheist) before converting to Islam later in Al-Jaaranah.<sup>38</sup>*

Islam went even further when it respected the freedom of choice even if the choice was wrong, and this was stressed by the Qur'an, God said:

- 
37. Suhail Bin Amr Bin Abd-Wod Bin Nasr known as Abi-Yazeed was a late companion of the Prophet, peace be upon him. He moved to Al-Sham with the Muslim armies during the reign of Abu-Baker. He is known to have said: (quoting the Prophet, peace be upon him): "Any one of you serving the cause of Allah for an hour is more important than his whole life's work with his family." Therefore I will accompany the army until I die, and will never return to Mecca." He actually stayed in Al-Sham until he died of plague in Emwas during Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's reign. His life story is in *Al-Tabakat Al-Kobra*, Dar Sader, Beirut Sec. 7, p. 404.
  38. Abu -Abdullah Mohammad Ibn-Al-Hakem Al-Naisabori, *the Supplement of Al-Bukhari and Moslem texts*, revised by Mustafa Abdul Kader Ata, Scientific Books Publishing House 1990, part 3, p. 317, also see *All-Sira AlHalabiya*. Part 3, p. 56.

*[Say: "Neither shall you be called to account for whatever we may have become guilty of, nor shall we be called to account for whatever you are doing."]*

*[Say: "Our Sustainer will bring us all together [on Judgment Day], and then He will lay open the truth between us, in justice – for He alone is the One who opens all truth, the All-Knowing!"]* Saba 25-26

The above text refers to the Prophet's, peace be upon him, choice of what is right as a sin (in their view, worthy of guilt) and refers to their choice of the wrong path simply as a deed, left for God to judge.

This is an ideal stance for dialogue with an opponent. The verse shows respect for the freedom of choice, not respect for the *Wrong* choice, as some may imagine.

Religious freedom in Islam meant that those who rejected the call to Islam were left to choose their belief. Islam stressed the principle of non-coercion in the matter of belief and did not resort in its call to compulsion or forceful practices of any kind. Tolerance and co-existence were applied principles adopted by Muslims and others within the single nation or society, as dictated by the revelations and orders of God.

The great historian Carlyle says:

“Muhammad is the spark fallen from heaven to set alight the apparently unnoticeable sand of the Arabian desert, to gather together the poor Bedouin tribes into a unity of irresistible power; the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven high from Delhi to Grenada.”<sup>39</sup>

In explanation of the Almighty's words,

*[And so, [O Prophet, peace be upon him,] exhort them; thy task is only to exhort: thou canst not compel them [to believe].]* AlGhashiah 21-22

---

39. Francesco Gabrieli, *Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam*, World University Library, Italy, 1968. p. 17.

Scholars state that God does not want belief to be the result of coercion or compulsion, but to be the result of comprehension and free choice. After God fully expresses the argument and lays down the evidence for monotheism, He tells us that there is no excuse for anyone to deny the facts and to continue in his denial. Forced belief negates the meaning of trial in this life. How can someone be tested and judged if the choice is taken away from him?<sup>40</sup>

*[think that thou couldst compel people to believe ] Yunus 99*

He therefore showed the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the Muslims how to approach others and how to advance their call through gentle methods of persuasion without force or threats, and to argue their cause with the people of the Books through the finest and gentlest approaches. If they believe, it is their gain, if not; the matter is left to God.

All of this proves that religious freedom was a principle decreed by the Qur'an and Sunnah. Furthermore, the main goal of Islamic conquests was fighting regimes that stood against religious freedom and forced people to adopt the religion of their kings.

Both the Qur'an and the day by day life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) give plenty of examples of the discussions between the opponents of Islam from different religions and the Muslims whose responses are supported by evidence and proof. This is a clear sign of religious freedom, as is the tolerance for the presence of non-Muslims in the Islamic societies from the early days of Islam onwards.

Throughout the centuries, there is an absence of historical documentation of any cases where Muslims forced their religion on others. Will Durant, in his book, the History of Civilization, states that the people of the Holy Books: Christians, Jews, Sabians, and followers of Zuradisht and oth-

---

40. Mohammad Al-Yazidi, *the Spread of Islam*, Qutaiba house, 2nd. Ed. 1995 p. 35.

ers, enjoyed during the Omayyad reign a degree of tolerance, the like of which did not exist in Christian countries of the time. They were free in their religious practices and were allowed to keep their churches and other places of worship. They only had to pay a personal tax which varied according to their incomes.<sup>41</sup>

In Sharia law the term “Thememies” or “protected people”<sup>42</sup> is often used to describe those who have contractual relationships with Muslims. These agreements guarantee their personal safety as well as the safety of their possessions and their right of worship. The name given, “protected people”, implies that they co-exist with Muslims in accordance to a contract that affords them protection and entails safety for them and their possessions, provided that they adhere to the decrees of Islam concerning law and order. They thus enjoy every right the Muslims enjoy while being allowed to keep their faith.<sup>43</sup>

The protection (Themma) contact between Muslims and non-Muslims gives non-Muslims (Thememies) the right to lifelong safety in the Muslim state (which defends these rights) in return for a personal levy (tax) called “Jeziah.”<sup>44</sup>

Jeziah is not money paid by non-Muslims to keep their religion nor is it a penalty for their refusal to become Muslims, rather it is levied from non-Muslims as compensation for not having to join the Muslim army in defense of the state (i.e. for avoiding the military draft imposed on Muslims). If they do join the army, this tax is dropped.

---

41. Will Durant “*A Brief History of Civilization*” Arabic translation, Samir Al-Ka’ki, Arab Book House, Beirut 2003.

42. Ahl A-Themma in Arabic.

43. Ala’a Eddeen Al-Kasani, *Badaea’ Assunnah*, Arab Book Publishing House, Beirut, 1982, part 9, 433, Al-Shirbini, *Moghni Al-Muhtaj*, part 4,243, Ibn-Kudamah, *ibid*, part 9, 337.

44. Mohammad Dhia AlHaq, *Terms for International Relations in Islamic Sharia and International Law*, Horizons of Culture and Tradition Magazine, United Arab Emirates, Year 12, Edition 46, July 2004, page 45.

Sir Thomas Arnold clarifies the meaning of Jeziah as follows:

“This tax was not imposed on the Christians as some would think, as a penalty for their refusal to accept the Muslim faith, but was paid by them in common with the other dhimmis (Themmys) or non-Muslim subjects of the state whose religion precluded them from serving in the army, in return for the protection secured for them by the arms of the Muslamans.”<sup>45</sup>

The key to relationships in any multi-racial and multi-national mix is inter-recognition. This opens the door for co-existence and the exchange of ideas. Thus does the whole cosmos, with its different parts, move in harmony and cohesiveness. Dialogue is the key for a society based on justice.

It is on this basis that we understand the messages sent by the Prophet, peace be upon him, to the kings and heads of state of his time. One of these was his message to A-Najashi, the King of Al-Habasha (Ethiopia now). In this message he says:

*In the name of God the Benevolent, the Merciful:  
From Mohammed, God's messenger, to Al-Najashi, King of  
Al-Habasha, peace on you, praise be to God, He save Whom  
there is no deity: the Sovereign Supreme, the Holy One, the One  
with whom all salvation rests, the Giver of Faith, the One who  
determines what is true and false. I testify that Jesus, Mary's  
son, is God's spirit and His word bestowed on the pure Virgin  
Mary, whereupon she became pregnant with Jesus. He was thus  
created from God's spirit as Adam was created by God's Hands.  
I call upon you to you to follow the only God.*<sup>46</sup>

Stressing common beliefs was the method adopted by the Prophet, peace be upon him, in peace-making and in promoting the principles of recognition and coexistence, on the basis of justice and integrity. This was

---

45. Arnold p. 61.

46. Abu-Baker Assayid Al-Bakri, *Ea'nat Attalibin*, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut part 3, p 147.

the basis for establishing relationships with Heads of State and spreading peace, thus paving the ground for advancement and development.

We find in the Sira<sup>47</sup> books the following text describing the letter to Al-Najashi, which was delivered by Amr bin Omayyah:

*“When the Prophet, peace be upon him, dispatched messengers to the kings calling them to Islam, he sent Amr bin Omayyah with the following letter:*

*Listen Asma’ah,<sup>48</sup> I have to tell you, and it is your duty to listen. Your kindness towards us is exactly what we expect of our own. Our trust in you is based on the fact that whatever good we expected from you was indeed shown us, and we never felt any fear from your side. We have the words of the Bible as a judge between us; a judge that does not wrong anybody or deviate from right. In this we have the ultimate guarantee. If not, you, as far as this Prophet, peace be upon him, is concerned, will be like the Jews when they confronted Jesus. The Prophet, peace be upon him, has dispatched his messengers to all kings, but had special hopes and expectations when he addressed you, because of your previous noble acts.*

*When Al-Najashi read the letter, he said: “I now know that this is the Prophet, peace be upon him, awaited by the people of the Book.”<sup>49</sup>*

The Prophet (peace be upon him) followed the same style with Caesar, the Roman King, when he dispatched Dehia Al-Kalbi to him. This shows that using dialogue to break down the other party’s reservations, is the best way to convey the message.<sup>50</sup>

---

47. Sira means Biography of the Prophet, peace be upon him, or Sunnah.

48. A title for AlNajashi, King of Ethiopia.

49. Abu-Al-Rabia Sulaiman Al-Kilae, *ibid*, Part 2, p. 390.

50. See the unabridged book, previous ref. Part2, p. 379.

When addressing the people of protection (Thememies), the Prophet, peace be upon him, used arguments derived from their books. This guideline was also adopted by his messengers in their discussions with the Kings.

An example of this was when Hateb Ibn Abi-Balta'a was sent to Al-Mukawkas of Alexandria with the following letter:

*“In the name of Allah, the Benevolent, the Merciful. From Muhammad Ibn-Abdullah, God’s messenger to Al-Mukawkas, King of Copts. Peace be on followers of good guidance. I call upon you with the call of Islam. Come to Islam and be saved; you will be twice rewarded by Allah. If you refuse you will carry sin of the Copts. O People of the Holy Book, let us talk and reach a goal to worship God only without associating any partners with Him, and to refuse to worship others in place of Allah. If you refuse, let us declare that we are the Muslims.”*<sup>51</sup>

*Upon receipt of the letter, the following dialogue took place: Hateb: “You have a religion that you are not going to change unless you find a better religion. This better religion is Islam, which when adopted will compensate you for all that you lose. This Prophet, peace be upon him, called people to believe. He was fiercely opposed by Quraish and the Jews, but was welcomed by the Christians. The promise of the future coming of Muhammad is mentioned by Jesus just like Moses’ foretelling of Jesus. Our calling you to Qur’an is like your call to the people of the Torah (Old Testament) to believe in the Bible. Every Prophet should be followed by the people of his time, and this applies to you. We are not telling you to forsake Christ’s religion, but we are in fact asking you to adhere to its principles.”*

**The Companions (Al-Sahaba), those who accompanied the Prophet, peace be upon him, and carried the message of Islam to the world, under-**

---

51. ref. 208, part 2, p 394.

stood that the basic principles and values of this religion were shared by other religions. This constitutes the common ground, not only between all religions, but between all humanity promoting fraternity and love. This understanding was reflected clearly in their dialogues with others.

Based on this Hateb addressed Al-Mukawkas' reservations by saying that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was like Jesus in that both were sent to guide people for the benefit of humanity. In this they were like all the previous messengers. Al-Mukawkas' argument that his religion was not to be deserted for another, received the response that the call of Islam is exactly the same as Christianity and that Al-Mukawkas was not asked to abandon his religion but to follow it and adhere to its principles.

In addition, the Prophet, peace be upon him, in his discussion with others, used logic and reason, avoiding useless and false arguments.

*[Lo! You are the ones who would argue about that which is known to you; but why do you argue about something which is unknown to you?  
Yet God knows [it], whereas you do not know:] Al Imran 66*

This scientific approach, based on facts and proof, appeals to the mind and opens the hearts of all people; while an approach using false arguments is time-wasting, insulting and unwise.

*[And yet, among men there is many a one that argues about God without having any knowledge [of Him], without any guidance, and without any light-giving revelation] Al Hajj 8*

The Prophet, peace be upon him, used facts that were relevant to the other party, because this was the shortest way to find common grounds. Thus, his dialogues were often fruitful. An example of this is what he wrote to Bishop Dagher:

*“Peace be upon the Believers. Moving forward, Jesus is the holy spirit of God and His word bestowed on the Virgin Mary. I believe in God and His message to us, His message to Ibrahim, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and his sons, to Moses and Jesus, and what He sent to the other prophets without differentiation between any of them. We all believe in God and surrender to him. Peace be on those who follow His guidance.”<sup>52</sup>*

Such constructive dialogue had equally fruitful effects when Muslims spread all over the planet preaching their religion. The recipients responded by joining forces with the Muslims against their tyrannical rulers and adopted Islam freely.<sup>53</sup>

The Prophet’s letters prove that Islam did not use force to promote the religion, but left people to make their choice and bear its consequence in front of God.

---

52. Muhammad ben Saad ben Manii, previous ref. part 1, p. 276.

53. Muhammad Al-Sadiq Argon, previous ref. part 1, p. 262.

## THE PROPHET'S TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

**T**he principles of justice, freedom and equality were followed in the Prophet's, peace be upon him, treaties and agreements with other parties. This is apparent in more than one place in the Qur'an where we find calls to respect treaties and a stress on the importance of honoring contracts, as well as the warnings against breaking agreements or violating their terms.

The Prophet's, peace be upon him, honesty, mercy and respect of his word were well established early before his message. An example cited in history books is the "Fudool pact" in which the Prophet, peace be upon him, participated. In this pact Quraish committed to answer the call of anybody in Mecca or the neighborhood who was subjected to injustice and to ensure that he received justice. In general the pact called for good conduct and rejected transgression.<sup>54</sup>

The Prophet, peace be upon him, mentioned this pact years later in Al-Madeena. Abdul- Rahman bin Awf quotes the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying:

---

54. Akhbar (news) of Makka, part 5, p. 192.

*“I witnessed the pact of my good relatives when I was just a boy, and I will not breach it for any number of camels.”*  
*Omar bin Shuaib quoted his father who quoted his grandfather who quoted the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying in a speech “Keep the pacts you did in the old Jahiliya days (before Islam). Your becoming Muslim should lend additional strength to your vows, but don’t create new pacts after Islam.”*<sup>55</sup>

The first detailed document written in Al-Madeena (named “the Document of Madeena”), was an agreement between Muslims and the people of the Book. It guaranteed Jews and other citizens the freedom of worship and gave them civil rights. A sample of its terms follows:

“The Jews are part of the citizenry that includes the Muslims. They, like others, have their own religion. Those allied with the Jews are likewise guaranteed their rights, except sinners or those who commit crimes and bring destruction upon themselves and their community. Any Jew who follows us will have our support and charity without transgression or harm. Muslims and Jews will act against any opponents of this pact. They will share advice and help each other out in good deeds.”<sup>56</sup>

Some of the Jews joined the Muslims in defending Al-Madeena and tried to follow the terms of this pact. On one such occasion, one of their clergy, called Mukheireek, said: “Oh Jews, you definitely know that you have to help Mohammad.” They tried to deny this by saying that it was Saturday. He told them that they should forget about the Sabbath and honor their contract. He took out his sword and armor, telling them that if he was killed, his wealth was to be given to Muhammad PBUH to use as he sees fit.<sup>57</sup>

---

55. *Imam Ahmad’s Musnad*, on Pacts, No 1511.

56. Muhammad Hameed Allah, *Political Documents of the Prophet’s, peace be upon him, era and Al-Khilafa Al-Rashida*, Beirut 1990, p 15-21.

57. Abdul-Malik bin Hisham, *Al-Sira Al-Nabawiyah*, Taha Abdul Raof Saad, Editor, Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut 1411 H. part 3, p. 89, Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nehaya*, Al-Ma’aref Library, Beirut, part 4, p. 36. Al-Albani mentioned that Ibn-Hisham

Another example is the treaty with the people of Najran, which pledged personal safety as well as the safety of possessions for the Christians of Najran. It also pledged that no Bishop or monk would be removed from his position. The text said:

“To the Najran inhabitants who adopted the Christian faith wherever they may be: they have God’s protection and Muhammad’s Themma for their personal safety and the safety of their possessions (whether they reside in their homes or are travelling), safety for their places of worship and what they own, be it little or great. I will protect and defend them, their churches and other places of worship, their monks and wandering men, and their religion and beliefs. I will offer them the same kind of protection I have for myself, my relatives and Muslims in general. This is because I offer them God’s word that they get the same treatment as Muslims, and have the same duties as Muslims in full partnership with the Muslims.”<sup>58</sup>

The text of this document is an example of Islam’s recognition for different religions, and its acceptance of religious differences, thus paving the way for “freedom of worship” laws. It was the norm practiced throughout all the history of Islam; unparalleled in human history. Such a total acceptance for minorities was not witnessed in any previous documents crafted by man.<sup>59</sup>

When Abu-Bakr became the Khalifa, he confirmed the Najran pledge by adding his own pledge to the people of Najran, practically repeating the Prophet’s, peace be upon him, text, word for word.

---

copied this treaty from Ibn-Isac, and that Ibn-Katheer took it from Ibn-Hisham, and that it is not well authenticated and weak. See Al-Albani: *Defense of the Prophet’s Hadeeth*, Al-Khafikain library, Damascus, p. 25-26. Yet, this treaty was mentioned in a number of quotes from the Prophet, peace be upon him, some of them in *Sunan Abi-Daud*. See Hameed Allah, ref.

58. Muhammad Hameed Allah, ref. 217, p. 123-128.

59. Muhammad Amara, *Laws in the Islamic Culture*, International Shurook Library, Egypt p. 144-145.

From a practical viewpoint, freedom of belief is directly connected to the relationship with others. Any guardianship on religious belief is an insult to human dignity, and a violation of freedom, it is even an assault against God's will.

To sum up, the policy of the state created by the Prophet, peace be upon him, was not based on the enforcement of belief within the state or in dealing with foreign countries.

Islam considered keeping a promise or a pledge a human virtue not limited to any race or belief or group. A pledge with an infidel or an enemy is as sacred as one with a Muslim. It is not acceptable to break it without a reasonable excuse such as treason, breach of contract by the other, or betrayal. God Said:

*[on Judgment Day] you will be called to account for every promise which you have made!] Al Israa 34*  
*[And be true to every promise – for, verily, [on Judgment Day] you will be called to account for every promise which you have made!] Allsraa 34*

Muslims followed this order from God Almighty and considered any pledge or contract between two parties as sacred. This principle was further enhanced in the below verses:

*[they who are true to their bond with God and never break their covenant;]*  
.....  
.....  
*[But as for those who break their bond with God after it has been established [in their nature], and cut asunder what God has bidden to be joined, and spread corruption on earth – their due is rejection [by God], and theirs is a most evil fate [in the life to come] ArRa'ad from 20 to 25*

Adhering to contracts and treaties is a basic and crucial factor in organized interaction, both in internal as well as external relations. It reinforces the principles of co-existence and co-operation, and promotes the culture of peace preached by the Prophet, peace be upon him.

“Muhammad himself had entered into treaties with several Christian tribes, promising them his protection and guaranteeing them the free of their religion and to their clergy undisturbed enjoyment of their old rights and authority.”<sup>60</sup>

The treaties between the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his opponents, Jews or non-believers, are numerous. An example is Al-Hudai-bayah. These treaties contained terms calling for co-operation between the parties to establish peaceful co-existence and security for everybody concerned. The Prophet, peace be upon him, also signed contracts with Arab tribes that turned to Islam to ensure the safety of their families and property.

Honoring treaties and contracts between Muslims and their opponents was an order from God to be followed even if the other party was known for breaching contracts. The Qur’anic verses and Hadeeth deplores the behavior of those who breach agreements and violate trust.

In a well- authenticated hadeeth:

*Abdullah bin Omar told us that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Four attributes, if they apply to anyone, he is a pure hypocrite. Having even one of them makes one a hypocrite to a degree unless he abandons it: he lies, he violates his pledge, he breaks his promises and he goes overboard in a quarrel or a dispute.”*<sup>61</sup>

Also

---

60. Arnold, Ibid, pp; 47-48.

61. Muslim, on Belief, No 88.

*Abu-Huraira reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Three people are my adversaries on Judgment day, and I triumph over all my adversaries on that day: one who betrays after promising in my name, one who sells a free man and lives off the price, and one who hires a man to do some work but does not pay him."*<sup>62</sup>

These basic principles towards others (even opponents) never changed. They were honored until the other party forced a breach through aggressive conduct.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) acted on these principles. One of his first acts after Al- Hijra was to draft the document of Al Madeena discussed above.

Jews in Madeena belonged to three tribes: Bani-Kainuka', Bani-Nadeer and Bani-Kuraitha. His attitude towards them only changed after they betrayed his trust by breaching the contracts and treaties. Bani-Kainuka' exhibited treachery and fought him after Badr. Therefore, he besieged their fortress and expelled them from Al-Madeena. They were the first Jews to wage war on Muslims.

In a similar fashion Bani-Nudair breached the contract and planned his assassination when he visited their part of the city to ask for their participation in paying compensation for the death of the Amerians. Their plot was revealed to him by God, and he escaped unharmed. The Qur'an discusses this in the following Aya:

*[Then, for having broken their solemn pledge, We rejected them and caused their hearts to harden – [so that now] they distort the meaning of the [revealed] words, taking them out of their context; and they have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; and from all but a few of them thou wilt*

---

62. Al-Bukhari, on Rent, No. 2109, Sunan Ibn Maja, No. 2433.

*always experience treachery. But pardon them, and forbear: verily, God loves the doers of good]* Al Ma'idah 13

In spite of their evident treachery and betrayal of citizenship conditions, the Qur'anic verse urged the Prophet, peace be upon him to treat them nobly and forgive them. Al-Tabari says in explanation of this verse:

“This is an order from God to his messenger (peace be upon him) to forgive these Jews who wanted to kill him and his Companions (Sahaba). He also ordered him not to harm them in any way.”

So in this case, both the Qur'an and the Prophet's, peace be upon him, actions laid the ground for the principle regulating relationships with opponents, even when they do excessive harm: Tolerance and forgiveness in dealing with others.

*Anas bin Malik reports that a Jewish woman offered the Prophet, peace be upon him, a roast sheep adulterated with poison. When she was caught and his companions wanted to kill her, he refused. According to Anas he continued to suffer from the after-effects of the poison over the years.<sup>63</sup>*

God showed his Prophet, peace be upon him, and the Believers, the way to follow in the matter of pledges and in establishing absolute justice, where equality for all people is the standard. He made it a duty for them to keep their word as long as the partners in the contract kept to it. If the partners commit a breach, then it is the duty of the Believers to give notice that they in turn will not be bound by the treaty, giving the other side the opportunity to prepare for what follows. This is the highest form of justice that can be envisioned.<sup>64</sup>

---

63. Al-Bukhari, *Acceptance of Gifts from Non-believers*. No 2424. See also Abu-Muhammad Abdallah Al-Asbahani, *Manners of the Prophet*, peace be upon him, ed. Saleh Al-Waniat, Al-Muslim house, Riyadh 1998, part1, 256.

64. See Muhammad Al-Sadik Arjon, *Encyclopedia of Tolerance of Islam*, Saudi Publishing House, Jeddah. 1404 H, part1, p. 365.

In accordance with this, the Prophet, peace be upon him, ordered Bani-Nadeer out of Al-Madeena. When they refused, he besieged them until they surrendered on the condition that they leave with their families, carrying camel loads of their possessions with the exception of arms.

Bani-Kuraitha also breached the contract in the battle of Al-Khandak (the Ditch) and joined forces with the non-Believers. Thus, the Prophet, peace be upon him, destroyed their fortresses and besieged them for twenty five days. They then surrendered and asked that Sa'ad bin Ubadah lay down the terms of their surrender: He ruled that their men be killed and their offspring and possessions taken.<sup>65</sup>

This treachery and hostile behavior was revealed in detail in the words of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in the writings about his life and in the history of the time. It is only natural that such treachery be appropriately and effectively dealt with. The punishment did not come about because the Muslims resented the presence of the Jews in Al-Madeena, as some might think, but because the Jews joined the ranks of the non-Believers of Quraish to fight against the Prophet, peace be upon him, in total violation of their signed treaties with him.

Therefore, the rules of dealing with those of other religions change only if they take hostile action against the Muslims.

One such case is the attitude of the Romans. When they saw that Islam was no longer a negligible group in the Arabian Peninsula, but had grown into a movement of potential danger to the Roman interests in the region (especially after the fall of Mecca), they resorted to force in Mo'ta and killed the Prophet's, peace be upon him, messenger to the King of the Romans. This greatly upset the Prophet, peace be upon him, and prompted him to dispatch small parties of fighters to the Northern borders, an act which was the prelude to the battle (Ghazwa) of Mo'ta.<sup>66</sup>

---

65. *Zad El-Ma'ad*, part 1, from 365 onwards.

66. Ibn Al-Juzieh, *Zad A-Ma'ad*, ref. 299. Part 3,381.

Here we observe that a change in the attitude of the other side is what prompted the confrontation. In a similar manner we find that the move to aggression by the non-Believers of Mecca changed the Muslims' behavior towards them. These changes were not prompted by mere differences in opinion or belief but were a result of hostile stances and harm against Islam and the Muslims. Also we note that the new rules of dealing with the violators were directed by the state, not by individuals.



## THE PROPHET AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**T**here is no doubt that the Prophet, peace be upon him, established a full-fledged state in the heart of Arabia, which had never known the meaning of unity before his time. Sir Thomas Arnold says about this:

“It is important to remember the peculiar character of Arab society at that time...There was absence of any organized administrative or judicial system such as in modern times we connect with the idea of a government. Each tribe or clan formed a separated and absolutely independent body, and this independence extended itself also to the individual members of the tribe, each of whom recognized the authority, or leadership of his chief only as being the exponent of a public opinion which he himself happened to share.”<sup>67</sup>

The new methods of organization and the laws that the Prophet, peace be upon him, laid down were unlike anything known to that society, which was used to a different set of rules for each tribe.

Arthur Glyn Leonard in ‘Islam, Her Moral and Spiritual Values’ said:

---

67. Arnold, *ibid*, p. 31.

“.....Arabia that had never before obeyed one prince, suddenly exhibits a political unity and swears allegiance to the will of an absolute ruler...”<sup>68</sup>

It is a well-accepted international principle that the sovereignty of a state has two aspects:

**First:** an external aspect comprising the relationship with other nations, as dictated by its constitution, including its freedom to enter into treaties, declare war or remain non-allied. Essentially this means equality with other sovereign states.

**Second:** an internal aspect where the state spreads its authority and laws on all parts of the country and on all its inhabitants.

However, the Muslim state, with its principles of justice, equality and freedom, gave its subjects of different religions the right to adopt special laws concerning their family affairs.

From a practical viewpoint, national strength is the key to sound international relations based on mutual respect.<sup>69</sup>

Joseph Frankel in his book, *International Relations*, says:

“National interest is the key word in foreign policy. This idea emanates from national values which are the outcome of the state and nation com-

---

68. Arnold, *ibid*, pp. 32-33.

69. Armstrong, Karen. *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*. Harper, San Francisco, 1992.

Andrae, Tor. *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*. Translated from German by Theophil Menzel, New York, N.Y. Barnes and Noble, 1957. Kelly, Marjorie. *Islam, The Religious and Political Life of a World Community*. New York, Praeger Publishers, 1984.

Lewis, Bernard. “*Gibbon on Muhammad*.” In *Daedalus*, vol.105, no.3 (summer 1976): Pp. 89-101. Peters, F E. *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994. Schimmel, Annmarie. *And Muhammad is His Messenger*. Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1985. Watt, William Montgomery. *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

bined. Yet this idea is vague to a degree, and the controversy about foreign policy is the result of differing interpretations of national interests.”

He continues to say that power or force is part of all international relations. It is there in wars and military conflicts, it is even there in cooperation and the threat to use force as a factor in overcoming the objections of one of the parties. The whole body of diplomatic practices revolves around the use of force or acquiring the capability to do so. This is why international policy is often described as the diplomacy of force. Yet, the question of force in international policy is more straightforward and less complicated than the use of force in internal policies.<sup>70</sup>

However, in Islam, force and the use of it, is not controlled solely by national interests, but rather by a superior value, which is the value of justice. This value is the controlling factor in the relationship between individuals as well as between states. It is a single standard and does not allow for duplicity or two-faced policies.

God said:

*[O YOU who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do] Al Ma' idah 8*

The holy Qur'an makes it clear that international relations are conducted in a constant push-pull atmosphere between nations. This is a characteristic of human interaction across the ages. Human societies are always engaged in a conflict between “Right” and “Wrong”, as expressed in God's words.

---

70. Joseph Frankel, *International Relations in a Changing World*, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 93.

[And if God had not enabled people to defend themselves against one another, corruption would surely overwhelm the earth] Al Baqarah 251

This state of affairs does not however nullify the values of justice, freedom and equality, and Islam does not try to dominate nations or employ force (Jihad) to force people to turn to Islam, or to steal their wealth, but rather uses force in defense of Right.

The main principle in Islamic international relations is the promotion of peace. War is only entered to when there is an aggression against an Islamic country or against people calling peacefully to Islam, or against those who force Muslims to leave their religion. In such cases war becomes a necessity to defend people, property or religion, i.e. to uphold “Right”.

In a number of verses, Qur’an stresses the idea that the message of the Prophet, peace be upon him, is one of guidance, mercy, love and peace to all mankind. God said:

*[And [thus, O Prophet,] We have sent thee as [an evidence of Our] grace towards all the worlds] Al Anbiya 107*  
*[and to provide guidance and grace and a glad tiding unto all who have surrendered themselves to God] An Nahl 89*  
*[INDEED, there has come unto you [O mankind] an Apostle from among yourselves: heavily weighs upon him [the thought] that you might suffer [in the life to come]; full of concern for you [is he, and] full of compassion and mercy towards the believers] At Tawbah 128*

It is an established historical fact that the Prophet, peace be upon him, turned the values of justice, equality, freedom, tolerance and respect for pledges and treaties into everyday practices. He never violated a contract and he adhered to the values of Islam even in the hardest of circumstances. He resorted to force only to overcome an aggression, and did not wage religious wars to force people into Islam.

“These stupendous conquests which laid the foundations of the Arab Empire, were certainly not the outcome of a holy war, waged for the propagation of Islam.<sup>71</sup>

Laura Viccia Vagliri,<sup>72</sup> in her book, *In defense of Islam*, says:

“If Islam created in Arabia a strong nation based on moral values, in a situation of unparalleled chaos, where the concept of government as a social institution was completely unknown, where any form of an authority was not tolerated, and where murder and theft were not punishable crimes, but incidents requiring reprisal by the victim or his tribe, then such an achievement could only be realized because Islam was a religion and a law at the same time.”<sup>73</sup>

All Qur’anic verses which gave permission to fight gave as the reason the aggression by the other party or expelling Muslims from their homes, as witnessed in:

*[PERMISSION [to fight] is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged – and, verily, God has indeed the power to succour them] AL Hajj 39*

When the order to fight was revealed to the Prophet, peace be upon him, the expulsion of Muslims at the hands of the non-Believers of Mecca was the driver. Thus the fight was defensive in nature.

*[AND FIGHT in God’s cause against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression – for, verily, God does not love aggressors] Al Baqarah 190*

---

71. Arnold, *ibid*, p. 46.

72. L. Viccia Vagliri is an Italian scholar who specialized in Islamic history and literature. She wrote: *Arabic Grammar* (in two parts) (1937-1941), *Islam* (1946), and *Defense of Islam*. She wrote several studies published in oriental journals.

73. Laura Viccia Vagliri, *Defense of Islam*, p. 94.

The persecution and expulsion of Muslims from their homes and denying them the freedom of belief were the reasons to start Jihad by fighting.<sup>74</sup>

Ibn Al-Kaiem<sup>75</sup> says the following about this:

Anybody examining the life story of the Prophet, peace be upon him, realizes that he did not force anyone in the matter of religion. He only fought those who fought against him. He did not fight those who refrained from this. As long as his opponents kept peace, God ordered him to reciprocate in kind.<sup>76</sup> God said:

*[HOW COULD they who ascribe divinity to aught beside God be granted a covenant by God and His Apostle, unless it be those [of them] with whom you [O believers] have made a covenant in the vicinity of the Inviolable House of Worship? [As for the latter,] so long as they remain true to you, be true to them: for, verily, God loves those who are conscious of Him]*  
At Tawbah 7

The acts of war (battles or Ghazwat) led by the Prophet, peace be upon him, were defensive in nature. Bader, the first such battle, started when the Prophet, peace be upon him, intercepted a Quraishy trade caravan, led by Abi-Sufyan on its way to the Levant, in order to recover the financial losses of the Muslims whose possessions were confiscated when they were driven from Mecca. The caravan managed to escape the interception. Quraish then returned to attack the Muslims. The battle took place at the

---

74. Muhammad Amara, previous ref. p. 122-123.

75. Muhammad Ibn Abi Baker bin Ayyub, a great scholar, was born in Damascus 691 h, he was a student of ibn Taymiyya, and he died in Damascus 751 h. His books include *Aa'lam Al-Muwake'enan*, *Rab El-Aalameen*, *Ighathat Allah-fan*. See his life story in: *Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr bin Naser Al-Demashki, Al-Shaweesh*, Islamic Book House, Beirut 1393, H. p. 68.

76. Ibn Al- Jusieh, *Hedayat A-Hayara*, *In Answering Jews and Christians*, Islamic university, Al-Madeena Al- Munawara, p. 71.

Bader spring near Al-Madeena in the second year of Al-Hijra. The writer Karen Armstrong writes:

“He also had to deal with Meccans, where Abu Sufyan now directed the campaign against him and had launched two major offensives against the Muslims in Medina. His object was not simply to defeat the Ummah in one battle but to annihilate all the Muslims.”<sup>77</sup>

Similar conditions led to the battle of Uhud, where the non-Believers of Mecca attacked first.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, met an attacking army of three thousand fighters who left Mecca for Al-Madeena intending to kill the Prophet, peace be upon him, and end his call and his state in one master swoop. The Muslims met them at Uhud where the fighting took place.

In his battles with the Jews, historical documents prove that Muslims went on the offensive only after the Jewish tribes broke their pledge and violated the Al-Madeena Contract. This contract superseded all previous alliances that were in effect in Al-Madeena before Al-Hijra (the migration to Al-Madeena). According to its binding terms, all the Jewish tribes had certain commitments and responsibilities. Some tribes chose to ignore these commitments despite the lack of any provocation or action by the Muslims. The Jewish tribes who abided by the document continued to live freely in Al-Madeena. The Qur’an describes Jews as people of the Book and calls upon Muslims to respect all their Prophets, peace be upon them all.

The writer Karen Armstrong says:

“The struggle did not indicate any hostility towards Jews in general, but only towards the three rebel tribes. The Qur’an continued to revere Jewish prophets and to urge Muslims to respect the People of the Book. Smaller Jewish groups continued to live in Medina and later like Christians enjoyed full religious liberty in the Islamic empires.”<sup>78</sup>

---

77. Karen Armstrong, *Islam*, p. 17.

78. Karen Armstrong, *Islam*, p. 18.

The battle of Mo'ta took place because the King of Busra (part of the Roman Empire) killed the emissary of the Prophet, peace be upon him, sent in the year 8H to invite them to Islam and to deliver the Prophet's, peace be upon him, letter. It was necessary, then, to resort to a defensive response from the sovereign Islamic state.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, did not seek to antagonize the two great states of the time, but sent messengers to their kings and princes to advocate his call in peace. War did not start with the Persian and Roman armies until their rulers incited the Arab tribes in Iraq and the Levant to invade Al-Hejaz (Arabia now), and they themselves started preparing for military action against the Muslims. Muslims became aware of the intention to carry out a surprise attack, which was only delayed because Khosrau and Hercules became engaged in suppressing internal disorders.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, was able, in a matter of a few years, to transform the scene in Arabia from one characterized by internal strife and wars to a unified peaceful nation. This new peace was the driver for much of the region's social and cultural transformations which set the stage for the world leadership role which Muslims were soon to play.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, arrived in Al-Madeena to find that the long tribal wars between the Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj had weakened both tribes and their Jewish allies. The writer Karen Armstrong describes this state as follows:

“Aws and Khazraj were engaged in a bloody conflict with one another. The Jewish clans had become involved in their struggle, Nadir and Qurayzah supporting Aws, while Qaynuqa was allied to Khazraj...Everybody was exhausted by the violence.”<sup>79</sup>

The accomplishment of building peace and promoting its value were apparent in his life (peace be upon him), after his death, and in the conduct of the Princes and Khalifas who ruled after him. The neighboring countries al-

---

79. Karen Armstrong, p. 103.

so benefited as the Muslims fought to relieve conquered people from tyranny and oppression and to spread the values of justice, equality and freedom.

Orthodox Christians in the Roman Empire suffered from the bigotry of Emperor Hercules who confiscated their churches and forced them to follow his beliefs. The Orthodox faith was considered illegal in 451 and its followers in the Levant and Mesopotamia suffered at the hands of the official church, and revolted against the Roman occupiers. When the Islamic conquest began, the Orthodox Christians considered it a liberation from the Byzantines.

This is apparent in a letter written by Patriarch Michael the Elder in the middle of the twelfth century.

“This is why the God of vengeance, who alone is all-powerful, and changes the empire of mortals as He will, giving it to whomsoever He will, and uplifting the humble, (upon) beholding the wickedness of the Romans who throughout their dominions, cruelly plundered our churches and our monasteries and condemned us without pity, brought from the region of the south the sons of Ishmael, to deliver us through them from the hands of the Romans. And if in truth we have suffered some loss, because the Catholic churches, that had been taken away from us and given to the Chalcedonians, remained in their possession; for when the cities submitted to the Arabs, they assigned to each denomination the churches which they found it to be in possession of (and at that time the great churches of Emessa and that of Harran had been taken away from us); nevertheless it was no slight advantage for us to be delivered from the cruelty of the Romans, their wickedness, their wrath and cruel zeal against us, and to find ourselves at peace.”<sup>80</sup>

The same course was followed by the Khalifa Omar who granted the people of Iliaa' (Jerusalem) a commitment safeguarding their lives, their possessions, and churches. He pledged that their churches would not be occupied,

---

80. Michael the Elder, vol, 2 pp. 412-13. *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. J. B. Abbeloos et Lamy, p. 474.

destroyed or pillaged. He also assured them that no one would be harmed because of his religion, and that no one would be forced to abandon it.

On this, Alexy Jurafsky<sup>81</sup> says:

“The Christians of the East received the new religion (Islam) without resistance, it was even welcomed in some areas. This attitude is the result of several factors. One factor was the tolerance of Muslims towards Christian religious practices as long as they didn’t impact Islamic policy. Another factor is the protection the conquering Muslims afforded to the Christians who had suffered under the bigotry of the Byzantine Empire, especially sects like the Nestorians and Monophysites.”<sup>82</sup>

The Christians, Jews, and other people of faith who were subjected to the most horrendous form of bigotry before Islam, were now free, under Islam, to practice their religion without obstacles. This is the highest demonstration of Islamic tolerance.

In this context the Patriarch of Jerusalem in the ninth century wrote to his brother, the Patriarch of Constantinople, that Muslims were a fair people, and that they did not oppress them in any way or use any form of violence.<sup>83</sup>

The German Orientalist Sigrid Honke<sup>84</sup> says:

- 
81. Alex Jurafsky specialized in cultural relations between people and continents. He worked in the oriental institute which is a branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He published several studies on the subject especially as regards East and West. See his biography in his book: *Islam and Christianity; From Rivalry to Dialogue*, translated by Khalaf Al-Jarad, World of Knowledge Series. The National Council for Culture, Art and Literature, Kuwait Nov. 1996.
  82. Alexy Jurafsky, previous ref. p. 177-178.
  83. Sigrid Honke: *Arab Sun Shines on the West*, translation by Farook Baydoon, Kammal Dusuki, Sader House, Beirut 2002, p. 364.
  84. Sigrid Honke, the famous Orientalist, is the wife of Dr Shultz famous for his fair writings about Arabs and their literature. This author has several books in this field. Her PhD treatise was on the effect of Arab literature on European literature. Her most well known book is: *Arab Sun Shines on the West*.

“Probably the most important factor behind the Arabic victories is the surprising tolerance that astonished the populations of the conquered territories, which led the knight King Kiros to say:

These conquerors don’t enter as destroyers. Claims of their bigotry or brutality are fictitious, and are contradicted by thousands of absolutely correct examples of their tolerance and humanity in dealing with the conquered peoples. Immense volumes of history books do not include but a few numbers of people who treated their opponents in belief in the way Arabs did. This kind of behavior left a very good impression that led to the easy and successful penetration of the Arab culture, a success not enjoyed by the brilliant Greek culture, or the violent Roman culture which imposed its will by force.”<sup>85</sup>

Sir Thomas Arnold says:

“It is only right to say that non- Muslims under Islamic rule enjoyed a degree of tolerance unparalleled in Europe before modern times. The continued existence of various Christian sects in an Islamic environment proves that the persecution they sometimes suffered on the hands of some bigots was, to a large extent, the result of local conditions, and not the result of intolerance.”<sup>86</sup>

The interactions between Muslims and other nations during the period of conquests and the tolerance and flexibility that characterized these interactions contributed to a rich dialogue and exchange of ideas and the emergence later on of what is known as “comparative religious studies.”

This intellectual movement was characterized by the appearance of a number of books on the subject as early as the end of the second Hijra century and the advent of the third Hijra century. Responses came from non-Muslim writers such as Damascan John,<sup>87</sup> Theodore Abu-Kurra and Kerkesani

---

85. Zegrid Honke, previous ref. p. 358.

86. Thomas Arnold, *the Call of Islam*, Cairo 1970, p 729-730.

87. Saint Damascan John (675-750 AD) was born in Damascus to parents connected to the church. He was the grandson of Mansour Bin Sarjon, Head of Treas-

the Jew, whose writings were embraced in this scholarly environment. The writings and responses constitute the historical written dialogue between Muslims and people of other religions for that era.

This led Adam Metz, a Christian writer, to praise the freedom enjoyed by other religions in the large Islamic state:

“Churches and other religious centers behaved as if they were outside the reach of the state; and as if they are not part of it. In this they were relying on the pledges and the privileges the state endowed them with. It was natural and expected that Jews and Christians lived in Muslim neighborhoods, which helped to create an atmosphere of tolerance unknown to Middle Ages Europe.”

It is evident then that Qur’an did not spread by force, but by the rational call to Islam, drawing in even those who would later take the power from the Arabs such as the Turks and Moguls. The spread of Islam in India, where Arabs were only passerbys, was so great that the number of Muslims exceeded fifty million. In our efforts to investigate the claims of compulsion, we have found no evidence contrary to what we have discussed so far. There is nothing in the Qur’anic verses which is not found in the other religious books such as the *Taw\*rah* for example.”<sup>88</sup>

Adam Metz in describing the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and people of other religions says:

“The presence of Christians among Muslims was behind the emergence of the principles of tolerance propagated by reformers of later times. The need to co-exist and the harmony that must prevail in this co-existence brought about a kind of tolerance that was unknown in Middle Ages Eu-

---

ury during the reign of Mu’awiya. He wrote on religion, philosophy and history. He laid the ground for philosophy and theology in Europe. See his life story in the *Great Philosophers Encyclopedia, and Theology*, revised by George Nakhil, Scientific Books, Beirut 1992, part 2, p. 601.

88. Arnold, *ibid*, p. 254.

rope. An aspect of this tolerance is the emergence of comparative religious studies, and their popularity among scholars.”<sup>89</sup>

These studies led to the adoption of Islam by a number of Christian writers who wrote about their conversion and the reasons behind it. One such book is “The Guide to Answer People of the Cross” by Al-Turjuman.<sup>90</sup> These books included, in addition to discussions and debates, historical facts and scientific analysis.<sup>91</sup>

Other writings also appeared on dialogue between Muslims and Christians and between Muslims and Jews especially in Andalusia. Among the most known of these writings are those of the Andalusian judge AbulWaleed Sulaiman bin Khalaf A-Baji of the Maliki sect.<sup>92</sup>

His writings contain dialogue to refute the ideas of the Head monk of Kloni monastery (the French saint Hugh), who sent a letter to Al-Muktad-

---

89. Adam Mitz, *Islamic Civilization in the Fourth Hijri century*. Translated to Arabic by Muhammad Abdul-Hadi Abu Redah, Cairo University, 3rd Ed. 1957, part 1, p. 57.

90. Abdullah bin Abdullah Al-Turjuman. He wrote the above mentioned book to refute the opinions of Christians and show the contradictions in their books and the errors in their beliefs, pointing out that Islam was the true religion. He mentioned that he found in the Torah and the Bible a foretelling of Muhammad, and that this was kept secret from the public. He was also a medicine man who cured people for free. See his life story in *Abjad El-Uloom*, Siddeek bin Hasan Al-Kanuji, ed. Abdul-Jabbar Zakkar, Scientific Books, Beirut 1978, part 3, 173. See also *Haji Khalifa, Kashf Al-Thunoon and Asami Al-Kutub wa Alfunoon*, Scientific Books, Beirut, 1992, part 1 p 362.

91. Muhammad Abdullah Al-Sharkawi, *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Al-Fikr Al-Arabi House, Egypt 2000, p. 345.

92. He was born in 403H, and was a famous scholar of Andalusia. He resided in East Andalusia and traveled East, where he lived in Mecca, and went to Baghdad to study Islamic law and Hadeeth. Among his books are *Al-Tajreeh wa Ata’deel* and *Al-Muntaka Al-Menhaj fi Tarteeb Al-Hujjaj*. He returned to Andalusia to become a judge. His life story is in *Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Thahabi, Seyar Aa’lam Al-Nubala’*, ed. Shua’ib Al-Arna’tand, Muhammad Na’aem Al-Irqsusi, Al- Resalah inst. 9th ed. 1413H, Part 18, 536. Also see Ibrahim bin Ali Al-Ya’mari, *Al-Deebaj Al-Muthahhab*, Scientific Books House, Beirut, part 1 p. 120.

er Billah, then the governor of Sarkusta, asking him to convert to Christianity. The Governor asked the judge to answer him. The two response letters are among the most important documents on the engagement of Muslims in dialogue with Christians, again a sign of intellectual exchange. They were studied extensively by Orientalists following the development of Islam-West relations in general, and were translated to more than one European language. Of great interest is the respect that Al-Baji exhibited towards the monk in this dialogue, and his appreciation of the position held by the monk among his people. He also left out of the discussion the impossible claims made by Hugh such as those concerning Jesus' divinity. The letter is an example of the ethics of dialogue and objectivity.<sup>93</sup>

Gentle, quiet dialogue - not war- was therefore the ideal means of communication between Muslims and others in the matters of belief and religious concerns. God said:

*[And do not argue with the followers of earlier revelation otherwise than in a most kindly manner – unless it be such of them as are bent on evildoing -and say: “We believe in that which has been bestowed from on high upon us, as well as that which has been bestowed upon you: for our God and your God is one and the same, and it is unto Him that We [all] surrender ourselves.”] Al Ankabut 46*

If dialogue is the adopted course for important issues such as faith and religion, it should also be applied in less important concerns, and should be a general principle in resolving all human problems up to international relations.

Dialogue in the Qur'an or Sunnah is not a roundabout way to force ideas or compel people to believe, but is a means to transmit knowledge and convey the message.

---

93. *The letter of the French monk to Muslims and the answer of Al-Baji*, ed. Mo-hammad Abdullah Al-Sharkawi, Al-Sahwa publishers, Cairo 1986.

We cannot think of dialogue in the absence of mutual recognition, diversity, open mindedness and a sensible approach. It also requires the ability to modify one's attitude and to respond in a civilized way to all ideas. It is established without doubt that honest dialogue was an intrinsic basic principle of the Arab and Muslim civilization, emanating from the teachings of Islam.<sup>94</sup>

This is exemplified by Muslims' practices over the centuries. They simply adopted the principles and directions laid down in the Qur'an and applied in the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him, through his Sunnah.

Any aberrations were the result of errors committed by individuals, who were not in any way representing the principles of Qur'an and Sunnah.

Such deviant behavior was usually instigated by personal human impulses, and was condemned by the nation's scholars as soon as it appeared. An example is what Salih bin Ali, the Abbasi governor, did to the Thememies when he evicted some of them from the mountains of Lebanon as punishment for an offense committed by a few of them. Al-Awza'e<sup>95</sup> protested this fiercely and wrote asking him to bring them back:

"Your action to evict from Lebanon's mountains some of the Thememies who had nothing to do with the actual offenders is not proper; you killed some and reinstated others. How can you punish all for the offending actions of a few, and expel them from their homes when you know God's rule concerning these people? No one should be punished for another's sin.

---

94. Abdul-Aziz Bin Othman Al-Tuwaijjeri, *Dialogue and Civilized Interaction from an Islamic Viewpoint*, July 1996.

95. Abu-Amr, Abdul-Rahman bin Amr Awza'e, from Sind. He lived in Awza'e, hence the name. He was the Islamic scholar and writer of the Levant. He was born in 88 H. His books in Islamic law and Sunnah are well known. His life story is in Al-Thahabi, previous ref. part 7, p 107.

They are not slaves but are free people of Themma.<sup>96</sup> You should remember the direction of the Prophet, peace be upon him: “Anybody harming a themmi or insulting him or imposing a hardship on him, or robbing him of anything is my adversary on Judgment day.”<sup>97</sup>

There were other historical circumstances which brought about unacceptable behavior by some Muslims towards the Themmies, which usually came in response to aggression perpetrated by the Themmies. An example is what happened during the reign of Abi-Ja’far Al-Mansour. During his Haj, a group of Muslims asked Shabeeb Bin Shaiba to ask Al-Mansour to save them from the injustice practiced by the Christians. He said to Al-Mansour: “You left Christians free to harm Muslims, and they did so by robbing their lands and money and persecuting them, using your authority to achieve their vile goals. They will not protect you from God’s wrath on Judgment day.” Hearing this Al-Mansour removed the Christians from their positions.<sup>98</sup> This of course, elicited angry responses.

Adam Metz, the German scholar, reports on the tyranny of some Christians during Muslim reign:<sup>99</sup>

“The Christians were the actual rulers in the land of Islam.”

The Lebanese historian George Karam says that these Christian-Islamic tensions came about as a result of three factors:

**First** was the personal disposition of some of the Khalifas. The most serious two cases of persecution of Themmies occurred during the reign of Al-Mutawakkel, the Abbasid Khalifa (206-247H), who was by nature dis-

---

96. Al-Balatheri, *Futooh Al-Buldan* 222. See also Amin Muhammad Alekdah, *the Treatment of non-Muslims in Islam*. Royal Institute for Research in Islamic Civilization, Jordan p. 585.

97. Sunan Abi –Daod, section on *Rulers and Taxes* etc. no. 2654.

98. Ibn Al-Kaiem Al-Jusieh, *Rules for Themmies*, ed Yusuf Ahmad Al-Bakri and Shaker Al-Aroori, Ramdi Publishing House, Dammam 1416 H. 1997, part 1, P. 461.

99. Adam Metz, *Islamic Civilization in the Fourth century H*, Beirut 1967, part 1, P 105.

posed to act violently and cruelly with all his subjects, and in the time of the Fatimid Al-Hakem Biamri Allah (375-411H) who was known to be excessively harsh with Christians.

**Second** was the injustice practiced by some Thememies in high office in the Islamic state. It is not difficult to connect these officials with some persecution cases in different Islamic countries. Sir Thomas Arnold discusses this:

“In fact they may generally be traced either to popular indignation excited by the harsh and insolent behavior of Christian officials.....the government acts of oppression that were contrary to the general spirit of Muslim rule.”<sup>100</sup>

**Third** is foreign intervention in the Islamic countries through attempts by foreign rulers to instigate the non-Muslim minorities to join them in the fight against Islam. This caused several acts of reprisal such as what happened against Christian minorities who had cooperated with the invaders at the end of the Crusades.

The foreign rulers, both British and French, did not hesitate to use non-Muslim minorities in Egypt and the Levant to spread unrest in Muslim countries which led to problems between Muslims and Christians.<sup>101</sup>

One should understand the circumstantial nature and the social and historical setting for such incidents before reaching an erroneous and unjust judgment on Islam's tolerance and values. The prevailing circumstances are reflected in the attitudes and rulings of some of the Muslim clerics of those times, and their wariness in their dealings with the Thememies in general. These clerics had witnessed firsthand the arrogant behavior of some Thememies and their insults to the Muslims.

A prominent witness of these incidents is Ibn Al-Kaiem, who writes to describe the arrogance of some Thememies of the time: “We live in a time

---

100. Arnold, p. 76.

101. George Karam, *Religious Diversity and Government*, Beirut, 1979, p. 2011-224.

when they (the Themmies) are put in the best seats and people move in line to kiss their hands. They also control the Sultan's expenses including the soldiers' salaries."<sup>102</sup>

The writer Sobhi Al-Saleh, editor of the books (*Explaining Omar's Conditions*) and (*Rules for Themmies*) written by Ibn Al-Kaiem, says:

"Reading these volumes, we can picture the historical and social conditions of those times. These conditions led Ibn Al-Jusieh, who is a fair person, to adopt certain harsh forms of conduct towards the Themmies of his time.<sup>103</sup> His attitude was nothing but a way of caring for the welfare of the people and the state, and guarding the general interests of Islam and Muslims."

Sobhi, Al-Saleh says:

"Ibn Al-Kaiem lived in a time of various challenges and aggression by Themmis towards Muslims. For Damascenes it was extremely hard, even after the passing of years, to forget what Christians did during the Mogul invasion in 658H. They poured wine on Muslims' clothes and in mosques, they forced shop owners to stand in respect for them and their crosses, and they cheered: 'Christian faith triumphed today.'"<sup>104</sup>

This led to some extreme remarks in Ibn Al-Kaiem's books, largely dictated by the general atmosphere of the period that he lived in. This does not diminish, however, the general value of his writings.<sup>105</sup>

---

102. Previous reference, Part 3, p. 1323.

103. An example he mentioned from the book "*Omar's Conditions*" is that Themmies should not use saddles, should keep their legs to one side of the animal, and should use footwear different from what Muslims use. See (*Explanation of Omar's Conditions*) ed. Subhi Al-Saleh, dar Al-Ilm for Millions, 1987, p. 90, 101.

104. Subnotes in (*Rules for Themmies*), Subhi Al-Saleh, Dar Al-Ilm for Millions, Beirut, 2nd ed. 1981, part 2 p. 771.

105. Subhi Al-Saleh says that the widespread fame of the document containing the conditions and alleged to be written by Omar bin Al-Khattab does not add to its authenticity. This was the opinion of Ibn Al-Kaiem also. See the introduction in his books. Ibn Al-Kaiem was a product of his times, and this should be

That scholars and thinkers in general are influenced by the conditions prevalent in their time is inescapable, and their rulings are a human effort which should be judged relatively and not absolutely. The Qur'an's verses and the Prophet's, peace be upon him, Sunnah are always the absolute reference that should be used for evaluating human views and rulings.<sup>106</sup>

These limited incidents of religious tension do not represent a general trend in Islamic history. On the contrary, we find shining examples of tolerance and acceptance. For example we see Ibn Taymiyyah intervening with the Tatars for the release of Muslim prisoners, and insisting on the release of the Themmi prisoners as well. He addressed the Tatar official saying: "All your prisoners of Jews and Christians, our Themma people, must be released. We are not leaving behind any prisoner be he Milla (Muslim) or Themma."<sup>107</sup>

A review of the Fatwas of the clerics across the ages shows that openness and tolerance to other religions was the norm which triumphed even in tough circumstances.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, it is not fair to use some isolated historical incidents to build generalized judgments.

This is expressed well by Prince Charles while speaking about the relations between Muslims and the people of the Book, and the respect Muslims have for them.

"I think we need to recover the depth, the subtlety, the generosity of imagination, the respect for wisdom that so marked Islam in its great ages....

---

taken into consideration in discussing his writings, which should not be taken as Islamic rulings, but rather should be judged accordingly to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

106. For details see Rukaia Taha Al-Alwani (*the Effect of Tradition (Urf) on the Understanding of Texts*), Dar Al-Fiker, Damascus 2003, p. 10. The book deals with the effect of tradition on rulings of Islamic law.

107. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al Fatawa*, part 28, p. 618.

108. Ahmed Al-Naifar, (*Criterion, Identity and Dialogue*), a study of the historic experiment of Islamic West, Horizons of Culture and Heritage. Issue 14, Dubai, UAE, sep, 1996, p. 65.

Islam called Jews and Christians the peoples of the Book, because they, like Muslims, are a part of a religion of sacred texts.”<sup>109</sup>

Coexistence and tolerance was also evident in the relationship between Muslims and Jews across the centuries. The historian Mark Cohen<sup>110</sup> in his book, *Under Crescent and Cross*, says:

“Arabs did not kill Jews or expel them in the same way that Christians did over a span of a thousand years. Jews found in the Islamic conquests in the Levant and Iraq a means to end the Roman nightmare, and a chance to escape oppression and persecution. The Arabs refused a request by the Patriarch of Alexandria to expel the Jews from Egypt. The Jews in Andalusia found a haven from persecution and expulsion at the hands of the Europeans, and a chance to establish a center for Jewish philosophy and culture. During the Crusades, Jews were victims to the killings in the same way that Muslims were. They found refuge in the Ottoman State of recent history.”<sup>111</sup>

The contrast between the life of Jews in the Islamic world and their life in Europe, led Jewish scholars to consider Islam as the ideal model under which to live and integrate in society. During the Romantic movement in literature in the nineteenth century, the pictures of the pure desert represented Islamic idealism. This was a point of pride and gave a sense of belonging to the oppressed and sidelined Jews in the West.<sup>112</sup>

This harmonic co-existence led a large number of Nineteen century Jewish philosophers and historians, such as Abraham Geiger, Gustaph Phyl, Jo-

---

109. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4844952.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4844952.stm)

110. Professor of Middle Eastern studies and Jewish history at Princeton and visiting professor in Cairo, Jerusalem and Berlin. Of his books is *Under Crescent and Cross*. The book contains some historical falsehoods, but does not deny the good life Jews enjoyed in the Islamic state.

111. Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross. The Jews in the Middle Ages. the Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Ser., Vol. 88, No. 1/2 (Jul. - Oct., 1997), pp. 76-78.

112. Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 4-9.

seph Dahernburg, Goldzeiher, Wolf, Leopold Fise and Belgrave to praise the unique Islamic tolerance.

Geiger reports that Islam provided a stable environment for the flourishing of sciences and philosophy unlike Christianity which encouraged the alienation from science and reason. Phyl was the first translator of “A Thousand and One Nights” to German in the nineteen thirties. He also wrote a book in 1837 on Arabic poetic literature and another about the Prophet (peace be upon him) in 1843. But the most important book by Phyl is the History of the Khalifas in five parts. He wrote it between 1846 and 1862 and it contains a survey of the history of Islamic peoples from the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him, until the time of the Ottoman Sultan, Sal-eem. He used original Muslim history references in addition to what he learned from his voyages in the Arab countries.

The writer, Mark Epstein says:

“Jewish communities in Anatolia flourished and continued to prosper through the Turkish conquest. When the Ottomans captured Bursa in 1324 and made it their capital, they found a Jewish community oppressed under Byzantine rule. The Jews welcomed the Ottomans as saviors. Sultan Orhan gave them permission to build the Etz ha-Hayyim (Tree of Life) synagogue which remained in service until 50 years ago. Early in the 14th century, when the Ottomans had established their capital at Edirne, Jews from Europe, including Karaites, migrated there.”<sup>113</sup>

In spite of all of these glowing testimonials, some Western writers still accuse Islam of being the religion of non-tolerance and bigotry. This is refuted by other Western writers, like the historian Smith, who says in his book, “Islam in Modern History”:

---

113. - Mark Alan Epstein, *The Ottoman Jewish Communities and their Role in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, K. Schwarz (1980). Stanford J. Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust: Turkey's Role in Rescuing Turkish and European Jewry from Nazi Persecution, 1933-1945*, New York University Press; Reprint edition (November 17, 2006).

“Every now and then we see some claims that Islam is a religion of non-tolerance and bigotry, two attributes that seem to be always stressed. Our objection to such claims is that non-tolerance can be observed in any religion in a certain stage of its history. This is true not only for religions, but it is also common in theories, creeds or ideas of political and social movements. Therefore, if one follows the historical, social and religious aspects (in Qur’an and Sunnah), there is no justification for an objective observer to talk about intolerance in Islam. We may spot every now and then or in a specific place, some social or psychological causes of intolerance, but this does not justify generalization.”<sup>114</sup>

Will Durant says:

“During the Omayyad rule Themmes of all religions: Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Sabee’s enjoyed a degree of tolerance that was not to be found in Christian countries of those times. They were free to practice their religions, and they kept their churches and their houses of worship.”<sup>115</sup>

Terton of London University, in his book “the Themmes in Islam” cites the testimony of Patriarch Leshuyabah, who was Pope until 657 H: “ The Arabs whom the Lord has given control of the World treat us as you know. They are not enemies of Christianity but they admire it and respect our saints and priests and they support our churches and monasteries.”<sup>116</sup>

He goes on to say: “ Jews in the near East welcomed the Arabs who liberated them from the injustice of their previous rulers....under Arab rule they enjoyed full freedom in their lives and religious practices....Christians could openly come and visit their religious sites, including Palestine on their

---

114. W. C. Smith. *Islam in Modern History*, (London, 1963), p. 98.

115. Will Durant, *The History of Civilization*, translated by Muhammad Badran, 2nd ed. Egypt 1964, part 13, p. 130.

116. Arthur Stanley Tirton, *Themmes in Islam*, Translated by Hassan Habshi, Egyptian Book Forum 1994, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Egypt. See also Lothrop Stoddard, *The Present of the Islamic World*, Translation by Ajaj Nuwaihid, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Dar Al Fikr, Beirut, 1973.

Holy days. The Eastern Christians escaped the persecution of the Constantinople, Antakia, and Jerusalem Bishops. They became free and safe under the Muslim rule.”<sup>117</sup>

Douzy, in his book, *A Look at Islamic History*, says: “The tolerance and good treatment for the Themmiies caused many of them to become Muslim. They saw in Islam a simplicity they did not find in their own religion.”<sup>118</sup>

Force was not a factor in spreading Islam, as Arabs left the conquered people free to choose their religion. It was the simplicity and justice in Islam, as well as the tolerance displayed by the new rulers which appealed to the converts.<sup>119</sup>

Will Durant agrees:

“In spite of the tolerance towards other religions shown by the early Muslims, or because of it, most Christians, Zoradishtis and Polytheists adopted the new religion. Islam captured the heart of hundreds of people in countries from China and Indonesia to Morocco and Andalusia, inspired their imaginations, elevated their values and formed their way of life. It ignited their hopes and relieved their burdens and troubles.”<sup>120</sup>

Adam Metz report:

“The Themmiies, by virtue of the tolerance shown to them by the Muslims, and the protection they afforded them, paid a national defense tax “Jizya”, levied only on those able to bear arms, each according to his means. Handicapped individuals, monks, and priests were not expected to pay this tax.”<sup>121</sup>

---

117. From Gustave LeBon, *The Arab Civilization*, Translated by Adel Zu’aiter, Egyptian Book Forum, Family Library, 2000 AD, P. 320. See also *the Secret for National Development*, translated by Ahmad Zaghlul, Dar AlNafa’es, Jordan, 1987 AD.

118. Reinhart Douzy, *A Look at Islamic History*, translated and edited by Kamel Kailani, Dar Biplon, Beirut, 2005 AD.

119. Gustave LeBon, previously mentioned reference, P 322-324.

120. Will Durant, previous reference, Part 13, P. 200.

121. Adam Mitz, previous reference, P. 210.

There was another reason for this tax. It was their share for building the common amenities of the state, such as the police and justice system, roads, bridges, etc...Muslims participated through the Zakat (Muslim form of tax) so it was only fair to ask non-Muslims who enjoyed the same privileges for a nominal contribution.

The Italian Orientalist Laura Vagliri, in her book, *In Defense of Islam*, states:

“This tax was smaller than that paid by the Muslims to their government. In return the Themmies received protection equal to that of Muslims. The Prophet’s, peace be upon him, and his wise Companion’s actions became law for his followers. Thus it is not too much to say that Islam did not just call for tolerance but made tolerance a principle of Islam.”<sup>122</sup>

---

122. Laura Vichia Vagliri, *In Defense of Islam*, translated by Muni Ba’albaki, Dar Elm for Millions, 1981, p. 94.

## CHAPTER IV

---

HUMAN CIVILIZATION BEFORE AND AFTER  
THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)



## FIRST TOPIC

### ARAB CIVILIZATION BEFORE THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)

**B**efore the message of the Prophet Mohammad, PBUH, Arabs did not have a distinct civilization. In Iraq, the Persian lexicon was adopted, while the influence of the Byzantines was seen in the Levant. In the North of the Arab Peninsula, the absence of administrative and economic systems was clear.

With regard to religious belief, Paganism was prevalent among the Arabian tribes, and Mecca, where Abraham went to start monotheism, became the center for worshipping 360 gods.<sup>1</sup> Although some of the Arabian tribes were convinced that their beliefs were mentally and intellectually backward, the pull of tradition was a barrier that impeded them from reconsidering such beliefs or renouncing them.

---

1. De Lacy O' Leary, D.D. *Arabia before Muhammad*, E. P. Dutton & Co, New York, 1927. pp. 196-197.

See also; D.S. Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, London, 1978. p. 27.

Thus, this era was branded an era of ignorance (Jahiliya), and became known as one of the most intellectually backward eras for Arabs.

Paganism was a practice exported to the Arabs from Syria. Over time, it became an ingrained tradition that was rarely questioned, and whoever renounced it was considered a sinful transgressor. Moreover, an aura of interlocking myths, delusions, and superstitions surrounded these idols and every Arab house had an idol to worship, adulate, and consult on affairs of life and travel.

In this regard, Karen Armstrong states:

“This idol worship was a relatively new religious enthusiasm, which had been imported from Syria by one of the Meccan elders who believed that they could bring rain.....”<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, tradition based on Paganism formed the roots of social life in the Arab mindset and became the standard for judging those who deviated from the norms.

Norms are social standards that define people’s comportment in a certain society which, if violated, result in severe rejection or punishment by that society. Thus, norms are considered an aspect of people’s popular traditions, and violating norms usually leads to disciplinary action such as alienation and corporal punishment.

Undoubtedly, the first step to implant values and develop human abilities is to scrape out all intellectual, psychological, behavioral retardants and inhibitors that hamper development, cripple energy, and prevent individuals from playing a constructive role in life. Once that “cleansing job” is complete, we fill in the void with values which conduct human energy towards the path of benevolence and good deeds. However, this is not an easy process as tradition is a strong influencer and renouncing it takes time and considerable effort.

---

2. Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 41.

In this context, Pierre Monnone says:

“Pre-conceived judgments and stereotypes also interpose social life. Both are forms of expressing thoughts that declare one’s belongingness and implicit affiliation with provisions made within his reference group... they represent the psychological content that he harbors towards the thoughts of others which are often inherited involuntarily.”<sup>3</sup>

Mannone emphasizes that **preconceived information and judgments or stereotypes are the social cement** that hold one back from reaching out to new heights of mindfulness, relevance, and rationality. Within a group, an individual feels that he is capable of behavior which he would never perform on his own. In the group, the individual’s innate sense of responsibility, which normally restrains him, disappears.

Gustave Le Bon, the philosopher, emphasizes this idea:

“The most prominent thing about a psychological group is the spirit of collectiveness the individuals among the group acquire just by being part of the group; no matter who they are individually, or how different they are in styles, careers, morals, or mentality. This spirit of collectiveness makes them feel, think, and act in a different way from how each of them feels, thinks, or acts on his own...”<sup>4</sup>

Thus, individuals feel a sense of fear when asked to renounce the common habits that link them to a group; they worry about the alienation and condemnation from the group. This fear makes it very difficult to go against the current and oppose a prevalent tradition.

---

3. Pierre Mannone, *Collective Psychology*, Interspace Publishing Company, Cyprus, no date, 78 and beyond.

4. Gustave Le Bon, *ibid*, p. 30.



## SECOND TOPIC

### ARAB CIVILIZATION AFTER THE MESSAGE OF THE NOBLE PROPHET PBUH

**A**rabs were far from being self-aware; they were ignorant of their own capabilities and powers. They were scattered tribes in the desert; each with its own gods and own interests to protect and defend. No common objective brought them together and no common leader united them.

The Qur'an came to liberate minds from the shackles of ignorance, blind mimicry, and erroneous beliefs and move the Arabs to become positive contributors to the development and construction of Earth. More importantly, it reshaped the Arab mentality to rely on logical deduction and not on prior judgments or traditional superstitions.

Social customs and traditions held sway over the Arab mind and restrained its ability to move in a forward direction. The Qur'an forbade mimicry without knowledge, analysis, or guidance in many verses, such as:

*[But when they are told, "Follow what God has bestowed from on high," some answer, "Nay, we shall follow [only] that which we found our forefathers believing in and doing." Why, even if*

*their forefathers did not use their reason at all, and were devoid of all guidance? ] AlBaqara 170*

and:

*[And so, the parable of those who are bent on denying the truth is that of the beast which hears the shepherd's cry, and hears in it nothing but the sound of a voice and a call. Deaf are they, and dumb, and blind: for they do not use their reason.] AlBaqara 171*

Thus, Allah reproves those who don't use their minds, knowledge, and reason and compares them to mindless beasts.

Moreover, the Qur'an founded a scientific methodology based on proof, logic, and evidence that presents facts without imposing them on others, through intellectual coercion or acts of compulsion or force. It asks the non-Believers to demonstrate their evidence for worshipping gods other than Allah. Scholars say this demand is intended to demonstrate the fallacy of their arguments:

*[Nay – who is it that creates [all life] in the first instance, and then brings it forth anew? And who is it that provides you with sustenance out of heaven and earth?  
Could there be any divine power besides God? Say: “[If you think so], produce your evidence – if you truly believe in your claim!”<sup>5</sup>] An-Naml 64*

- 
5. This relates to man's life on earth and his resurrection after bodily death as well as to this worldly cycle of birth, death, and regeneration manifested in all organic nature. The term “sustenance” (rizq) has here both a physical and a spiritual connotation; hence the phrase, “out of heaven and earth.” “if you truly believe in your claim” – the implication being that most people who profess a belief in a multiplicity of divine powers, or even in the possibility of the One God's “incarnation” in a created being, do so blindly, sometimes only under the influence

Hence, the Holy Qur'an tells us that truth is based on facts and not on illusions and conjectures...

*[But nay – they who are bent on evildoing follow but their own desires, without having any knowledge [of the truth]. And who could guide those whom God has [thus] let go astray, and who [thereupon] have none to succour them?<sup>6</sup>]*  
Ar-Rum 29

The very first word revealed in the Holy Qur'an was "Read (Iqraa)".

*[READ in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created man out of a germ cell] Alaq 1*

Thus Islam announced a fight against ignorance and affirmed the importance of education, reflection, and wisdom. This is a continuous theme throughout the twenty-three years over which the Qur'an was revealed. By all measures, starting the Holy revelation with the word "Read" has very special significance. This auspicious start was followed by verses with contained an oath by the "pen" (the tool for writing and learning). This truly proves the value of knowledge in Islam.

*[Nun. CONSIDER the pen, and all that they write [therewith]!]*  
AlQalam 1-2

---

of inherited cultural traditions and habits of thought, and not out of a reasoned conviction.

6. In this instance, the phrase ("they who are bent on evildoing") relates to those who deliberately ascribe divinity or divine powers to anyone or anything beside God, thus yielding to a desire for divine or semi-divine "mediators" between themselves and Him. Inasmuch as such a desire offends against the concept of God's omniscience and omnipresence, its very existence shows that the person concerned does not really believe in Him and, therefore, does not have the least knowledge of the truth.

This, on one hand, was a call to read, in the name of Allah Almighty, the Holy Book to be revealed unto the noble Prophet (PBUH), i.e. God's *written* book; and, on the other, a call to reflect on the universe which is God's *observed* (applied) book. The Prophet (PBUH) passed many a day meditating and reflecting on the greatness of Allah's creation in this universe; created from nothing, conditioned and made subservient to Man who is endowed with the mental capabilities to subject the universe and use its laws, and to sense the greatness of its Creator.

From the very first word (Read), the Qur'an established a new model for the human consciousness; one which realizes that the human role on Earth is to develop it and make use of its resources in building societies and civilizations.

Hereunder are the most prominent cognitive contributions of Islam to human civilization:

- The Holy Qur'an urges human beings to use, develop, and operate their various mental and sensory capabilities, and reproaches those who paralyze these capabilities and do not utilize their gifts. Allah Almighty said:

*[Have they, then, never journeyed about the earth, letting their hearts gain wisdom, and causing their ears to hear? Yet, verily, it is not their eyes that have become blind – but blind have become the hearts that are in their breasts!] Al-Hajj 46*

The topic of reflection was discussed in the Holy Qur'an in nineteen locations; this signifies the incessant call to ponder signs and indications, to view similarities and differences, meanings and possibilities, to arrive at conclusions.<sup>7</sup>

---

7. For more details about the ability of reflection and its significance, see: Malik Badry, *Contemplation from Perception to Spiritual Cognition*, the International Institute of Islamic Thought, USA, 1413 Hijri / 1993.

Hence, the Holy Qur'an decrees that we stimulate our minds, and utilize our full capabilities all the time, in all situations, and by all means. It also decrees that we develop the skills of empirical research, and establishes the scientific Muslim mindset which considers contemplation of the universe and the human self as a religious duty and an act of worship, by which one gets closer to Allah, Almighty. This opens vast prospects for the mind to comprehend things; partially and totally, seen and unseen, and review facts based on intellectual grounds away from myths and suspicions.

The Italian Orientalist Laura Vichea Vagleri says:

“Thanks to Islam, all forms of paganism were vanquished, and people's perceptions about universe and religion were liberated from all deformation. The human being began to realize his stature and true nature when he pondered what Ibrahim (PBUH) said in the Qur'an:

*[Behold, unto Him who brought into being the heavens and the earth have I turned my face, having turned away from all that is false; and I am not of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him.] Al-An'am 79*

and what Muhammad (PBUH) said:

*[Say: “Behold, my prayer, and [all] my acts of worship, and my living and my dying are for God [alone], the Sustainer of all the worlds, in whose divinity none has a share: for thus have I been bidden – and I shall [always] be foremost among those who surrender themselves unto Him.”] Al-An'am 162-163*

He no longer humiliates himself except in front of his Great Creator. Hence, his will is freed from all restraints, and his soul is liberated from all middlemen and brokers of salvation. Mediation between a

human being and Allah becomes invalid, and a human is no longer linked to any other human except through the normal relationship between two equal free men.<sup>8</sup>

- The Holy Qur'an laid the foundation for the relationship between humans and the universe. It is a relationship of joint performance in accordance to the will of Allah; developing the Earth, and worshipping Him in His universe. If this relationship is flawed, human civilization is disrupted. The extent of the disruption is directly proportional to the degree of deviation in this relationship.

The Lord's decree to develop the Earth is intended for all human beings, regardless of faith or culture. Thus, the entire universe was made subservient to all mankind with no exceptions, in order to enable Man to fulfill this responsibility. All mankind are given equal opportunity to compete in this great mission.

Hence, Allah's creation is there to serve Man to fulfill this mission as God's regent on Earth. The whole universe worships Allah Almighty. The only exceptions are those humans who reject faith. Allah Almighty said:

*[The seven heavens extol His limitless glory, and the earth, and all that they contain; and there is not a single thing but extols His limitless glory and praise: but you [O men] fail to grasp the manner of their glorifying Him!  
Verily, He is forbearing, much-forgiving!]* Al-Israa' 44

As discussed above, the Holy Qur'an teaches Man that all elements of the universe were made subservient to all Mankind, regardless of their degree of faith, race or color. These elements and universal laws will serve all those who use them, and fail those who are too

---

8. Laura Vichea Vagleri, op cit, p. 23.

lazy to utilize God's gifts in this universe; regardless of their religion or degree of faith.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an emphasizes the importance of using the senses in observing and exploring the Earth. Utilizing the senses allows one to respond to stimulus and to adapt to the fullest extent with the laws of nature and the rule of God.

*[DO, THEN, they [who deny resurrection] never gaze at the clouds pregnant with water, [and observe] how they are created? And at the sky, how it is raised aloft? And at the mountains, how firmly they are reared? And at the earth, how it is spread out? And so, [O Prophet,] exhort them; thy task is only to exhort: thou canst not compel them [to believe].] Al-Ghashiyah 17-22*

The approach that the Holy Qur'an establishes involves mustering and harmonizing energy and capability to focus on the one common goal; thereby achieving higher degrees of effectiveness, innovation, and creativity. This can be clearly seen in the way it stimulates the human mind, pushing it towards full utilization of the human senses and moving it away from everything that causes its recession or paralysis through a systematic approach. Hence, the Holy Qur'an consistently calls for pondering the majesty of the universe and seeking to understand its systems and laws through observation.

- The Holy Qur'an, as well as the noble Prophet's actions and words, established the concept of preserving the environment which encompasses all elements of life for mankind. Moreover, they established the principles, rules, and precepts that control and regulate the relationship between man and Earth: a balanced relationship to preserve the environment so that it continues to fulfill its role as specified by the All-Knowing Creator to support human life. Allah, Al-

mighty, created this environment and made it subservient to Man whom He made his regent on Earth.

*[He it is who has made the earth easy to live upon: go about, then, in all its regions, and partake of the sustenance which He provides: but [always bear in mind that] unto Him you shall be resurrected.] Al-Mulk 15*

*[And He it is who has made the sea subservient [to His laws], so that you might eat fresh meat from it, and take from it gems which you may wear.*

*And on that [very sea] one sees ships ploughing through the waves, so that you might [be able to] go forth in quest of some of His bounty, and thus have cause to be grateful [to Him].] An-Nahl 14*

*[ARE YOU NOT aware that God has made subservient to you all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and has lavished upon you His blessings, both outward and inward? And yet, among men there is many a one that argues about God without having any knowledge [of Him], without any guidance, and without any light-giving revelation;] Loqmân 20*

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

*The Earth is beautiful and green. Allah made you its Regents so that He may try you in respect of your actions.<sup>9</sup>*

Being a regent means that **Man is a guardian for this Earth and not an owner.** He was made a regent to manage, invest, and develop his living environment. Thus, he has to deal with it as a keeper for Allah's land.

---

9. Narrated by Muslim, *the Book of Remembrance and Supplication*, Hadeeth number: 4925.

The Noble Prophet (PBUH) always encouraged his companions to cultivate and preserve plants. Many Hadeeths were narrated in this context such as:

*If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird or a person or an animal eats from it, this is counted as a charitable reward for him.*<sup>10</sup>

In another Hadeeth, it was narrated that he (PBUH) said:

*If the day of Judgment comes while you have a palm-cutting in your hands and it is possible to plant it, you should plant it.*<sup>11</sup>

Explicit orders were always given to Muslim army commanders forbidding them from cutting or ruining trees, and stressing the importance of preserving the environment. Islam gave rulers the right to establish natural preserves for the benefit of Muslims; fourteen centuries before the West recognized their importance in protecting the environment. The noble Prophet (PBUH) considered protecting the environment from all forms of pollution as a charitable act deserving of a reward from God. This emphasizes the link that he (PBUH) maintained between the teachings of Islam and the reality of life on Earth.

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

*The deeds of my people, good and bad, were presented before me, and I found the removal of harmful objects from the road among their good deeds.*<sup>12</sup>

---

10. Narrated by al Bukhari, *the Book of Agriculture*, Hadeeth number: 2152.

11. *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, Hadeeth number: 12512.

12. *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, Hadeeth number: 20570.

The mercy of our noble Prophet (PBUH) extended to animals, birds, and even ants. He demonstrated that care and compassion was an act of worship for which Man will be recompensed for doing, and punished for abandoning. He emphasized the great importance of compassion towards all living creatures and their offspring. The impact of this on preserving the ecosystem has finally been recognized.

*In Sunan Abi Dawud, it was narrated that AbdurRahman Bin Abdullah quoted his father as saying: "While we were on a journey with the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) and he had gone to relieve himself, we saw a Hummarah with two young ones. We took the young ones. The Hummarah came and began to spread out its wings. Then the Prophet (May peace be upon him) came and said: 'Who has pained this one by the loss of her young? Give her young ones back to her.' He also saw an ant-hill which we had burned. He asked?: 'Who has burned this?' We replied: 'We have.' He said: 'It is not fitting that anyone but the Lord of the fire should punish with fire.'"*<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) set clear rules about developing land and cultivating it. This was to prevent the desertification from which the world suffers today as a result of neglecting its agricultural lands. The prophetic Hadeeth says:

*He who has land should cultivate it himself, and if he does not cultivate it himself, then he should let his brother cultivate it.*<sup>14</sup>

Hence, the Muslim is ordered to cultivate his land himself, allow others to cultivate it for no charge, or give his land to someone else to

---

13. Sunan Abi Dawud, Regarding Killing Ants, Hadeeth number: 4584.

14. Sahih Muslim, Hadeeth number: 2862.

cultivate while bearing part of the costs of production and taking a share of the crop in return; what is called sharecropping.

In addition the Prophet (PBUH) set the principle of cultivating neglected lands when he said:

*He who cultivates unclaimed land has right to it (to own it).*<sup>15</sup>

He (PBUH) gave an incentive and motivation for preserving the environment and ordered people to think about solutions for various environmental issues, lest they be considered sinful according to the principles of Islam. In summary, Islam defined concern for the environment and protecting it from pollution as an act of worship.

When Allah created all creatures and things and made them subservient to Man, He ordered Man to be prudent in dealing with this creation; he should not use it to excessiveness or ruin it with neglect. He should deal with this creation in a “cause no harm receive no harm” manner; taking only what’s necessary to cater for his basic needs without exhaustion or attrition.

- The Holy Qur’an laid the foundation for the scientific methodology based on observation, experimentation, and the use of mind and senses. Allah, Almighty said:

*Say: “Go all over the earth and behold how [wondrously] He has created [man] in the first instance: and thus, too, will God bring into being your second life – for, verily, God has the power to will anything!]* Al-‘Ankabut 20

Allah tells us that all knowledge and information that Man gains after birth is acquired through ears, eyes, and minds. Allah, Almighty says:

---

15. Sahih Al Bukhari, the Book of Sharecropping, Hadeeth number: 2167.

*[And God has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs knowing nothing – but He has endowed you with hearing, and sight, and minds, so that you might have cause to be grateful.]*  
An-Nahl 78

- The Holy Qur'an established what is called the Science of Research Methodologies. It guided Man towards the methods of research in cosmic sciences to conclude scientific facts and truths. It also emphasized the importance of the Experimental Deductive Approach which deduces a general rule or scientific law from facts through observation and experimentation.

Many historians and scholars of scientific methodology credit the discovery of this approach to the English scientist Francis Bacon who wrote the famous book, "The New Organon", in the Modern European Renaissance era. This book, which discussed the empirical research approach, came to invalidate Aristotle's (Old Organon).

Professor Robert Briffault states in his book, "The Making of Humanity", which studies the genealogy of European civilization:

"Roger Bacon learned Arabic and Arabic Sciences at Oxford School through Andalusian teachers. Neither Roger Bacon nor his namesake have any right to be credited with having introduced the Experimental Method. Roger Bacon was no more than a bearer of Muslim Science and Methodology to Christian Europe and he never wearied of declaring that knowledge of Arabic and Arabic Sciences was the only way for his contemporaries to gain true knowledge. Disagreement on the originator of the experimental method....is part of the colossal misinterpretations about the origins of European civilization."<sup>16</sup>

---

16. Robert Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*, London, 1938.

Briffault adds:

“Science is the most momentous contribution of the Arab civilization to the modern world; but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after the Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the giant, to which it had given birth to, rise in his might.”

Then he says:

“What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of enquiry, of new methods of experimentation, observation, measurement, and the development of mathematics, in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.”

- The Holy Qur’an introduced the discipline of Experimental Logic. A huge number of its verses stimulate the human mind to observe and reflect on the truth of existence, the universe, and the human soul. Allah, Almighty says:

*[Say: “Consider whatever there is in the heavens and on earth!”]*

Yunus 101

*[Have they never learned to think for themselves?*

*God has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them without [an inner] truth and a term set [by Him]]*

Ar-Rum 8

*[Have they, then, never considered [God’s] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, and all the things that God has created, and [asked themselves] whether, perchance, the end of their own term might already have drawn nigh? In what other tiding, then, will they, after this, believe?]* Al-Araf 185

The Holy Quran established the scientific mentality through its persistent calls for reflecting and pondering over the universe and the signs of Allah’s greatness in our souls, societies, and nations. This

call stimulates minds to explore, search, travel through the universe, and deduce its laws; the constant Divine laws that never change. Allah Almighty created those laws for governing the universe and regulating its course. Allah Almighty said:

*[such being God's way which has ever obtained in the past – and never wilt thou find any change in God's way!] Al-Fath 23*

Discovering these laws is the key to building civilizations on Earth. Obviously, one of the greatest purposes of the revelation of the Holy Quran is the call for reflection on the universe, deduction of its concealed laws, revelation of its secrets, and making use of all this knowledge to benefit the entire human race through better ways of life. The Arab mentality was liberated from the intellectual shackles of ignorance, superstition, and sorcery and was released to explore the secrets and laws of the universe.

Thus, Muslims moved towards conducting experiments and deducing conclusions armed with all the required prerequisites: the theoretical, practical, and religious knowledge and their liberated minds.

Hence, **Muslim scientists were the first to identify the elements of Scientific Methodology; elements consistent with today's terminology and still in use by today's scholars. They include the types of observation and experiments (pilot, control, and conclusive experiments), prerequisites of scientific hypothesis, and the use of scientific imagination in comparing different phenomenon and detecting the common unit that links scattered facts.**

Islamic methodology reached its pinnacle by defining the relationship between theory and experiment. Both Wiedemann and Schramm emphasized the role of Muslim scientists in establishing the law of theory and experiment, and highlighted their clear influence on Roger Bacon who claimed himself as the founder of the Scientific Meth-

odology (which relies on experiment as a basis for research in natural sciences).<sup>17</sup>

Wiedemann states that not only were the Arabs the forerunners in this path, but also that the findings of Roger Bacon were far less valuable than those of the former Arab scholars.

It is highly probable that the discovery of the relationship between theory and experiment is what moved the Islamic civilization from the stage of assimilation to the advanced stage of innovation in the mid-third century AH. However, even during the assimilation phase, Arab scientists had significant contributions. They were able to establish the Arabic Poetry Measurement Science; the science that studies poetic rhythms. Moreover, they succeeded in developing linguistic and grammatical sciences, and contributed to the huge amount of idioms and philosophical terminology, as well as the science of jurisprudence and the new field of chemistry. They considered Algebra a separate branch of science and not a branch of mathematics. They also developed a method to measure the circumference of the globe.

**Therefore, the Islamic civilization in the Middle Ages was a fundamental chapter in the history of science and civilization; the contributions of Muslim scholars and scientists to the establishment of the scientific approach helped humanity develop new sciences and branches of knowledge.**

This prompted August Kundt,<sup>18</sup> the founder of the doctrine of Posi-

---

17. King, D. *Islamic Mathematical Astronomy*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1985, 2nd edition 1993. Wiedemann, E. *Aufsätze zur arabischen Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 2 vols. Hildesheim: Olms, 1970.

18. August Kundt (1798-1857) was the student of Henri Saint-Simon. He was a French philosopher. He founded the doctrine of Positivism based on the view that the exclusive source of knowledge is observation and sensory experience. August Kundt is one of the founders of Sociology. See Wikipedia for more de-

tivism, to declare that Islam did not kidnap minds, but granted them the freedom to think, foresee, and innovate in all the artistic, aesthetic, and constructional aspects of life. He added that such a religion deserves to be studied in depth.

The noble Prophet (PBUH) applied this scientific approach even in the minute details of his mission and in all interactions with members of society and state. This is demonstrated clearly in his attitude the day his son Ibrahim died.

On that day, there had been a solar eclipse and people started to attribute this cosmic phenomenon to the death of the Prophet's son, Ibrahim, for which he (PBUH) suffered intense sadness. The noble Prophet (PBUH) took a logical scientific stance on this. He uprooted the seeds of superstition and falsehoods that were far from any sense of logic and reason when he said:

*The sun and the moon do not eclipse for anyone's death nor for anyone's life.*<sup>19</sup>

...thereby showing that eclipses are great signs from Allah governed by natural and cosmic laws. This emphasizes the importance of adhering to scientific fact even in the emotional situations.

“Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about 570 A.D. into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty, he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five, his employer, recognizing his merit, proposed mar-

---

tails. One of his greatest writings is “*The Course in Positive Philosophy*”, a series of six volumes published between 1830 and 1842.

19. *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadeeth number: 1006.

riage. Even though she was fifteen years older, he married her, and as long as she lived, remained a devoted husband. Like almost every major prophet before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded 'Read.' So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth: 'There is one God.' In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumors of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, 'An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human being.' At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: 'If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever.'<sup>20</sup>

These Qur'anic instructions and Prophetic attitudes had a great impact on an Arab mind rooted in superstitions and sorcery across long centuries of time. They opened the fountains of science and knowledge. Phenomena, facts, and reason now filled the Arab mind, and pushed Arabs forward to take their place in history.

The German Orientalist Sigrid Hunke says:

"Not only did the Arabs save the Greek civilization from transience, organize it and gift it to the West, but also founded the experimental methods in chemistry, physics, arithmetic, algebra, geology, trigonometry, and sociology. Arabs presented the world with the most

---

20. James A. Michener, "*Islam: The Misunderstood Religion*," in *READER'S DIGEST* (American edition), May 1955, pp. 68-70.

precious gift: namely the correct way of scientific research, which paved the way for the West to learn the secrets of nature.”

Hunke adds:

“Astronomy had a profoundly religious significance for Muslims. The stars and their orbits, the sun and its greatness, the moon and its motion were glaring proof of the greatness and power of Allah; the Creator in Whose name the Arab Prophet was sent advocating that He is the Creator of heavens and earth, and the Maker of darkness and light”...<sup>21</sup>

- The Holy Quran established methods for observing the fixed laws of history in accordance with the relationship between Man and the universe. Human history repeats itself in patterns and in accordance with Divine laws. The Holy Quran emphasizes the importance of historical awareness which provides meaningful insight into the present. This can be realized by reading, profoundly and with focus, the various and numerous human experiences. Man has to study these experiences, ponder over their various dimensions and backgrounds, and point out the motives and laws that contributed to their occurrence. He should actively seek to learn and understand the psychological background for many events, conflicts, emotions, impacts, and wars...which occurred throughout the long and rich human history. Allah Almighty says:

*[Have they, then, never journeyed about the earth and beheld what happened in the end to those [deniers of the truth] who lived before their time? Greater were they in power than they are; and they left a stronger impact on the earth, and built it up even better than these [are doing]; and to them [too] came their apostles with all evidence of the truth: and so, [when they*

---

21. Sigrid Hunke, *The Arab Sun Shines On The West*, p. 130.

*rejected the truth and thereupon perished,] it was not God who wronged them, but it was they who had wronged themselves.]*  
Ar-Rum 9

- The Holy Quran identified the moral standards for human scientific research. These standards can be found in the words of advice that the great scholars gave to their students. The great scientist Jabir Ibn Hayan advised students to conduct experiments and to rely on nothing but their results. He also recommended precise observation, prudence, and taking one's time to deduce conclusions; i.e. to beware of generalizations and not to jump to conclusions. In this context, Jabir Ibn Hayan says to one of his students:

“Your very first duty is to perform practical work and make experiments; he who does not perform practical work or makes experiments will never attain to the least degree of mastery. Thus, I recommend that you make experiments to attain knowledge, my son.”<sup>22</sup>

In the “Book of Optics”, Ibn Al-Haytham (known by Westerners as AlHazen) says:

“The basis for scientific knowledge is to look into its principles and premises, beginning our research with an inspection of the things that exist and a survey of the conditions of visible objects. We should distinguish the properties of particulars, and gather by induction what pertains to the eye when vision occurs and what is found in the manner of visual sensation to be uniform, unchanging, manifest and not subject to doubt. After which we should ascend in our inquiry and reasoning, gradually and orderly, challenging assumptions and premises and exercising caution with regard to conclusions- our aim in all that we make subject to inspection and review being to employ justice, not to follow prejudice, and to take care in all that we judge and

---

22. Morris Charbel, *The Encyclopedia of Chemists (their Lives and Relics)*, the Scientific Library.

criticize that we seek the truth and are not swayed by our whims.” Thus we can aspire to reach a gradual conviction and arrive at the truth which removes all doubt and puts to rest all argument.<sup>23</sup>

The moral standards in the writings of those masters are derived from the Holy Quran and the biography of the Prophet (PBUH); wherein following justice is the main criteria, and training oneself to abide by its ruling is an integrated part of the Muslim character. Thus it becomes possible to avoid prejudice and its motives which lead to injustice, transgression and misinformation.

Psychologists believe that prejudice is a natural tendency to satisfy personal inclinations. It drives a human being to hasten to reach results which please him and prove him right, even if they are false or temporary. He starts looking for things that support his inclinations, highlights them within his subjective frame of reference and analyzes the results in a way which supports his preconceptions, regardless of all evidence to the contrary.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, the early Muslim mentality was shaped according to a sound intellectual approach free from prejudice and bigotry, grounded on induction and reasoning, consistent with the truth wherever it may be, reliant on logic wherever it leads, and following the evidence regardless of previous direction. Approaches based on bigotry and intolerance of other intellectual approaches were unacceptable.

Moreover, the zealotry and moral commitment to the truth displayed by the first builders of Islamic civilization in presenting and researching the accuracy of religious texts, led to the formation and evolution of the Islamic methodology. This served them well and

- 
23. Ibn Al-Haytham, Muhammad Ibn Al-Hassan: *The Book Of Optics*, Articles of Vision, A.I. Sabra, The National Council for Culture (Kuwait, 1983) p. 6.
  24. Straughn, R. Wringley, J. eds, *Values & Evaluation in Education*, London, Harper& Row Pub. 1980, p. 85.

proved its value in the study of other sciences such as natural science and its derivatives.

Another characteristic of Islamic methodology was the practice of starting from where predecessors had ended; what we call today “surveying the literature and heritage of former knowledge and prior studies.”

**This never meant copying knowledge from foreign cultures and assimilating it blindly; but involved a methodological evaluation of past knowledge in a conscientious and scientific manner, without denigrating or offending the original presenter.** This is based on the moral standards enshrined in the Holy Quran and Prophetic Sunnah.

Al Beiruni (a Muslim scientist) says:

“Verily I’ve done what every man has to do in his own craft: accept the efforts of the forerunners with gratitude; rectify faults, if found, with no restraint; and perpetuate what stays in the mind for the successors and generations that follow.”<sup>25</sup>

Al Beiruni’s words clearly indicate his interest in the critical approach. According to Dr. Franz Rosenthal, the spirit of criticism emerged among Muslims in the early ages of their history. In order to regulate this approach, they set some principles to be followed; including respect for predecessors, regardless of their slips and mistakes. Thus, they reserved the right to review and correct past work without defamation nor misinformation.<sup>26</sup>

---

25. Fuat Sezgin, *the Journal for the History of Arab-Islamic Science*, p. 51. Abdel Halim Montasser, Abu Rayhan Al Biruni, Dar Al Maarif (Egypt, 1986) p. 112. See also: Zakia Belnasser Al Qaoud, *the Critical Approach of Muslim Medics*, Jeel cultural website. <http://www.jeel-libya.com/profiles/thoughtview.asp?field=content&id=1792>.

26. Franz Rosenthal, *Methods of Muslim Scientists in Scientific Research*, translated by Anis Freiha, Dar Athaqafa, Beirut, 1961, p. 133.

In this context, Jack S. Riesel talks about Arab physicians in his book “The Arab Civilization”:

“They, tirelessly and painstakingly, compiled information. They were critics to the greatest degree and thoughtful men of strong views. Henceforth, medicine became experimental.”<sup>27</sup>

- **The noble Prophet (PBUH) established the basis for a human civilization that came to develop mankind;** a civilization for all humans regardless of geographic region, race, color, or historic roots. It is a civilization which removes all barriers in order to achieve happiness and well-being for all mankind. Moreover, every act that is intended to achieve this goal is considered a humanitarian civilized religious act for which man is verily recompensed.

This civilization focuses on Man; to fulfill his aspirations and needs in perfect balance, and achieve his goals and interests with complete disregard for all human differences, even those that stem from religious roots. Hence, the Islamic civilization became a live application of the universality of Islam; it is a religion for all mankind. The impact of this is clearly reflected in the contributions of the nations which converted into Islam in the Islamic civilization, even while the language of the Holy Quran (Arabic) remained as the language of the new civilization.

Obviously, the main thing which determines the value of contribution for any civilization is its morals, ethics, and the value it places on the human: not his gender, class or race. **The precise criterion which determines the positive contribution of a particular nation to human civilization is the degree and extent of dignity and justice that Man enjoys within the confines of this civilization.**

---

27. Jack S. Riesel: *Arab Civilization*, translated by Ghoneim Abdoun, undated, p. 194.

In this regard, the Holy Quran speaks about past civilizations, such as the those of Aad, Thamud, the people of Midian, and the people of the Pharaoh, who were not able to maintain moral and ethical standards for their people. This led to their extinction despite all their achievements in exploring the secrets of the earth and utilizing its resources, and notwithstanding all the fine edifices and monuments they erected; many of which still stand as proof for the greatness of their material accomplishments. Allah, Almighty says:

*[And with Pharaoh of the [many] tent-poles? [It was they] who transgressed all bounds of equity all over their lands, and brought about great corruption therein] Al Fajr: 10-12*

A salient feature of the Islamic civilization is that its discoveries and achievements are offered to the entire world without discrimination, and made available and accessible for the benefit of all mankind. The early Muslims left a great legacy of scientific discoveries and humanitarian knowledge for all: with no proprietary rights for Arabs over non-Arabs, for white people over black, or even for Muslims over non-Muslims.

This distinctive feature gave the Islamic civilization an attribute of tolerance and love towards all nations of the world as well as openness to all human civilizations and cultures. This positive and effective outlook contributed to a lasting, growing, and diverse Islamic civilization enriched by contributions from the diverse human cultures participating in its development. Within the confines of this civilization Arabs, Persians, Romans, Turks, Africans, and other races of the world worked side by side as one nation for the enrichment of all mankind.

Thus, many non-Muslims took part in building the Islamic civilization and reached the highest positions in the Islamic state contributing to the its growth and achievements.

Because of this cultural and intellectual cross-fertilization between Muslims and other nations, the Islamic civilization reached a high degree of maturity and resilience. Most social classes participated in this scientific activity and civilizational construction.

Moreover, during the Abbasid era, the great expanse of the state (spread across three continents), the abundance of its wealth, and ever-expanding markets had a significant impact on the creation of an unprecedented cultural renaissance in the East. Scholars roamed around the three continents in search of resources for science and knowledge in order to return back, like bees bearing honey, to their masses of eager students.<sup>28</sup>

Professor Horton - the Orientalist and Professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Bonn - emphasizes that Muslims have an ability to be open and to accomplish cross-fertilization with various civilizations and cultures of other nations, while sustaining the dominance and mastery of the teachings of the Holy Quran and Prophetic Sunnah. They can do this with an unmatched cognitive consistency. Professor Horton states:

“The spirit of Islam is broad, capacious, and quasi-borderless. It assimilates every idea it can perceive from neighboring nations, except thoughts of disbelief. Then, it adds its special developmental character to these ideas.”<sup>29</sup>

---

28. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge, 1930, p. 281.

29. Suhail Farah, *The Arab Contemporary Philosophy*, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1988, p. 263.

## THIRD TOPIC

### FIELDS OF MUSLIM CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CIVILIZATION

**T**he qualitative intellectual education accomplished by our noble Prophet (PBUH) was not an education restricted to theoretical concepts, but a functional applied comportment characterized by both realism and spirituality. The goal was to train Muslims and to feed the embryo of the Islamic civilization inside the Muslim womb. It moved the Muslim nation in progressive steps from one stage to another, patiently and wisely, until its full emergence from the world of ignorance to the world of civilization.

In this context, Thomas Carlyle, in his lecture entitled “Hero as a Prophet”, says:

“Islam was to the Arab Nation as a birth from darkness into light; Arabia became alive as its result. To a poor shepherding people, roaming unnoticed in the deserts since the creation of the world, a Hero–Prophet was sent with a message they could believe. Suddenly the unnoticed become world-notable, the small grow to world-greatness, the weak grow to strength, and the humility turns to pride; all within less than a century. Its light shone on all regions of the globe, tying West to East and North to South, filling its

reaches with nobility, bravery, succor, and grace. The Arabs soon had their people in India, in Andalusia, and in every section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving, a source of strength. A nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, and rises to greatness, as long as it believes. It is as if, for these Arabs, the man Muhammad, and their century, a spark had fallen on their black unnoticeable sand to turn the sand into explosive powder, blazing to high heaven, from Delhi to Grenada! I have always said that a great man is like a comet out of Heaven and the rest of humanity await him like dry timber, ready to go up in flame.”<sup>30</sup>

This great transformation was reflected in various shapes and forms. During the first century of Hijra (counted from the date of migration from Mecca to AlMadeena), its features were still unclear. By the end of the second Hijra century, its characteristics were revealed. Arab-Islamic sciences as well as intellectual, mathematical, natural, and human sciences all emerged. Knowledge was enriched, minds were unleashed, and energies erupted in a leading innovational transformation and a brilliant civilizational process.

In this ambience of freedom, a huge doctrinal and social movement started in the Muslim communities. Henceforth, scientists began to apply the principles of the Holy Quran and Prophetic Sunnah in fulfilling the real life needs of their communities and to accommodate the continuous changes. Academic activity flourished and its fruits blossomed through a number of intellectual doctrines and schools of thought based on the Prophecy and its message. Therefore, the first Abbasid era (132-232 AH) became the era of innovation in the Islamic civilization.<sup>31</sup>

Several factors were behind the expansion of this intellectual movement; most important of which was the great respect shown by the Caliphs

---

30. Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic In History*, 1993, University Of California Press, p. 38.

31. Hamilton Gibb. *Studies on the civilization of Islam*. Princeton University Press. 1982. p. 66. Bertold Spuler. *The Muslim World. Vol. I, The Age of the Caliphs*. Leiden. E. J. Brill. 1960. p. 29.

for science and scientists, and their focused attention on education. Scholars were part of the inner circle of the Caliph and enjoyed high ranks in governments and respected positions in society. Councils for science and scientific debates were held. Many scientists excelled in various fields of science and knowledge. The emergence of the Imams of Independent Judgment (Al A'imma Al Mojtahedoun) increased the documentation activity in the various branches of science.

The breadth of the Islamic state, the abundance of its wealth, and stability of its economy had a great influence on this unprecedented scientific and cultural renaissance in the entire East. In such a knowledge-friendly atmosphere, all people became students and/or supporters of science and education.<sup>32</sup>

Combining the study of doctrinal and juristic sciences with research in the fields of natural science was customary for both scholars and students. Many Muslims were able to excel in multiple fields of science and knowledge, and the Islamic civilization was the outcome of the integrative interaction between studies in natural and juristic sciences concurrently.

The Orientalist Goldziher couldn't deny such a fact when he said:

“What (Peter Vernvels- theologian of the Modern Church) has said about the Bible is reinforced by the Holy Quran: that every man finds his own beliefs in this Holy Book, and **every man finds what he seeks in it.**”<sup>33</sup> Thus a physicist, a naturalist in his lab, and a scientist of jurisprudence in his studies and fatwas, all can find in the Holy Quran what they particularly seek.”

---

32. R.A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 281. Marshall G. S. Hodgson (Edited, with an introduction and conclusion, by Edmund Burke III) *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam and World History* (Cambridge 1993).

33. Ignac Goldziher, *Trends in the Exegesis of the Quran*, translated by Abdel Halim An-Naggar, Al Khangi library, Egypt, and Al Muthana library, Bagdad, 1955-1974, p. 3.

In the Islamic perspective, science embraces all aspects of human activity, conditions, values, morals, customs, laws of nature, and the means of using all such knowledge to benefit mankind, in fulfillment of Man's mission to be regent on earth. Man can never fulfill such a mission without knowledge as his tool. Hence, **learning in Islam is a duty. Science in the Islamic civilization was never apart from religion. On the contrary; both were the effective tools for worship.**<sup>34</sup>

Thus, Muslim scholars did not fall into the trap of differentiating between theological and natural sciences.<sup>35</sup> They made both sciences meet in perfect balance and consistency. Religion can never be threatened by science nor can it be a barrier to scientific achievement.

History abounds with examples of Muslim scientists who studied juristic sciences alongside natural sciences. Al Kindi (260 AH/ 873 AD) studied philosophy, logic, arithmetic, astronomy, engineering, politics, medicine as well as religious jurisprudence. Likewise, Al Farabi, Al-Razi, Ibn Al-Nafis, Abdul Latif Al-Baghdadi, Ibn Rushd, Ibn At-Tufail, Al-Samaani, and many others studied various branches of science at the same time.

Therefore, science had a civilizational and religious significance, and the study of natural sciences became a path towards faith. This interactive link between knowledge and religion, between natural and doctrinal sciences, contributed to the balanced and integrated Islamic civilization. All fields of knowledge were elements of this civilization; theology, jurisprudence, science, literature, crafts, arts, etc....

In this regard, Thomas Carlyle says:

- 
34. For more about the comparison between Western and Islamic scientific movements, see what the British scholar Rom Landau has written in: *Islam and the Arabs*, translated by Mounir Baalbaki, Dar Al Ilm Lilmalayin, Beirut, 1977, second edition, p. 280-281.
  35. Unfortunately Christians fell into this trap and the struggles between Church and Science are well documented.

“The religion embraced by the wild idolatrous Arab and ruling their fiery hearts is worthy of being believed and its rules followed. It combines the spirit of all religions and is a combination of all good things. When followed, Man truly becomes the high-priest of this temple of a world. He is in harmony with the laws of his Creator; synchronizing his motion with them, not vainly trying to oppose them. Islam devoured all vain erroneous faiths, and I think it had every right to do so. It was the Truth, whose emergence caused all Arab idolatries, Christian fallacious arguments and other twisted faiths to go up in flames as dead fuel.”<sup>36</sup>

Scholars unanimously agree that the Islamic civilization occupies a high rank among the great civilizations in human history. Moreover, **it is one of the most enduring and influential in the history of the world.** Verily, Muslims contributed to the establishment of a unique civilization that changed the course of history and was one of the greatest factors for the emergence of the modern Western civilization.<sup>37</sup>

**In summary,** the Islamic civilization grew from the roots of science and knowledge; it protected knowledge and made it a religious duty for its followers. Besides, it made the process of education and instruction a public process and prohibited the monopoly of science and scientific knowledge. Exceptional creative abilities emerged in various fields of science and knowledge; the East and the West both benefited from the Arab-Islamic sciences and Islamic urban centers were the destination of students from all over the world.<sup>38</sup>

During the medieval centuries- the dark ages of Europe, the Islamic world was living its most scientifically advanced and prosperous era. Arabs

---

36. Thomas Carlyle, *ibid*, p. 38. Simon Heffer, *Moral Desperado - A Life of Thomas Carlyle*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Carlyle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Carlyle).

37. Izz Ad-Din Farrag, *Influence of Muslim Scientists on the European Civilization*, Cairo, 1989, p. 10.

38. Maher Abdul Qader and Hassan Hallaq, *The Arab History of Science*, Kreidieh Brothers library, Beirut, 1991, p. 5.

were the pioneers of science while Europe was living a long barbaric age – according to Gustave Le Bon.<sup>39</sup>

The civilizational achievements of Muslims encompassed different fields of science, such as medicine, geography, philosophy, literature, and arts. Identifying the full impact of the Islamic civilization in the various fields is a difficult task. However, a closer look at the contents of the catalogs of Islamic heritage (by Ibn An-Nadim, Haji Khalifa, Brokhlman, Fuat Sezgin, and others) can offer a general idea of this momentous impact across centuries of time.

In this regard, reference to the book by George Sarton “Introduction to the History of Science” is enough. In his book, Sarton divides the human scientific activity throughout history into equal periods of time lasting half a century each. For every half-century, he mentions a name of a person who symbolizes that period from different parts of the world. Over a 350 years period -between 750 and 1100 AD - Muslim names consistently made this list. They include: Jabir Ibn Hayyan, Al Khawarizmi, Al-Razi, Al-Masou-di, Abul Wafaa, and Al Beiruni. They were all Muslims; Arabs, Turks, Afghans, and Persians who excelled in the sciences of chemistry, arithmetic, medicine, geography, nature, and astronomy. All of them were prominent in multiple fields of science and art; they were “encyclopedic references” as recognized by many Western thinkers.<sup>40</sup>

---

39. Gustave Le Bon, op cit, p 567. See also: At-Twajjri, *Features of Islamic Civilization and Future Prospects*, op cit. See: Abdul Aziz Ibn Othman At-Twajjri (*Builders of Scientific Thought in the Islamic Civilization*), publications of the Islamic Organization of Education, Science, and Culture, Rabat, 2002. Ash-Sharif, *Studies in the Islamic Civilization*, op cit, p 300 et seq. For more about the achievements of Muslim scientists, see: Mohamed Abdul Rahman Merheb, *the Whole History of Science in the Arab World*, Beirut, Oweidat publications, 1988, second edition. Said Merezin Aseeri: *the Scientific Life in Iraq in the Seljuk Era*, At-Talib library, Mecca, 1987.

40. Pearce Williams and Henry John Steffans, *The History of Science in Western Civilization*, Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1977. p. 224.

During the seventh and eighth centuries of Hijra, the Arab scientific activity peaked. Ibn An-Nafees discovered the circulatory system, Lesan Ad-Din Al Khatib explained the subject of infection, and Nuseir Ad-Din At-Tussi developed the science of trigonometry. In Arithmetic, Ghayyath Ad-Din Al Kashi reached various significant findings, while Qutb Ad-Din Ash-Shirazi and Ibn Ash-Shater recorded remarkable discoveries in astronomy. Last but not least, Ibn Khaldun established sociology and the philosophy of history.<sup>41</sup>

In this context, George Sarton says:

“During the reign of Caliph Al-Ma'mun (813-833 A.D.), the new learning reached its climax. The monarch created in Baghdad a regular school for translation. It was equipped with a library, one of the translators there was Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (809-77), a particularly gifted philosopher and physician of wide erudition, the dominating figure of this century of translators. We know from his own recently published Memoir that he translated practically the whole immense corpus of Galenic writings....Besides the translation of Greek works and their extracts, the translators made manuals of which one form, that of the ‘pandects,’ is typical of the period of Arabic learning. These are recapitulations of the whole medicine, discussing the affections of the body, systematically beginning at the head and working down to the feet.”<sup>42</sup>

In his book “Islam and Christianity”, Aleksei Zhuravsky states:

“Today, the world clearly recognizes **the effective role played by the peoples and cultures of the Near East, as well as their spiritual experiences in the emergence and development of the European civilization.** The Near East was the source spring for Europe from which it extracted the elements of its culture; elements out of reach for Europe before its contact with this vital region. In addition, the Near East was the perpetual motivator which

---

41. John William, *Intellectual Development of Europe*. T. Arnold and A. Guillaume, “*The Legacy of Islam*,” Oxford University Press, 1931.

42. George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science and the New Humanism*, Indiana University Press, 1962. p. 94.

prompted a sense of challenge in Europe through the new ideas and complex problematic issues it introduced. This forced Europe to search actively for reasonable solutions. By the late Middle Ages, the Arab-Islamic culture started to play the role of the intellectual-spiritual rival for the European civilization of that time.”<sup>43</sup>

In this context, Stanwood Cobb –the historian– says:

“Few people are aware of the significant contributions made by the Islamic world to the progress of humanity. Yet for more than five centuries that civilization not only led the world in science, but was the only one actively engaged in the systematic pursuit of knowledge.”<sup>44</sup>

**In fact, the relationship between human civilizations is based upon mutual influence. Every civilization benefits from the outcomes of the preceding civilizations. Likewise, it influences subsequent civilizations through its various concepts and perceptions.**<sup>45</sup>

In the Middle Ages, the influence of Islam was predominant in all aspects of European life including living, commercial, economic, technical, political, literary, scientific, philosophical, and religious aspects. The subject of Arab-European cultural relations became a fertile field for countless studies, academic treatises, and scientific symposia.

Gustave Le Bon says:

“The Islamic civilization had a great influence on the world. Muslims were the ones who opened for Europe the doors of scientific, literary and philosophical knowledge through their great culture. They were, verily, the ones who urbanized us, and we remained guided by them over six centuries of time.”

---

43. Dr. Aleksei Zhuravsky, *Islam and Christianity*, the series of Alam Al- Ma'rifa, Kuwait, November 1996, p 33-34.

44. Stanwood Cobb, *Muslims in the History of Civilization*, Saudi House for Publication and Distribution, second edition -1405 AH/ 1985 AD, p. 21.

45. Philip Hatti, *History of the Arabs*, Beirut, 1953, part. 2, p. 139.

He also says:

“Europe, in its civilization, is indebted to the Arabs. Indeed, the Arabs were no less influential to the West than they were to the East. This influence on the West can be perceived only by remembering the state of Europe before Arab civilization entered it. During the 9th and 10th centuries, while the Arab civilization in Spain shone bright, the centers of culture in the West were no more than towers inhabited by brutal aristocrats proud of being unlettered.”<sup>46</sup>

The Islamic civilization with its fields of science and knowledge was transmitted to Europe through various routes, such as: Andalusia, Sicily, the Levant, as well as other cultural crossing points like Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Cyprus, Rhodes, and others. At that time, Europe was suffering the brunt of scientific and cultural backwardness.

### The Route of Andalusia

When Muslims conquered Spain, it was not much different from other countries of Western Europe. Ignorance, superstitions, internal conflicts and strife between Christian doctrines prevailed to the extent that some princes of Spain including the Archbishop of Seville helped Muslims conquer their own country.

The great Spanish writer, Vicente Ibanez, says: “From the eighth to the fifteenth century the most elevated and opulent civilization of middle Ages Europe (Islamic Andalusia) was formed and flourished. While the people of the North were decimating each other in religious wars and living in tribal barbarity, the population of Spain rose to thirty millions, comprising all varieties of races and all beliefs. In this prolific amalgamation of peoples and races all the culture, ideas, and discoveries known to Man met, and all

---

46. Gustave Le Bon, *op cit*, p. 566.

arts, sciences, industries, inventions and culture of the old civilizations bud-  
ded out into fresh discoveries of creative energy.”<sup>47</sup>

Gustave Le Bon refers to the start of this cultural transfer. He empha-  
sizes that science was transferred to Europe through Spain, Sicily, and It-  
aly. This was accomplished through a translation office launched in 1130  
AD to translate the famous Arab books into the Latin language under the  
auspices of Bishop Raymond.<sup>48</sup>

As soon as Muslims settled in Andalusia, economic, social, and scientific  
activities began to flourish. The cities of Andalusia became the most pros-  
perous and important cities of Europe, especially Cordoba. Muslims settled  
there for almost eight centuries wherein the Islamic civilization reached its  
zenith during the second half of the tenth century AD. By that time, Cor-  
doba –the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate- became one of the greatest  
cities of the civilized world.<sup>49</sup>

This fact was highlighted by Koehler Young in his research about the  
influence of Islamic culture on the Christian West. He reminds the Chris-  
tians of Contemporary Europe that they owe Islam a great cultural debt.  
During medieval eras, their ancestors travelled to the capitals of the Islam-  
ic world –especially Spain- in order to learn from Muslim teachers in the  
various fields of art, science, and philosophy; including the ancient classi-  
cal European heritage that Islam preserved and protected until Europe was  
able to get it back.

---

47. Quoting: Roger Garaudy, *Islam in the West- Cordoba, the Capital of Science and Thought*, translated by: Thokan Kerkot, Damascus Publishing and Distribution, Damascus, 1995, p. 16-18.

48. Gustave Le Bon, p. 567.

49. Abdul Moneim, Maged. *The History of Islamic Civilization in the Middle Ages*, the Anglo Egyptian library, Cairo, second edition, 1972, p. 279. See also: Gus-  
tave Grunbaum, *The Civilization of Islam*, translated by Abdul Aziz Gaweed,  
Cairo, 1956, p. 81-82.

Another factor which contributed to this massive cultural revolution in Andalusia was the tolerance which Muslims displayed to their Christian and Jewish neighbors. This prompted the Jews and Christians to learn the Arabic language, and some of them became students of Muslim scholars. Hence, they became new ambassadors for the Islamic civilization as they mastered both Arabic and Latin languages.

They succeeded in transferring the Arab-Islamic sciences to the Spaniards and Europeans. The interest of Westerners in learning Arab sciences was so strong that it prompted the Bishop of Cordoba, in 854 AD, to warn Christians against forgetting their own language. By that time, a countless number of them were speaking Arabic fluently. Moreover, many of them composed Arabic poetry even better than the Arabs themselves.<sup>50</sup>

“Looking back we can say that **Islamic medicine and science** reflected the light of the Hellenic sun, when its day had fled, and that they shone like a moon, illuminating the darkest night of the European middle Ages; that some bright stars lent their own light, and that moon and stars alike faded at the dawn of a new day - the Renaissance. Since they had their share in the direction and introduction of that great movement, it may reasonably be claimed that they are with us yet.”<sup>51</sup>

The transmission of Islamic civilization from Andalusia to Europe was swift and impressive. At that time, Sicily, whose ruler Frederick II fell in love with the Islamic sciences and culture, was described as “a paradise for science enthusiasts”, and the impact of Islamic civilization was felt clearly there.

---

50. Aleksei Zhuravsky, op cit, p. 45. See also: Said Ashour, *Islamic Urbanity and Its Influence on the European Civilization*, Dar An-Nahda Al-Arabiya, Cairo, 1963, 529. See also: Ash-Sharif, op cit, p. 310-311 where he talks about the message of the Spanish writer Alvaro in which he lamented the neglect of Latin and Grecian languages, and the unparalleled interest in Arabic.

51. T. Arnold and A. Guillaume, “*The Legacy of Islam*,” Oxford University Press, 1931.

## The Route of Sicily

Muslims conquered Sicily in the first half of the third Hijra century (tenth AD century) during the Aghlabid and Fatimid Caliphates in North-west Africa. At that time, Sicily was a stronghold for Romans from where they attacked Islamic lands.

Under Islamic rule, for over two and a half centuries (from the early third Hijra century till the late fifth century), Sicily lived a period of great civilizational prosperity.<sup>52</sup> Features of Islamic civilization appeared in Palermo, Messina, Syracuse, and other regions. Palaces, mosques, castles, and bridges were erected, and the manufacture of paper, ships, silk, mosaics, and sulfur developed. Moreover, Muslims played a large part in trade and industry, and the Arabic language pervaded the region.

Long after the Islamic rule in Sicily ended (almost two centuries) its influence persisted. Muslim heritage can still be seen there. Moreover, the cultural exchange and interaction between Muslims and Christians expanded in Sicily despite the dominance of Normans over the region. Post-Muslim rulers of Sicily, among whom were Roger I and Roger II, mimicked the systems adopted by the Muslims and copied their practices in political management, municipal department setup, financial systems and others matters of government.<sup>53</sup>

Roger II (ruler of Sicily between 1101 and 1154 AD) invited Ash-Sharif Al-Idrisi (d. 457 AH/ 1166 AD) to his court. At that time, Al Idrisi was the most famous Arab geographer. He asked him to draw a map of the seven continents on a silver ball, and to write a book about it. Hence, the book of Nuzhat Al Mushtaq came about. The famous map of Al-Idrisi never fails to impress scholars and researchers of past and present times.

---

52. Maged, op cit, p. 278 et seq.

53. Hassan Hallaq, *Civilizational Relations between the East and the West During the Impassioned Middle Ages*, Andalusia, Sicily, and the Levant, Ad-Dar Al-Gameiya, Beirut, 1986, p. 122, 123.

Frederick II (1194-1250 AD) sponsored translations of Arab books from Arabic into Latin and Italian<sup>54</sup> as a way to transfer Arab knowledge. Sigrid Hunke states:

“Arabs were the ones who made Roger II the richest among all the kings of Europe after he was the poorest among them. This happened thanks to their economical and constructional efforts, as well as their precise financial and administrative systems and their perfect system of laws.”<sup>55</sup>

### Arrival of the Crusaders to the Islamic East

The Crusades invaded the Islamic East many times between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. In spite of all of the violent warfare of that time, the Crusaders were influenced by all aspects of Islamic civilization and arts. They learned to grow varieties of crops that Europe had never known before. They also transferred many Arab industries to their countries, such as glass, ceramic, mirror, jewelry, carpet, textile, metal pots, paint, and drug industries.

In this regard, Gustave Le Bon says:

“The impact of the East on the civilization of the West was very great, thanks to the Crusades. That impact was greater in arts, industries, and trade than in sciences and literature. If we look at the steady progress in commercial relations between the West and the East and the development in arts and industry that resulted from these relations, we will find that people in the East extricated the West from barbarism and prepared it for progress; all thanks to the Arab scientific knowledge which European universities relied on to jump-start the European renaissance.”<sup>56</sup>

---

54. Maged, op cit, p. 279. Tawfeeq At-Tawil, op cit, p. 30.

55. Sigrid Hunke, *The sun of the Arabs Rises Over the East*, translated by: Farouq Baidoun and Hussein Al Dosouqi, Dar Al Afaq Al Gadeeda, seventh edition, Beirut, 1982, p. 416.

56. Gustave Le Bon, *Civilization of The Arabs*, op cit, p. 339.

### **Trade between the East and the West**

Trade between Muslim and European countries flourished, and many industries of the East were transferred to different European regions through various routes. Egypt was one such route (from the days of the Fatimid Caliphate). The Fatimid Caliphs made Egypt a commercial and cultural center where various arts and sciences developed and flourished. People travelled to Egypt in search of science and knowledge. Moreover, its trade flourished with European cities such as Genoa, Venice, Florence, and other cities that subsequently led the European Renaissance.<sup>57</sup>

The trade continued while the Crusades were in the Levant, in spite of all the wars and animosity between Muslims and Europeans, and commercial convoys moved between the lands of both parties freely and safely.

---

57. Maged, op cit, p. 280-281.

## FOURTH TOPIC

### CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

**T**he Arabic language had a great impact on Latin languages, to the extent that Dozy and Engelmann wrote a glossary for Spanish and Portuguese words that were derived from Arabic.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the Arabic language influenced the French language; the dialects of the regions of Auvergne and Limousin are filled with Arabic words. Since the Arabs were masters of the sea since the eighth Gregorian century, France and Italy took their maritime terminology from the Arabic language.<sup>59</sup>

The Orientalist H.A.R. Gibb says:

”Europe is indebted to Arab countries for its fervent metaphorical trend. It is also indebted to Jewish countries for its faith, and to the savannas of the Arabs and the Levant for most of its vigor and energy; all of which made the middle Ages so different, in spirit and imagination, from that world ruled by Rome.”<sup>60</sup>

---

58. Dozy, Reinhart Pieter Anne. *Supplement aux Dictionnaires Arabes*. Arabic, Tawzi al-Dar al-Wataniyah lil-Tawzi wa-al-Illan, 1978 ed.

59. Gustave Le Bon, op cit, p. 441.

60. Gibb, *Arabic Literature- An Introduction*, Calrendon Press, 1963.

In the field of medicine, the Islamic civilization eliminated all forms of sorcery and superstition. At that time, Europe was prohibiting the practice of medicine as it believed disease was a punishment from God, and that nobody had any right to cure those who deserved it.<sup>61</sup>

Physicians of Europe described Al-Razi as the greatest scientist of clinical medicine in the Middle Ages. Even now, Westerners recognize the medical achievements and glorious discoveries of Al-Razi. Princeton University in the USA has named its most prestigious division after him in recognition of his scientific achievements and contributions.<sup>62</sup>

Islamic libraries of the time abounded with books in various fields of medicine such as *Al Hawi* (The Virtuous Life), and others on the science of optics and chemistry. Among the books that had great influence on Europe was the book by Ibn Sina "The Canon of Medicine". It was considered the one comprehensive reference on all sciences and branches of medicine. It was translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona in the twelfth century. It was published and translated several times in Venice, Milan, the Belgian city of Louvain, and Naples.<sup>63</sup> Translations continued up until the sixteenth century AD.

Another great Muslim physician was "Yahya Ibn Masawaih" credited with several important medical writings. Among his books is a book entitled "Disorder of the Eye" which was the first Arabic book on Ophthalmology. Moreover, it was said that Ibn Masawaih studied anatomy by dissecting the bodies of apes. The Caliph Al Mu'tassem always relied on his advice and it was believed that that was the reason for his strong constitution and good health.

---

61. Draper, J. W. *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, London, 1864. vol 2, p. 88.

62. Peter J. King, *One Hundred Philosophers*, 2004: New York, Barron's. Henry Corbin (1993). *History of Islamic Philosophy*. London: Keagan Paul International Corbin, H. (1993). *History of Islamic Philosophy*. London: Keagan Paul International. p. 154.

63. Maher Abdul Qader, Hassan Hallaq, *The Arab History of Science*, p. 170-171.

In the West, Ibn Masawaih was known as “Mesue Maior”, while the great physician “Hunayn Ibn Ishaq” was called “Yohantus”. Yohantus wrote several books, most important of which was his book on ophthalmology, “Ten Treatises of Ophthalmology”, as well as the book of “Venoms and Antidotes”. He also wrote a book about abdominal pains, another about fevers, and another about mouth and teeth diseases.<sup>64</sup>

With regard to Muslim achievements in medicine, Gustave Le Bon says:

“Medicine owes the Arabs for the discovery of several medical drugs... and for the clever approaches to therapy which then came by repackaged as new Western medical discoveries... the science of surgery owes to the Arabs many of its basic procedures. Until recently, books by the Arabs on surgery were the main references for medical schools...”<sup>65</sup>

This integrated civilization and scientific renaissance which covered various fields of science and knowledge was influenced by the first community founded by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and His companions. The early Muslim scholars used the principles of Islamic faith to link up religion and knowledge. They were the building blocks for an Islamic nation where customs derived from religious teachings met perfectly with scientific discovery. In such a wonderful fabric, the first Muslim society started in a region that had witnessed no prior civilization or scientific renaissance.

In this context, Bernard Lewis says:

---

64. <http://www.islamset.com/arabic/aheritage/mather/index.html>

65. Gustave Le Bon, *op cit*, p. 498. See also: Ibn Abi Usaibia: *Ayun Al Anbaa’ (Lives of the Physicians)*, edited by Amer An-Najjar, 1996, Hakim Muhammad Said: *Great Names and Thinkers: Previews About Famous Scientists And Thinkers in the Golden Ages of Islam*, the Islamic Academy of Sciences, Amman, Jordan, 2000, second edition. Muhammad Al Arabi Al Khattabi, *Medicine and Physicians in Muslim Andalusia*, Dar Al Gharb Al Islami, Beirut. Abdullah Ad-Daffa’, *The Contributions of Arab and Muslim Scientists in Zoology*, Ar-Resala foundation, Beirut, 1986.

“He had achieved a great deal. To the pagan peoples of western Arabia he had brought a new religion which, with its monotheism and its ethical doctrines, stood on an incomparably higher level than the paganism it replaced. He had provided that religion with a revelation which was to become in the centuries to follow the guide to thought and count of countless millions of Believers. But he had done more than that; he had established a community and a well organized and armed state, the power and prestige of which made it a dominant factor in Arabia.... The modern historian will not readily believe that so great and significant a movement was started by a self-seeking imposter. Nor will he be satisfied with a purely supernatural explanation, whether it postulates aid of divine or diabolical origin; rather, like Gibbon, will he seek ‘with becoming submission, to ask not indeed what were the first, but what were the secondary causes of the rapid growth’ of the new faith...”<sup>66</sup>

The social structure based on a clear understanding of the teachings and principles of Islam paved the way for Muslims to establish a great civilization and renaissance. The impact of this civilization is clear in the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. This civilization could never have come from a morally or socially degenerate society but was the fruit of the seeds that the early Muslims planted. Moreover, moral regression and social corruption were the reasons for the demise of Islamic civilization later on.

Social degeneration and imported new customs totally foreign to Islam played an important role in undermining the Islamic civilization. Such habits and customs are still on the rise in Islamic societies to the extent that they are replacing the principles and teachings of Islam.<sup>67</sup>

The Holy Quran characterized some prior civilizations as tyrannical and corrupt. Although they erected lofty buildings and had tremendous civiliza-

---

66. Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 1950, p. 45-46.

67. For more details, see: Muhammad Al Fadel Ibn Ashour, *The Spirit of Islamic Civilization*, the International Institute for Islamic Thought, USA, 1401 AH/ 1981 AD, p. 66 et seq.

tional achievements, they deserved Allah's wrath because they ignored all spiritual values and moral ideals. Their skyscrapers did not protect them from Allah's punishment.<sup>68</sup>

The Holy Quran clearly identifies God's rules for demolishing civilizations and nations; fixed laws which never change. In several verses, the reasons for punishment and extinction of civilizations are outlined: excessive luxury, pride and arrogance, injustice and transgression, and over-indulgence in pleasures and desires.<sup>69</sup> Allah Almighty said:

*[HAVE THEY, then, never journeyed about the earth and beheld what happened in the end to those [deniers of the truth] who lived before their time? More numerous were they, and greater in power than they are, and in the impact which they left on earth: but all that they ever achieved was of no avail to them – for when their apostles came to them with all evidence of the truth, they arrogantly exulted in whatever knowledge they [already] possessed: and [so, in the end,] they were overwhelmed by the very thing which they were wont to deride. And then, when they [clearly] beheld Our punishment, they said: "We have*

---

68. For more about the stories of prior nations, see the following verses of the Quran: Ash-Shu'ara' 26:123-140, Ad-Dukhan 44:25-29 and many others. See also: Haidar Abdel Karim Al-Ghadir, *Muslims and The Civilizational Alternative*, the International Institute for Islamic Thought, USA, third edition, 1413 AH/1992 AD, p. 42 et seq.

69. See the following verses: the Holy Qur'an: Al A'raf 7:4, Al-Kahf 18:59, Al Hijr 15:4, Ash-Shu'ara' 26:208, Al-Abiya' 26:11, Al Hajj 22:45, Al Qasas 28:58. In this context, it is worth mentioning that reference to these verses, traditions, and laws is inevitable even when discussing Muslim societies where such deviations occur. The punishment did not occur just because of disbelief only, but because of the deviation, aberration, excessive luxury, vanity, and other reasons that make a nation or society deserving of annihilation. Thus, several scholars refer to the Holy verses when discussing blind imitation of one's forbearers. For example, see: Ibn Qayyim Al Jawziyya, *A'lam Al Mowaq'een*, op cit, part2, p. 191.

*come to believe in the One God, and we have renounced all belief in that to which we were wont to ascribe a share in His divinity!” But their attaining to faith after they had beheld Our punishment could not possibly benefit them – such being the way of God that has always obtained for His creatures – and so, then and there, lost were they who had denied the truth.] (Ghafir 40:82-85).*

In fact, when social diseases such as weakness, stagnation, and moral decay pervade all institutions of a society or nation and extend to its individuals to the extent that they are no longer considered aberrations but become social trends and common behaviors, it eventually brings down the entire society or nation.

## CHAPTER V

---

WHAT THE MESSAGE OF THE NOBLE PROPHET  
CAN OFFER THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD



## PREFACE

**T**oday, the entire world is living a time of crisis; not limited to one aspect of life but clouding most, if not all, of life's fields.<sup>1</sup> People are suffering from an uninterrupted series of moral, intellectual, social, political, and economical disasters.

The only way to break this cycle is to consolidate the efforts of all countries of the world regardless of political alliances, differences, or interests. Thought leaders and sociologists have started to warn people about the spread of moral epidemics and the aberrant behavior which are threatening Western societies nowadays.

In this context, the famous pastor Jerry Fallwell<sup>2</sup> has written in his book "Listen America":

- 
1. Wilhelm Roepke, *The Social Crisis of Our Time*, Library of Conservative Thought, 1998. *The Moral Foundations of Civil Society*.
  2. This famous doctor and American pastor was born in 1933. He wrote a number of books most famous of which is "*Listen America*", "*Fasting Can Change Your Life*", and "*Achieving Your Dreams*." He's the founder of Liberty University. See his biography on: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=6921>

“I have seen the grim statistics on divorce, broken homes, abortion, juvenile delinquency, promiscuity and drug addiction. I have witnessed firsthand the human wreckage and the shattered lives that statistics can never reveal in their totality. I am convinced that we need a spiritual and moral revival if America is to survive the twentieth century.”<sup>3</sup>

In a similar vein, Murad Hofmann says:

“In the twentieth century even the masses carried these ideas. As a result of the subjectivism and relativism they had acquired, they lived a vulgar de facto atheism with new idols: power, money, beauty, popularity and sex. It was accepted that science, as opposed to the religion it had repressed, was incompetent in determining the meaning of life.”<sup>4</sup>

In addition, several wars and conflicts are threatening peace in the entire world. Wars have a big social impact: family disintegration, poverty, ignorance, moral degradation and lack of security and stability... All these crises require deliberate efforts to search for methods of salvation for humanity. The world of today longs for peace: inner and outer peace, security and stability in the midst of all these deteriorating conditions.

Today’s reality provides testimony on the serious imbalance and lack of equilibrium in the course of civilization. The leader of the former Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev says:

“Our rockets can find Haley’s Comet and fly to Venus with amazing precision. But despite all these scientific and technical triumphs there is an obvious lack of efficiency in using scientific achievements for economic needs; many Soviet household appliances are of poor quality. Unfortunately that’s not all; a gradual deterioration in our ideological and moral

- 
3. Jerry Fallwell, *Listen America*, (New York: Bantam Book. Inc, 1981)  
See also: Majed Ersan Al Kilany, “*The Muslim Message in the American Society, Articles About the Islamic Call and Media*”, op cit, p. 128.
  4. Murad Hofmann, “*Islam: The Alternative*”, Al Obeikan Library, Riyadh, third edition, 1421 AH/ 2001 AD, p. 35.

values has begun... Corruption is permeating general morality, and crimes as well as alcohol and drug addiction have increased. We will continue to fight resolutely against alcohol and alcoholism.”<sup>5</sup>

After profound consideration, Arnold Toynbee announced that **humanity is suffocating itself by a strangulating crisis which is no less destructive than the two world wars, and the future is alarming.** He added that a man-made catastrophe is likely to occur; which will destroy the biosphere and eliminate the entire human race. He emphasized that this was just a probability and that there were other options for mankind.

Moreover, Toynbee notes that the material powers of Man have increased to a degree that turns him into a threat for the biosphere, while his spirituality has taken a downturn. Toynbee believes that the only rational salvation for humanity is to go through a spiritual revolution to cure the illnesses of our modern society. He emphasizes that Man is a form of matter (a body); but that he also has a conscious spirit. Thus, he is able to choose between good and evil.

He continues that social ills can never be addressed by mere institutional changes. According to Toynbee, every social institution is based upon a particular philosophy or religion which determines its “goodness” or “badness”. Humanity is sorely in need of a new spiritual basis to revive its institutions and social structures. Voices from all over the world have been echoing that our world is in great need for faith.<sup>6</sup>

**Karen Armstrong emphasizes that the situation of our world today is very similar to the situation before the mission of the noble Prophet (PBUH).**

**Armstrong** believes that the Jahiliya<sup>7</sup> is not just a historical epoch, but is a state of mind that results in terrorism and extremism. It is present now-

---

5. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking of Our Country and the World*, translated by: Hamdy Abdel Gawad, Dar Ash-Shorouk, Egypt, 1988, p. 35.

6. Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, translated by: Nicola Zyada, Al Ahlia for Publishing and Distribution, fourth edition, Beirut, 2003.

7. State of Ignorance before Islam.

adays in Western, as well as Muslim, countries. The whole world –Western and Islamic- desperately needs to comprehend the Prophet’s, PBUH, teachings and follow his successful approach in the fight against evil, corruption, oppression, and ignorance.

“As a paradigmatic personality, Muhammad has (taught us) important lessons, not only for Muslims but also for Western people. His life was a jihad; this word does not mean holy war, it means struggle. Muhammad literally sweated with effort to bring peace to war-torn Arabia, and we need people who are prepared to do this today. His life was a tireless campaign against greed, injustice and arrogance. He realized that Arabia was at a turning point and that the old ways of thinking would no longer suffice, so he wore himself out in the creative effort to evolve an entirely new solution. We entered another era of history on September 11, and must strive with equal intensity to develop a different outlook.”<sup>8</sup>

Our study will focus on two subjects which symbolize the deteriorating situation of the world today and threaten human stability and security. They are:

- the threat to the family as an entity, and
- the spread of prejudice and extremism.

---

8. Karen Armstrong, *ibid*, p 19.

## FIRST TOPIC

### THE FAMILY AS AN ENTITY

**T**he family is the cornerstone of human society regardless of location, race, color or belief. It is the axis around which various human and social interactions revolve. Thus, all divine religions –Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - give special attention to the rules related to the family entity in order to ensure its efficiency and continuation.

However, today's family is facing many challenges which target the legitimacy of its existence. Across the globe, many deviant trends have emerged, at odds with everything revealed in the divine religions. Such trends have started to shake the foundations of this basic unit of human life, and threaten its cohesion and continuance.

The request to legitimize homosexuality, or the so-called marriage between same sex couples, is one of the major challenges threatening the family unit in Western societies nowadays.



## VIEW OF DIVINE RELIGIONS ON HOMOSEXUALITY

**T**he position on this crime is very similar among all the divine religions. All have precise and integrated statutes to define lawful versus illicit relationships. All divine religions agree that all forms of homosexuality are prohibited, and prescribe different forms of punishment for the offenders. Such crimes bring the wrath of the Lord and texts in divine books show that the spread of homosexuality in prior nations was the cause for their extinction.

In Judaism,<sup>9</sup> thirty six sins are considered heinous among which are adultery and homosexuality. These sins are punishable by death by stoning, strangulation, or decapitation. Moreover, there are 207 pardonable sins among which is incest which is punishable by flogging. The Book of Leviticus says:

*“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: nei-*

---

9. Our study focuses on Judaism and Christianity in response to attempts to legitimize homosexuality in Western countries.

*ther shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God.”<sup>10</sup>*

In Christianity, this crime is heinous in both the Old and New Testaments. The Epistle to the Romans says:

*“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness...”<sup>11</sup>*

Nevertheless, distorted interpretations began to seep into these divine texts. People who introduced such misinterpretations were affected by the philosophies of certain eras, and by the studies which emerged from time

---

10. Leviticus: 18/22-30.

11. *Epistle to the Romans* 1:26, 27.

to time to propagate, justify, and legitimize such aberrant activities, which violate all human and religious values.

One of the most prominent philosophies in this regard is the Biblical Criticism Methodology. This philosophy originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the research centers of German universities. Thence, it spread out to the countries of Western Europe, and then to the Unites States.<sup>12</sup> The objective of this study was the investigation of biblical writings of the Old and New Testaments in order to judge their authenticity. These efforts which started out as authentication efforts concluded by stating that the Old and New Testaments were human documents containing contradictions and echoes of ancient historic incidents of nations with epochal particularities, and that they were not divine texts by any means.

The founder of the philosophy of Biblical Criticism was Baruch Spinoza<sup>13</sup> (1632-1677). The common belief among the philosophers of Biblical Criticism on the Old Testament is that it was not written by Moses but was a set of cumulative traditions which were documented at different times in history.<sup>14</sup>

The impact of this philosophy was clearly felt when the Reformist Jewish Movement announced its rejection of Mosaic and Rabbinic laws, including the Revelation and all related scriptures. This was due to the influence of prevalent philosophies of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Biblical Criticism. From that point onward, the Reformist Jewish Movement viewed their holy texts as historical accumulations; and the Holy Book as an outcome of cumulative historical events,<sup>15</sup> not as a revelation sent directly from Heaven.

---

12. E. Krentz, *The Historical Critical Method*, Fortress Press, Carlisle, 1992, p. 126.

13. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 1999. Inc CD-Rom. Judaism.

14. For more details, see: Irfan Abdul Hamid, *Judaism: Historic Presentation*, Dar Ammar, Jordan, 1997, p. 81-82. See also our book: *The Influence of Tradition in Understanding Texts... Women's Issues as an Example*, Dar Al Fikr, Damascus, 2003, p. 155 et seq.

15. Encarta Encyclopedia, 97 CD, *Biblical Scholarship*.

**This led to a change in viewpoint on homosexuality.** The movement introduced new interpretations for various legislative holy texts in an attempt to view homosexuality from a historical narrative perspective and not as a crime incurring the wrath of God.

In due course, **the Reformist Jewish Movement accommodated homosexuals, and believed that their existence was a cause for strengthening familial bonds in Judaism.** Moreover, they believed that legitimizing gay marriage did not threaten the traditional family, or the sacred concept of reproduction and procreation in Judaism.

“Welcoming gay and lesbian families into the synagogue will strengthen all our families, by bringing the exiles home and by reuniting children, parents and siblings who have been forced to keep their partners and innermost lives hidden. *Kelal Yisrael* is strengthened when we affirm that there can be more than one way to participate in the Covenant.”<sup>16</sup>

**Therefore, the rabbis of the largest Reformist Jewish community in the United States voted for legitimizing gay marriages in their Central Conference for American Rabbis. As of 1995 the movement began to approve the appointment of gay rabbis.**

The Conservative movement emerged in 1886<sup>17</sup> in an attempt to establish a middle ground between the Reformist and Traditional Movements. It announced its full commitment to the inherited rabbinic traditions while reserving the right to interpret the Mosaic Law in accordance with the changing requirements and conditions.

This direction is reflected in the Conservative view on the traditional family versus gay marriage.

---

16. Ian Silver, *Homosexuality And Judaism*, <http://www.betham.org/kulanu/iansilver.html>

17. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York: Mircea, 1986. vol 4, p. 63. See also: Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in Modern Times, USA*; Blackwell Publishers, 1995, p. 99.

Conservatives believe that the legislative texts which prohibit homosexuality were authentic teachings to be followed. However, they believe that texts should be considered within the historical and social framework in which they originated. Thus, the outcome of modern scientific research which claims that homosexuality is an uncontrollable biological process can, absolutely, alter such interpretations!

“As a Conservative Jew, I believe that *Halakha* (normative Jewish law) is binding. The Conservative Movement, however, understands the traditional Halakhic sources (Bible, Talmud, etc.) as products of different historical ages- which are often very different from our own age! Deciding what is Halakhically permissible is not only a matter of reading the texts, but also understanding the social/cultural contexts in which they developed.”<sup>18</sup>

Notwithstanding the above, Orthodox Jews and many Conservatives still believe that the inherent concept of the family, which is based on the relationship between man and woman, is the one and only legitimate family concept, and that preserving it is a prerequisite for the survival and continuance of the human race. They view homosexuality as a deviation from human instinct, a threat to the family as an entity, and a disobedience to the Lord who has decreed reproduction, procreation, and respect for the inherent marital relationship between man and woman.

“Homosexuality destroys the individual’s ability for ontological fulfillment in the Halakhic world.... frustrates the divine intent of procreation; undermines the family; and is biologically and anatomically unnatural.... Homosexuals should be viewed as patients rather than criminals. As a result, psychological assistance must be extended to those who cannot avoid homosexual desire.”

The New Testament was subjected to a similar authentication process. Rudolf Bultmann, Samuel Sandmill and others stated that the Bible

---

18. Michelle Kwitkin, quoted by: Ian Silver, *Homosexuality And Judaism*, <http://www.betham.org/kulanu/iansilver.html>

was a set of diverse narratives and legends without resonance in the reality of history.<sup>19</sup>

The influence of this philosophy was reflected in many areas, most prominent of which was the view on the family unit and on the prohibition of homosexuality. **Now statutes on aberrant sexual comportment could be re-interpreted, critiqued, or re-considered in a new socio-historical context.**

Although both Catholics and Protestants believe in the Bible, and the importance of preaching its words to the whole world, the influence of Biblical Criticism has steadily been increasing among reformists who do not view the Old and New Testaments as sacred revelations, but as inherited traditions. Accordingly, the Holy Book has lost its status as the absolute and indisputable word from heaven.

The views of Christian Reformists on gay marriage resemble those of Jewish Reformists. They also try to critique and re-interpret legislative texts which prohibit homosexuality in the Holy Books. They support the idea of reading these texts within their socio-historical context. Thus, they perceive the terrible end of the people of Lot as a punishment for their cruelty and ill-treatment of others, and not as retribution from God for their homosexual activities and deviation from the pure human instinct.<sup>20</sup>

**Under the title: Understanding the Bible in a New Way, we see:**

“There are at least two important things to keep in mind when reading the Bible. First, you must always consider its context. In order to understand any writing (whether it be a letter, a speech, or even the Bible) it is necessary to understand its background. Think about who is speaking, to

---

19. Samuel Sandmel, *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament*, Cincinnati; Hebrew Union College, 1957. P 128. Marcus J. Borg, Marcus J. “*Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith*,” Harper Collins, (1994). R.E. Friedman, “*Who Wrote the Bible?*” Harper; San Francisco, (1987).

20. Jason Knisley, *The Biblical and Talmudic Positions on Homosexuality*, <http://www.betham.org/kulanu/iansilver.html>

whom it is addressed, why it written, and what the culture was like. In the case of Scripture, the cultural and social context of Biblical times was very different from our own.”<sup>21</sup>

Before 1973, homosexuality was classified as a mental disorder in the Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; the major source for diagnosing mental disorders in the United States and most other countries. However, pressure from gay groups resulted in the formation of a committee to review the language of the Manual. People who believed homosexuality was a mental disorder were excluded from the committee. **Thus, in record time and bypassing many of the common legal channels, an unprecedented decision was taken to remove homosexuality from the classification of mental disorders in the Manual.** The Manual still included a case known as eco-dys-tonic homosexuality which is defined as dissatisfaction of a person with his own sexual tendencies to a degree which causes severe psychological suffering. Shortly afterwards, even this isolated case was removed from the Manual!

Moreover, homosexuals started lobbying, through their organizations and associations, for recognition of their marriage contracts. Their idea was to portray the gay marriage as an acceptable alternative form of marriage or even as a substitute for normal marriage, and to present a new definition for the family. Committing the sin openly and without shame wasn't enough; they wanted their aberrant relationships to become the social norm. They demanded all the rights of marriage including inheritance rights, tax discounts, services, and even the ability to adopt children... Although these were mere wishes up until recently, many of them are coming to realization in some Western countries where Constitutions are changed to allow and bless these anomalous unions.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2003, the Vatican issued a document re-asserting the position of the Catholic Church on homosexuality and warning the world

---

21. *Homosexuality and the Bible: Good News or Bad New.* Metropolitan Community Church Of Toronto Info Sheet: October 21, 2002.

about the consequences of legitimizing homosexual marriages. It also emphasized the danger of giving credence to ideologies that threaten the normal family structure and equate the relationship between homosexuals with the normal relationship between man and woman... Pope John Paul II has persistently defended traditional marriage in the face of demands for recognition of homosexual marriage in the United States and Europe. Yet, the influence of homosexuals in Western societies is very strong and growing and claims for legislation of civil union laws for homosexuals in Western countries are on the rise.

Dr. James Dobson, the famous American writer, commented on the danger of homosexuality on the familial entity in his "State of the American family report" published in 2000, when he said:

"It is attempting to destroy the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman. If homosexuals are successful in that effort, then marriage will lose its meaning. If marriage is not exclusively between one man and one woman, then any combination of temporary relationships could qualify, such as two men and three women. Polygamy itself would be legal. In short, if marriage now means everything, then ultimately it will mean nothing. Second, homosexual activists have targeted children and youth with the objective of capturing their hearts and minds. Our public schools in California and Massachusetts, in particular, appear to be moving relentlessly in that direction. In some curricula, children are taught that homosexual behavior is acceptable and normal and that moral perspectives are hate-filled and bigoted. We must be diligent to oppose those initiatives."<sup>22</sup>

Specialists confirm that the youth of today are expressing their need for security and their opposition to the domination of materialism, through their drug dependency, complex issues, and aberrant behavior. This could

---

22. *The Family in Crisis*; United States Census, 2000, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/christiangrowth/family.htm>

very possibly be a result of the collapse of the family institution and its related support systems.

The famous writer, Henrietta Moore, portrays the many aspects of the moral and social crisis in Western societies as reflected in the increasing divorce rates, familial disintegration, homosexuality, drug abuse, and suicide among youths. She says:

“Historians and social scientists have documented many instances in different societies at various times of what they term “moral panic”. These moments of crisis in what are perceived as deeply rooted and firmly held cultural and social values have often occurred in periods of transition and rapid social change. The extent to which such crises accurately reflect changing circumstances is questionable, since they often appear to be part of a response to change rather than an instigator of it. However, it is clear that many countries and communities at the present time sense their social and cultural values to be under threat from a diverse range of social, economic and political changes that appear both interconnected and global in their spread.”<sup>23</sup>

“We have sensed for a long time that the traditional family is in serious trouble, and the recent Census revealed just how dire the situation has become. The alarming results show that households headed by unmarried partners (most of them involving people living together out of wedlock) grew by almost 72 percent during the past decade. Households headed by single fathers or mothers increased by 25 percent and 62 percent respectively, and for the first time ever, nuclear families dropped below 25 percent of households. Thirty-three percent of all babies were born to unmarried women, compared to only 3.8 percent in 1940. Other studies show that cohabitation increased by close to 1,000 percent from 1960 to 1998, and that households headed by same-sex couples are soaring. We are also seeing a growing number of unmarried women in their 20s and 30s who are choosing to bear and raise children alone.”<sup>24</sup>

---

23. *Is There a Crisis in the Family*, UN Research.

24. James Dobson, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/christiangrowth/family.htm>

Several years ago, Prince Charles expressed the growing concern of the West for this deteriorating situation, when he said:

“Modern materialism has caused a great crises in the life of the individual and the community. It lacks the element of balance which is necessary for establishing a normal consistent integrated life. In the Western world, a dangerous division has occurred in the way we perceive the universe, the environment and our responsibility towards God’s creation. In order to comprehend the inherent perception of our existence and our mission on earth, we may seek help from the Islamic heritage which preserves this integrated, spiritual view of the world and the human being. We can also benefit from this great heritage in enhancing our view of the regency of Man on Earth... Science and technology have become increasingly separated from ethical, moral and sacred considerations... The Message of Islam, is important for the West as it preserves an integrated view of the universe.”<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev says:

“All through the years of our heroic history, we have failed to pay attention to women’s specific rights and needs as mothers and home-makers, and their indispensable function in raising children. Engaged in scientific research, working on construction sites, in production and in the services, and involved in creative activities, women no longer have enough time to perform their everyday duties at home - housework, the upbringing of children and the creation of a good family atmosphere. We have discovered that many of our problems in children’s and young people’s behavior, in our morals, culture and in production are partially caused by the weakening of family ties and slack attitudes with regard to family responsibilities. That is why we are now holding heated debates... About what we should do to make it possible for women to return to their main womanly mission. Another problem is that using women in heavy physical la-

---

25. See the lecture in: Asharq Alawsat newspaper, issue 6598, London, date 21-12-1996. Many other articles spoke about the focus which Prince Charles places on the importance of learning from Islam.

bor is hazardous to their health. This is the legacy of war wherein we lost huge numbers of men... We have now begun to work seriously on these issues. **One of our most urgent social missions is to enhance the health of the family and foster its role in society; this will help in our campaign against alcoholism.**"<sup>26</sup>

---

26. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking For Our Country and the World*, translated by: Hamdy Abdul Gawwad, Dar Ash-Shorouk, Egypt, 1988, p. 35.



## WHAT CAN THE PROPHETIC BIOGRAPHY OFFER TO TODAY'S FAMILIES?

**T**he Sunnah (biography) of the noble Prophet (PBUH) and his familial life provide the finest examples on successful family relations. Moreover, they are a guide for raising children and adolescents on a righteous value foundation so that they can become effective members of society and provide security and stability for themselves, their families, their countries, and the whole world. It also introduces superior educational methods in a wholesome environment far removed from moral and behavioral deviations. Moreover, the Prophetic Sunnah includes several examples for successful socialization.

The family is, absolutely, the primary social group wherein young individuals acquire their psychological and social attributes. It provides the individual with the first set of values which guide his behaviour and actions. Recent studies and research show that the methods of socialization applied by parents reflect parental attitudes; i.e. their emotions and tendencies in the ways of treating their children. Most individual and collective potential stems from the structure of the family. The more sound and construc-

tive the family structure, the more it yields efficiencies that feed communities with elements of strength and success.

The most prominent methods of fostering the role of families include:

- Treating the child positively; with love and respect for his individuality. This contributes to the openness of his personality, and the development of his creative skills. The role of the family is to provide the child with opportunities for expressing new and positive ideas through reading, discussion, and asking questions. In this regard, the noble Prophet (PBUH) provided a good example for educators and parents to follow.

*Sahl bin Sa'd (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: "A drink was brought to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and he drank some of it. On his right was a boy and on his left were some elderly people. He said to the boy, "Would you permit me to give the rest of this drink to these on my left?" The boy said, "O Messenger of Allah, I would certainly not give preference to anyone in anything that might come to me from you." So he, PBUH, handed over the rest of the drink to him."*<sup>27</sup>

**Parental control should never be authoritarian or coercive, but rather guiding, educating, and leading.** Thus, individuals can grow up with healthy self-esteem, positive thinking, and respect for others stemming from their own self-respect. Educators, especially parents, should focus on this method of education. Media and educational institutions can play a role in training parents on the importance of gentle guidance in establishing values and ideals for their offspring.

Moreover, studies emphasize that imposing the will of parents upon children in a consistent manner and using methods of intimidation, corporal punishment, and deprivation, may result in extremism, lack

---

27. Al Bukhari, *Al Fat'h* 10/5620.

of self-confidence, social withdrawal, and may impede a child's positive interaction with the community.<sup>28</sup>

Besides, an authoritarian relationship between parents and their children limits the communication and interaction between them and causes children to retreat into silence to avoid confrontation. Therefore, children grow up feeling marginalized with pent-up anger which may be expressed through violence, extremism, rebellion, and sometimes deviant behavior.

Negative childhood experiences and bad family relations are among the major factors for adult aggression and deviance. Moreover, marginalization, exclusion and repression will cause the child to practice the same kind of behavior with other people.<sup>29</sup>

The Prophetic biography includes several examples of the Prophet's, PBUH, tolerance and respect for children and adults, his kind patient attitude in guiding towards correct behavior without temper or emotions. His style, PBUH had a lasting impact on the learner and made the lesson memorable.

Mu'awiya bin al-Hakam said:

*"While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), a man in the company sneezed. I said: "Allah have mercy on you!" The people stared at me with disapproving looks, so I said: "Woe be upon me, why is it that you stare at me?" They began to strike their hands on their thighs, and when I saw them urging me to observe silence I became angry but said nothing. When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) finished the prayer (and I declare that neither before him nor after him have I seen a*

---

28. Hamid Al Feqi, *Types of Parental Control in the Kuwaiti Society*, Louis Kamel Malika (editor), *Readings in Social Psychology in the Arab World*, Egyptian Book Organization, Cairo, 1994, part 6, p. 43-45.

29. Fuad Al Bahi Al-Sayed, *Social Psychology*, Dar Al Fikr Al Arabi, Cairo, 1981.

*leader who gave better instruction than he (for whom I would give my father and mother as ransom)). I swear that he did not scold, beat or revile me but said: "Talking to persons is not fitting during the prayer, for prayer is a practice of glorifying Allah, declaring his Greatness, and recitation of the Qur'an or words to that effect."<sup>30</sup>*

Omar bin Abi Salama said:

*"I was a boy under the care of Allah's Apostle PBUH and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allah's Apostle said to me, "O boy! Mention the Name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and eat from the side of the dish that is nearer to you." Since then I have always applied his instructions while eating."<sup>31</sup>*

- Families should focus on moral discipline and avoid bad practices in the upbringing of their children. Among such malpractices is the absence of rules or extreme strictness without explaining the fault in the child's behavior. If the child develops negative interactions with his peers, rejects acceptable forms of communication, and moves to violence and aggression, then parents must deal firmly with the child, impose a punishment, and watch his behavior. On the other hand, parents should develop the child's compassionate tendencies to help others and enhance his peaceful coexistence skills.

The noble Prophet's (PBUH) adoption for this approach was unrivalled.

*A young man came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) him and asked: 'O Messenger of Allah, permit me (with special license)*

---

30. Narrated by Muslim, *Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer*, no 836.

31. Al Bukhari, *Book of Food*, no 4957.

*to commit fornication (and adultery).’ The people started to rebuke him harshly, but the Prophet sat close to him and asked: ‘Would you like it for your mother?’ He replied: ‘No, by Allah, may Allah make me a sacrifice for you!’ The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their mothers.’ He said: ‘Would you like it for your daughter?’ ‘No’: he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their daughters.’ He said: ‘Would you like it for your paternal aunt?’ ‘No’: he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their paternal aunts.’ He said: ‘Would you like it for your maternal aunt?’ ‘No’: he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their maternal aunts.’ Then the Prophet put his hand on the youth and said: O Allah forgive his sin and purify his heart and make him chaste (fortify his abstinence from sexual sins).” Thereafter, the young man was never seduced by anything.<sup>32</sup>*

The noble Prophet (PBUH) displayed a tolerant edification style by giving examples which showed the young man the error of his way. Such an approach strengthens the personality of the child, and develops his sense of independence and confidence.

The Prophet (PBUH) gave us other examples on how to deal with the mistakes of the young gently and positively.

*Anas reported that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) had the best disposition among all people:*

*“He sent me on an errand one day, and I said: ‘By Allah, I would not go.’ I had, however, this idea in my mind that I would do as Allah’s Apostle (PBUH) had commanded me to do. I went out and came across children who were playing in the street. Allah’s*

---

32. Narrated by Ahmed and At-Tabarani.

*Messenger (PBUH) found me there and caught me by the back of my neck from behind. As I looked towards him I found him smiling and he said: 'Unais (using a nickname as a form of endearment), did you go where I commanded you to go.' I said: 'Allah's Messenger, yes, I am going.'"*

*Anas also said: "I served him for nine years during which he never asked me about a thing I had done why I did it, or about a thing I had left why I had not done it."<sup>33</sup>*

A study of the meanings in the above Hadeeth shows the gentle instructive method the Prophet (PBUH) used for addressing Anas which solicited an effective response and a move to rectify the mistake.

Teaching meaningful constructive dialogue starts in childhood; in fact instruction for every meaningful human development should start at a very young age. The factor of time and its influence on the success of the educational process should not be taken lightly. A long time is needed for a child to acquire righteous concepts and values, but it is a worthwhile investment as these values represent the only outcome of value for a human being.

- The role of the family in developing intellectual autonomy and a spirit of independence for the offspring. This prevents the development of the "follower" mentality. Although some controlling parents view themselves as curbing the rebelliousness of their adolescent, they may be fostering a sense of dependence and depriving their children from the sense of fulfillment that comes with free choice; which is an essential aspect for normal psychological development of the teenager. If this need is not satisfied, the teenager will search for alternative methods of self-actualization in accordance with his

---

33. Narrated by Abu Dawud, *Book of General Behavior*, no 4143.

own perception of right and wrong, or through other questionable sources.

It is well known that children raised to be dependent on the parents, are prone to remain dependent on others and to be led by them, especially those who feed their ego and satisfy their desires. On the other hand, raising children with a sense of responsibility for decisions creates conscious individuals who are capable of making the right choices; confident individuals guided by their own values and perceptions.

Paulo Freire says in his book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed":

"The Problem-posing concept of education views dialogue as the foundation for understanding the world... Dialogics incites the individual's creativity, comprehension, and insight into the reality of existence; thence, it makes him fully human."<sup>34</sup>

---

34. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by: Yusuf Nour Awad, Dar Alilm, Beirut, 1980, p. 9.



## SECOND TOPIC

### GLOBAL PREJUDICE AND EXTREMISM

**L**inguistically, prejudice means having prior judgments. These prior judgments generally stem from the tendency to support one's group and attack whoever antagonizes them, no matter if they were right or wrong, oppressed or oppressors.<sup>35</sup>

According to the European glossaries, prejudice is derived from the Latin word *Præjudicium*,<sup>36</sup> which means having preconceived thoughts that don't rely on objective facts or sound logic. A man acquires prejudice when he belongs to a group of people who have the same tendency, thus it is a transmitted attribute. Prejudice is an emotional tendency<sup>37</sup> which is very difficult to overcome as with all ingrained customs.<sup>38</sup>

---

35. Ibn Manthour, *op cit*, part 2, p. 296.

36. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/topic-474816/prejudice>.

37. Abdel Mon'eim Hifny, *The Psychological Encyclopedia*, Madbuly Library, 1995, p. 345.

38. Moataz Abdullah, *Prejudice: A Psycho-social Study*, Dar Ghareeb for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, second edition, 1997, p. 88.

Prejudice gives those who practice it, especially if they are leaders of their group, the means to distinguish themselves. It is usually directed against minorities in a society. Psychologists tell us that the majority, “the internal group”, considered the minority as an “external” group which poses a threat to the cohesion of the “internal” society because of their different attributes, culture, and values. Accordingly, the internal group starts treating such “external” groups with intolerance and discrimination. In many cases, conflict occurs between the two parties if there is an increased perception of a threat to the identity of the “internal group.”<sup>39</sup>

This is an ancient psycho-social disease. The noble Prophet (PBUH) fought against this disease from the early days of his message. The concept of tribal loyalty was deeply rooted in the Arab mentality. The noble Prophet (PBUH) refused to allow tribalism and prejudice any role in the new world of Islam. He, PBUH caused a quantum leap with his call to the expansion of the social relations network beyond the borders of tribal loyalty, color, class or race.

Prejudice was one of the most obstinate obstacles in the way of the Islamic call; a call for equality in a society which viewed those outside the tribal circle as foreigners. Hence, the greatest challenge was in confronting this trend and purifying the souls in order to build a global nation wherein different races and ethnicities could coexist and live harmoniously together.

The Holy Qur’an describes prejudice as one of the characteristics of the Jahiliya (Ignorant Society), and one of its most dangerous and deeply rooted diseases. It tells us that getting rid of this disease was one of the blessings of Islam, and the fruit of applying its teachings and principles. Allah Almighty said:

*[And hold fast, all together, unto the bond with God, and do not draw apart from one another. And remember the blessings which God has bestowed upon you: how, when you were en-*

---

39. Al Hifni, op cit, p. 349.

*emies, He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brethren; and [how, when] you were on the brink of a fiery abyss, He saved you from it. In this way God makes clear His messages unto you, so that you might find guidance] Al-Imran 103*

The noble Prophet (PBUH) rejected prejudice and described it as a fetid and obsolete value. He warned the nation of rolling back to the values of Jahiliya, and considered it a heinous sin.

*As narrated by Jabir bin 'Abdullah:*

*We were in a Ghazwa (Sufyan said, in an army) and a man from the emigrants kicked an Ansari man (on the buttocks with his foot). The Ansari man called his tribe: "O Ansar! (Help!)" And the emigrant said: "O emigrants! (Help!)." Allah's Apostle PBUH heard the commotion and said: "What is this call for? Is this a return of the Jahiliya (period of ignorance)?" They said: "O Allah's Apostle! A man from the emigrants kicked one of the Ansar." Allah's Apostle said: "Leave it (this call to fight) as it is a detestable rotten call."<sup>40</sup>*

**Prejudice stems from various root causes; most important of which is the absence of dialogue.**

Social psychologists believe that prejudicial inclinations of people are formed at several stages. Discrimination represents the first harmful stage, where one seeks to deprive members of external societies of all rights and privileges which he and his internal society enjoy.

Therefore, the noble Prophet (PBUH) viewed prejudice, especially prejudice of belief, as one of the most grievous intellectual and psychological diseases.

---

40. Al Bukhari, *Book of Prophetic Commentary of the Qur'an*, no 4525.

Psychologists also believe that prejudice is an acquired trend; it is a set of thoughts and attitudes which the individual perceives and then acquires through the various processes of social learning; whether from controlling parents who practice dominance over their children, or from peers, or through the various mass media channels which highlight and sometimes promote violence towards specific groups or societies. This is the most common and widely accepted theory in explaining prejudice in the field of social psychology.<sup>41</sup>

In childhood, the individual may be self-centered. Thereafter, his center shifts to his social group. Various factors of socialization then ingrain negative attitudes against certain “external” groups; the larger the social distance the stronger the negative tendencies he acquires.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, psychologists think that some causes of prejudice stem from a bigot’s feelings of inadequacy; which make him overemphasize his group’s values and standards. Through these values, he gains strength and vents his insecurity on the minority.<sup>43</sup>

In brief, all forms of prejudice depend primarily on the willingness of the individual or the society to accept such phenomenon and attitude. Social isolation, certain cultural, psychological, and intellectual accumulations experienced by the individual contribute to the formation of those aggressive attitudes.

Refusal to recognize the other is, in itself, an aggressive attitude which originates from the psychological, cultural, and doctrinal beliefs of the individual. Thus, he becomes incapable of interaction and dialogue. On the other hand, a tolerant and positive individual is capable of communicating with others and is open and accepting of differences.

---

41. Moataz Sayed Abdallah, *op cit*, p. 558.

42. Leila Abdel Sattar, *Development of the Proper Mindset of the University Youths to Counter Extremism*, Journal of Educational Studies, volume VII, part 43, Cairo, 1992, p. 197.

43. Al Hefni, *op cit*, p. 352.

In fact, prejudice is the first step on the path towards extravagance (extremism). A prejudiced person does not recognize others and does not have dialogue with others; he is not interested in discussing differences or arriving at the truth based on the evidence.<sup>44</sup>

This practice is as ancient as humanity; man has survived tremendous waves of extravagance throughout history. Moreover, extravagance is closely related to dogmatism and intellectual rigidity. It is a closed way of thinking that shuts down all opinions or beliefs which seem to be at odds with the person's beliefs or the beliefs of the society to which he belongs.<sup>45</sup>

It is a psychological and emotional trend which ingrains in the individual's mind a certain belief or prejudgment without rationale, sufficient knowledge, or facts to rely on. Thus, his only tool for apprehending the reality of life is his own subjective view with all its prejudices and preconceptions.<sup>46</sup>

Psychological studies indicate that extravagance is an extreme aspect of prejudice whereupon the individual accepts nothing but his own subjective view, belief, and way of thinking, and shows unwillingness to accept criticism from others. The person will not discuss his beliefs and opposes every new thought. The individual, thus, begins to believe that he has the absolute Right and starts attacking others' views to bring them over to his point of view. If he fails to convert the others, he resorts to violence. Thus, violence is the practical application for intellectual extravagance and the logical outcome for it. By consistently rejecting others and their views, no matter how valid they are, the extremist tendencies exacerbate and aggression becomes an option for muzzling every dissenting voice.

---

44. Mustafa Sueif, *Extravagance as a Response*, the Anglo-Egyptian, Cairo, 1968, p. 4.

45. Samir Naim, *Social and Economic Determinants for the Religious Extravagance*, the Arab Future, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Lebanon, January 1990, p. 111.

46. Hamid Abdul Salam Zahran, *Social Psychology*, Alam Al Kutub, Cairo, third edition, 1974, p. 165.

Thus prejudice and extravagance lead to violence, aggression, and hostility. Violence is, in essence, a negative psychological state against the other, where the other becomes alienated and rejected for his existence, for his position and stature, or for his interests and relations. Aggression is an act which seeks to inflict harm on an individual or a group of individuals physically or verbally, directly or indirectly. Hostility is a directional response formed by feelings of enmity and verbally expressed towards others and events.<sup>47</sup>

There is a direct relationship between a culture of compulsion, rejection, and alienation, and the aggressive attitudes directed by its members towards the other. The culture which sees nothing outside its beliefs and interests and negates the other is fertile ground for aggressive behavior and violence towards others.

Thus, there is a cause and effect relationship between a culture that promotes hatred between humans for ideological or political purposes and the level of violence in that culture. A culture of hatred, hostility, and alienation can never give birth to a reality of love, harmony, and tolerance. In other words you reap what you sow; you create a reality which mirrors your essence and basic nature.

Aggression is the weapon of choice for individuals who cannot communicate or engage in dialogue. It is an alternative way to prove their point and impose their values. Thus, some psychoanalysts specialize in gauging an individual's willingness to act violently and aggressively in case the interaction between him and others fails.<sup>48</sup>

Once aggression spreads in a society it loses its ability to integrate and work interdependently within its confines and with other societies and groups.

---

47. Adapted from: Abdul Latif Muhammad Khalifa, *Studies in the Psychology of Alienation*, Dar Gharib for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 2003, part 1.

48. Moataz Abdullah, Saleh Abu'abah, *Dimensions of the Aggressive Attitude: A Comparative Factorial Study*, Journal of Psychological Studies, Volume V, issue 3, 1995, p. 521 et seq.

Accordingly, failure to establish a relationship between the self and the other on a basis of acceptance of the other view, recognition of the right to disagree, and an appreciation of the relativity of the truth is one of the leading factors which promote aggression towards others. Aggressors consider any ideological, political, or cultural disagreement as a reason for violating the rights of the others, and as an excuse for violating their freedoms, controlling their thoughts or even harming their lives.



## HOW CAN THE PROPHETIC SUNNAH PROTECT THE WORLD AGAINST PREJUDICE?

**T**hrough his judicious approach, the noble Prophet (PBUH) was able to eradicate the centuries old tribalism from the Arabian Peninsula.

From the Prophetic approach the following prominent principles can be deduced:

- **Rejection of hasty generalization and stereotyping** as is widely applied today by Westerners against Muslims and vice versa. This is categorically rejected in the Holy Qur'an, as indicated above.<sup>49</sup> Anyone who observes the global scene today can feel the danger of the so-called Islamophobia.

The Free Encyclopedia defines this word as a new term for the discrimination against Muslims which emerged in the late eighties and

---

49. Some western writers attempt to tarnish the reputation of Islam, Muslim history, and the character of the noble Prophet (PBUH) in way that is far from objectivity and rationality; this is really lamentable. See: Serge Trifkovic, *What Muslims, multiculturalists, and the media hope, you never find out about Islam*.

early nineties, and intensified significantly after 9/11/2001. This prompted Kofi Anan -Secretary General of the United Nations- in 2004, to highlight the growing prejudice and discrimination against Muslims, and its negative consequences on the world.

In addition, Mr. Anja Rudiger -Executive Coordinator of the European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia- discussed the seriousness of this issue and its impact on the international community in general. Many western writers believe Islamophobia to be a new aspect of racial and ethnic discrimination.

In this context, Mr. Jack Straw sees that this type of discrimination views Islam as one homogenous lump which is unresponsive to change and incapable of accepting other cultures. Those who practice Islamophobia view Islam as a barbaric, primitive, and sexually centered religion which encourages terrorism, violence, and extremism. Thus, their animosity against Islam is normal and required behavior.<sup>50</sup>

Karen Armstrong says:

“We have a long history of Islamophobia in Western culture that dates back to the time of the Crusades. In the twelfth century, Christian monks in Europe insisted that Islam was a violent religion of the sword, and that Muhammad was a charlatan who imposed his religion on a reluctant world by force of arms.”<sup>51</sup>

Armstrong and other Western thinkers emphasized the importance of having an objective view, liberated from prejudice and distorted ideas when dealing with the life of the noble Prophet (PBUH). This allows the observer to perceive his (PBUH) great accomplishments through his spirit of tolerance and peace.

Edward Sa'id says:

---

50. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Muslim>. Castle, Stephen. “*Islamophobia takes a grip across Europe*”, The Independent, December 18, 2006.

51. Karen Armstrong, p. 17.

“The intellectual elite and policy makers in the United States have consistently enforced the image of Islam as a threat. From Zbigniew Brzezinski’s vision in the “Crescent of Crisis” to Bernard Lewis’s “Return of Islam”, the picture drawn is one dimensional: that “Islam” means the end of civilization as “we” know it. Islam is anti-human, antidemocratic, anti-Semitic, and irrational.”<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, Armstrong discusses how the noble Prophet (PBUH) was able to extirpate tribalism which dominated the lives of the Arab tribes before Islam. The tribe member killed, plundered, and robbed only out of loyalty to the tribe. She also threw light on the accomplishments of the Prophet (PBUH) in the field of social reform, and emphasized that such accomplishments could not have been achieved had they not been grounded on spiritual solutions capable of touching human emotions and effecting change.

Armstrong believes that that this spiritual power converted the Arab impulse to fight and wage war into a desire to think, meditate, and reflect on the power of the Creator, His generosity, and His munificence. People started to feel responsibility towards self and others; something sorely missing in today’s world.<sup>53</sup>

- **Dialogue** was one of the main tools used by the noble Prophet (PBUH) to cure the disease of prejudice and rescue humans from the vortex of discrimination. Dialogue is a means for fostering co-existence and positive interaction between civilizations, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Purposeful and controlled dialogue is one of the most effective means to vaccinate societies against prejudice. Direct communication softens the rigidity of stereotypes and corrects misconceptions. It also enhances the emotional bonds and harmony between different groups.

---

52. Edward Said, “*Islam Through Western Eyes*,” *The Nation*, 3 April 1980.

53. Karen Armstrong, p. 63.

This tool is needed especially in Muslim countries where minorities of different faith live. Through rapprochement and communication, positive interactions and mutual recognition is achieved.

**The Prophetic biography contains several examples of commercial and cultural exchanges between Muslims and believers of other doctrines in the community of AlMadeena. Thus, cases of discrimination were rare despite the racial and religious mix in the community.**

Dialogue is the perfect means for interacting in this human world. It should not be confined among people of the same opinions, ideas, or doctrines.

The noble Prophet (PBUH) was keen to extend the bridges of dialogue and communication throughout the community of Madeena between the various groups who lived there. He fought against the preconceptions and stereotypes which threatened to ignite conflict and partisanship from time to time. In the Prophetic biography, we find the following example:

*It was narrated that Anas reported that a Jew invited the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to partake bread made of barley, and stale fat a few days old, and he (PBUH) accepted the invitation without hesitation.<sup>54</sup>*

Since prejudice is an acquired attitude, it can be tamed or mitigated to a large extent. This can be achieved through edification, indirect advice, and community awareness programs. Education and public programs can play a positive role in encouraging rapprochement between different groups especially those who share the same community.<sup>55</sup>

---

54. Musnad Ahmad, 13357.

55. See: Linda L. Davidoff, *Introduction to Psychology*, translated by: Sayed At-Tabab and others, Cairo, 1983, p 616 et seq.

Dialogue and communication does not require direct contact and conversation. It can be through mutual participation in community projects and/or businesses ventures. Through such participation, interaction and exploration of the other's capabilities and ideas can occur. Undoubtedly, a purposeful dialogue is still essential for unleashing the spirit of tolerance and coexistence, and for the consequent intellectual and civilizational cross-pollination.

In this context, Sigrid Hunke says:

“Friction between different opinions caused the intellectual life to be constantly vibrant, protected Islam from rigidity, and forced it to arm itself with science and awaken its intellectual powers from their previous trance.”<sup>56</sup>

Socio-social studies and the Geneva School (of Social Construction of Intelligence) have proven that the mental capacity of an individual develops only through the interaction with the other; i.e. cognitive dissonance is the perfect field for mental and cognitive development. Social interaction enables the individual to create new mental tools to use in increasingly involved and more sophisticated social interactions and so on. This is the so-called spiral causality rule.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, the applied research in psychology and education conducted by Jean Piaget (1896-1980)<sup>58</sup> proved that cognitive progress

---

56. Sigrid Hunke, p. 373.

57. For more details, see: Abdul Moneim Al Hefni, *Encyclopedia of Psychological Schools*, Madbuli Library, Egypt, 1995, p. 471. This was also referred to by the German Orientalist Sigrid Hunke, previously mentioned.

58. The theory of cognitive development of Jean Piaget (1896-1980) is one of the most important theories in modern psychology. A theory is measured according to its viability in order to verify its validity and assure that similar outcomes will be achieved in similar conditions; in addition to the clarity of definitions of the theory and its capability of sparking new research. With this in mind, we can say that Piaget's theory meets most of these conditions – if not all- to an extent which is unparalleled in any similar psychological theory. Till 1976, Mudgel ra-

and intellectual enrichment can only be achieved through the involvement of the individual in situations of disagreement and confrontation with others of different ranks and trends. Thus, we deduce **that any cognitive conflict produces intellectual enrichment if the views of the conflicting sides about the process of knowledge acquisition are different.**

Dissonance creates increased consciousness.<sup>59</sup> On one hand, the individual feels that his interpretive system is not compatible with the requirements. Thus, he overrides deceptive intuition, preconceptions and direct and shallow sensory knowledge by rectifying his viewpoint in accordance with the facts, and rationalizing the facts through constant challenging dialogues. On the other hand, the individual recognizes different opinions and views, which is important for subduing self-centeredness which impedes the proper growth of his mind. A child usually overrides his self-centeredness at the age of seven.

However, intellectual enrichment through cognitive conflicts requires an atmosphere which embraces disagreement and conflicting points of view under an umbrella of tolerance, peace and understanding.

Since K. Lewin's experiment in 1938, psychosocial studies have emphasized the impact of the prevailing atmosphere on the intellectual outcome and its enrichment.

Doise's theory of social interaction states that learning is achieved through cognitive conflicts and can be better realized through the socio-cognitive interaction within a society or a group.

---

tioned more than 35 thousand researches and studies on the basic concepts in the theory of "Jean Piaget".

59. Arnov Witpeg, *Theories and Problems in the Psychology Of Learning*, translated by Ezz Ed-Din Ashoul and others, McGraw-hill Publishing House, 1984, p. 329. See also: Jean Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child*, translated by Ahmad Ezzat Rageh, An-Nahda Al Masriya Library, Cairo, 1954.

According to research conducted by the Geneva School, **the dynamics of cognitive development is increased in situations of social interaction wherein each participant is stimulated to express his own views or coordinate his efforts with the others. This enables him to achieve cognitive development** on the condition that an appreciable difference in views exists, the participation of individuals is organized, and the cognitive conflict is developed in order to be fruitful.

The subjective elements are the most pivotal elements in the human character. When a person overestimates himself, tends to treat others as inferior, and feels absolute superiority over them, he rejects the recognition of others; and thus, tyranny originates.

Moreover, the spirit of self-interest and selfishness dominates and the individual tries to monopolize everything for his own benefit. This leads to meaningless disputes and conflicts.

The French philosopher Alexis De Tocqueville<sup>60</sup> believes that individualism is a watered down form of egoism which disposes a person to isolate himself from the mass of his fellow humans. He asserts that community cohesion requires overriding the tendencies of individualism and egoism.<sup>61</sup>

The historical analysis of past civilizations reveals that **the nations who were able to develop, evolve, and establish civilizations were those who succeeded in creating an atmosphere of homogeneity, coexistence, and understanding between the various groups, na-**

---

60. Tocqueville was born just after the French revolution (in 1805), and died shortly after the mid-nineteenth century at the age of 54. He was a political thinker, a sociologist, and a historian at the same time. He was born to an aristocratic family who sided with royalty against the French revolution which eliminated the privileges and interests of aristocracy. He has left behind a number of important books most famous of which is *Democracy in America*.

61. For more on this point, see: Olivioir Zunz & Alan S. Kahan, *The Tocqueville Reader*, Blackwell Publishing. Oxford, 2003.

**ationalities, sects, and religions within their midst. This atmosphere pervaded all psychological, social, and political aspects.** Thus, their survival was due to their ability to realize human reconciliation and peace.

The Islamic nation established by the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (PBUH) is living proof of the ability of Islam to unify the different elements of the human fabric into compatible frames working together for community development, improved quality of life, and the application of social justice without conflict or violence.

The first Muslim community was able to participate fully in the intellectual, scientific, and cultural exchange with others while retaining its identity and values. Thus, prominent figures from other religions contributed to the establishment and growth of the Islamic civilization. Diversity was never a reason for conflict, collision, and dispute with others at any time throughout the Islamic history.

A culture which sees nothing beyond its interests is the theoretical prelude for the development of aggressive individuals who cannot accept beliefs different from their own; and thus, seek to make them void.

The practice of dialogue is a type of self-reform which cures the soul from the toxins (of the culture of aggression). It is an essential step towards the rescue of individuals and societies from the flood of intellectual tyranny practiced by those who claim to be proprietors of truth. Dialogue can open the doors to mutual understanding based on mutual respect and it allows the exchange of views necessary to get past the crisis stage. Then relationships between individuals and nations can improve.

Islam was the first religion to call for dialogue between different religions and civilizations. The Islamic civilizational rapprochement with other civilizations was established on firm values; the first international interaction of its kind in history.

From the Islamic perspective, the world is a global civilizational forum whose members are nations of distinctive civilizations. Thus, a common civilizational base exists among these nations, even while each has its typical civilizational features which preserve its identity.<sup>62</sup>

Dialogue with other nations is an indispensable tool for any civilization which seeks to achieve growth and development. It is well-known that cultural cross-fertilization is achieved through exchange of knowledge, translation and adoption of new thoughts and ideas. Every civilization combines its own contributions and innovations with that copied or transferred from others. This results in an enhanced civilization which is transmitted to other nations in turn. No civilization has ever evolved without building on the accomplishments of others. Thus intellectual cross-fertilization, interaction, and cultural give-and-take are prerequisites for a great civilization.<sup>63</sup>

Muslims were never isolated from other ancient civilizations. Cultures combined and married in constant and continuous steps. Ideas and knowledge were filtered and developed to form the unique Islamic heritage.

Islam didn't spread in a cultural vacuum. The nations and peoples who converted into Islam came from various civilizations and intellectual backgrounds. Thus, cultures combined, ideas mingled, and Muslims were able to use elements of the Indian civilization, the Persian wisdom and the Greek philosophy and to pool the theories of various nations of diverse beliefs and varied opinions. Cultural dialogue was predominant and became one of the most important features of Islamic civilization.

---

62. Muhammad Amara, *Intellectual Invasion: Myth or Reality*, Al Azhar edition, 1988, p. 8. See also: Ahmad Abdul Rahim As-Sayeh, *About the Intellectual Invasion*, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Qatar, Rajab 1414 AH, p. 122.

63. Adapted from: Mohamed Abdul Rahman Marhaba, *Originality of the Arab Thought*, Oweidat Publications, Beirut, 1982, p. 152.

The Islamic civilization was a global and open human civilization capable of accommodating all peoples and cultures.<sup>64</sup> Thus, preserving the identity and civilizational individuality of a nation does not mean isolation from other civilizations, superiority over others and rejecting their human achievements. The entire history of civilization is the fruit of the accumulated efforts of human activity throughout history. Today, there are calls for the imposition of Western culture in Islamic countries through all methods of cultural and economic dominance. This was clearly stated in a number of international events such as: the Conference of Population in Cairo 1994, and the Women's Conference in Beijing 1995.

Such calls fuel civilizational conflict between nations, and push them towards violent chapters of history. On the other hand, the calls for coexistence and positive communication create an atmosphere which enhances joint contribution to the development of humanity. All enlightened individuals and groups should support such calls. Dialogue jumps to the forefront as the tool for reactivating civilizational interaction, and moving humanity past this crisis of alienation and isolation.

Undoubtedly, dialogue is one of the most important means of civilizational interaction between nations; and this is not limited to oral dialogue. Ibn Rushd held a dialogue with Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and other Western philosophers hundreds of years after their death through his writings and thesis.

The world today, with all its sophisticated tools for combat, threatens the survival of mankind. Ethnic, national, and religious conflicts continue in various regions on Earth. Thus, the concept of coexistence becomes a necessity for the maintenance of life and for preserving

---

64. Adapted from: Ali Fahad Zumai, *Communicational Approach between Civilizations of the World*, a research for the eighth conference. op cit, p. 3.

the human species, as well as its progeny and material wealth. Numerous nations and countries now comprehend the importance of this and have combined into larger entities in order to pool their resources and benefits. This is a great start for the application of coexistence as long as people's rights for self-determination are respected and policies to force a dominant culture are not imposed.

Moreover, the capability of a nation to achieve power and development is related to its ability to accommodate others and realize comprehensive reconciliation among its fractions. Similarly, the failure of a nation is directly related to its isolation and the polarization of its individuals. Failed nations choose to divide a country rather than reconcile differences among the population. Positive and rational communication with the other is the key element for the synchronized movement of humans as an integrated body towards the advancement of humanity. Each human being or group represents one aspect of existence while the other groups or individuals represent the counterbalancing dimension of human existence. Human beings should share a common understanding about their combined role in this big world and work together to tackle its problems, and contribute to its development and growth. They should celebrate the accomplishments of any human or nation in any field which benefits humanity and improves the quality of life on Earth.

Coexistence means that all parties believe that the world accommodates everyone, and that cooperation in utilizing its resources is essential; it is the one common objective for the entire human race without regard to nation, color, religion or sect.

- **Binding humans to a certain global vision is important; it is the first historical move to achieve social change and build cultures.** The noble Prophet (PBUH) was the first to create this bond. He linked every Muslim to the great civilizational objectives of Islam and the world; thereby replacing the ancient narrow objectives of the Jahiliya, its

prejudices, and its tribal bonds of loyalty. The efforts of the noble Prophet (PBUH) in this regard were well-organized, wisely planned and balanced.

The famous historian Bernard Shaw emphasizes this fact. According to Shaw, **Islam is the only religion which accommodates change; thus, it can appeal to every Age. According to Shaw, Prophet Muhammad was far from being an enemy of Jesus; he should be called the savior of humanity. Shaw believed that a man like Muhammad could definitely tackle all problems of the world, and bring peace and happiness to the entire humanity, if he took control.**

“I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phases of existence which can make it appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion (he is) far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”<sup>65</sup>

- **Islam affirms the unity of divine religions in the general principles, and that the decrees of Allah Almighty for people are based on faith, good deeds, and brotherhood. It also affirms that Allah Almighty sent revelation to all Prophets, and that every Holy Book is from Him. Believers from all walks of humanity are His truthful triumphant servants. Breaking religious unity in His name is a sin that contradicts the basic divine principles and objectives. This unifying religion is the**

---

65. George Bernard Shaw, *The Genuine Islam*, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.

upright religion, it is in line with the natural disposition which Allah has instilled into humans. In this context, the Holy Qur'an says:

*[In matters of faith, He has ordained for you that which He had enjoined upon Noah – and into which We gave thee [O Muhammad] insight through revelation – as well as that which We had enjoined upon Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus: Steadfastly uphold the [true] faith, and do not break up your unity therein.*

*[And even though] that [unity of faith] to which thou callest them appears oppressive to those who are wont to ascribe to other beings or forces a share in His divinity, God draws unto Himself everyone who is willing, and guides unto Himself everyone who turns unto Him.] As-Shura 30*

*The noble Prophet (PBUH) said: “My example in comparison with the other prophets before me is that of a man who has built a nice and well constructed house, with the exception of an empty place for a brick in a corner. The people go about and wonder at the house’s beauty, but say: ‘Would that this brick be put in its place!’ So I am that brick, and I am the last of the Prophets.”<sup>66</sup>*

Hence, Islam introduced to humanity the concept of “unity”, and called for it in a world afire with religious conflict and hatred; and burning in flames of doctrinal antagonisms. In the midst of this spiritual battlefield, the Holy Qur'an was revealed with this new call for brotherhood in Islam, unity based on true principles, revolving around the divine revelation. Throughout the ages, branches of religion may diverge, but the constant imperishable principles of Islam never change or conflict as they are based on the inbuilt natural human disposition which God created.

---

66. *Sahih Bukhari*, 3271.

The concept of religious unity, its role in building the Islamic viewpoint of the world, and its impact on the values which regulate the relationship between nations and peoples, is one of the most frequent topics of communication by the Prophet, PBUH. The world is in great need for these values today.

Verses of the Holy Qur'an clearly stress the concept of unity, and order the Prophet and His Companions to be the first believers in this unified look at divine religions. Muslims must believe in all Prophets and all Holy Books, have respect for all the divine religions, and speak well of the past nations of believers. Allah Almighty said:

*[Say: "We believe in God, and in that which has been bestowed from on high upon us, and that which has been bestowed upon Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, and that which has been vouchsafed to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been vouchsafed to all the [other] prophets by their Sustainer: we make no distinction between any of them. And it is unto Him that we surrender ourselves."]*  
Al-Baqara 136

Then, the Holy Qur'an states that this is the right path towards the unity of believers. If followers of other religions come to believe in it, they will find themselves on the right path; and if not, they will keep fighting with one another. Allah Almighty says:

*[And if [others] come to believe in the way you believe, they will indeed find themselves on the right path; and if they turn away, it is but they who will be deeply in the wrong, and God will protect thee from them: for He alone is all-hearing, all-knowing.]* Al-Baqara 137

The noble Prophet (PBUH) emphasized the importance of this concept in his letter to Asama'a, the Nejashi. Therein he said:

*When the noble Prophet (PBUH) decided to send letters to the kings beyond Arabia calling them to Islam, He sent Amr Bin Umayyah to the Nejashi to say: 'O Ashama, I invite you to listen and accept my advice. You treated us well. We have complete trust in you. The thing we had hoped for from you, has been realized and you made us safe and sound from the things we had feared. Between us as witness is the Bible which cannot be denied and whose words are just. This is the true test. Otherwise (if you do not believe in Mohammad as foretold by the Bible) you will be like the Jews who disbelieved in Jesus. The Prophet PBUH has sent his emissaries to different nations, but has the highest hopes of you.' The Nejashi was affected and said: 'I bear evidence that He is the true Prophet of Allah whom the people of the Holy Book await.'"<sup>67</sup>*

**Common principles and values bind the believers of different religions - in fact the whole of humanity - with bonds of brotherhood and compassion. Dialogues of the early Muslims reflect these convictions.**

Two strong pillars support the concept of religious unity, and confute every claim that the multiplicity of Divine Revelations can ignite conflicts or wars in the name of religion. The Holy Qur'an identified those two pillars. The first is that the religion of Abraham is the religious base and the reference for the three Prophetic missions of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad – peace be upon them all. The second is that it is important to elevate religion and attribute it to God and not to human beings with their different motives and desires. According to Montgomery, this principle endorsed by Islam is one of its most powerful tools for accommodating all nations and peoples.<sup>68</sup>

---

67. Abul Rabi' Suleiman Alkalai', *op. cit.* part 2, p. 390.

68. W. Montgomery Watt, *ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, London, 1983, p. ix.

Gibb, the Orientalist, believes that if Western and Muslim worlds unite, peace, security, and prosperity will spread throughout the world. Islam is capable of unifying all mankind.

“But Islam has a still further service to render to the cause of humanity. It stands after all nearer to the real East than Europe does, and it possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and cooperation. No other society has such a record of success uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavors so many and so various races of mankind... Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of East and West is to be replaced by cooperation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problem with which Europe is faced in its relation with East. If they unite, the hope of a peaceful issue is immeasurably enhanced. But if Europe, by rejecting the cooperation of Islam, throws it into the arms of its rivals, the issue can only be disastrous for both.”<sup>69</sup>

The Holy Qur’an and Prophetic Sunnah abound with values and practical steps in various fields of reform. Such values are capable of steering the ship of the world, which is currently on the verge of sinking into moral decline, to safety. These values are not idealistic or unrealistic; they were applied by Muslims in their lived reality as observed by the whole world. Muslims converted these principles to mannerisms, laws and moralities. Hence, the Islamic world bears a great responsibility to the world which is doubly important in view of the increasing need for such values and principles.

In this context, Prince Charles says:

“Modern materialism has brought to the life of the individual and the community great imbalance. It lacks the element of balance which is

---

69. H.A.R. Gibb, *WHITHER ISLAM*, London, 1932, p. 379.

necessary for establishing a normal consistent integrated life. In the Western world, a dangerous division has occurred in the way we perceive the universe, the environment and our responsibility towards God's creation. In order to comprehend the inherent perception of our existence and our mission on earth, we may seek help from the Islamic heritage which preserves this integrated, spiritual view of the world and the human being. We can also benefit from this great heritage in enhancing our view of the regency of Man... Science and technology have become increasingly separated from ethical, moral and sacred considerations... (till he says): the Message of Islam, in its essence, is important for the West as it preserves an integrated view of the universe..."<sup>70</sup>

**Today, the world desperately needs to rectify the distorted conceptions and erroneous perceptions between the Western world and Muslims.** The only means for rectifying such perceptions is a fruitful and constructive dialogue to arrive at the true picture of the other.

Islam and Muslims have a stereotypical image in the eyes of the West, due to a number of intertwined historical and political factors. Recent studies and data from public surveys indicates that Western views about Arabs and Muslims are generally negative. It is noticeable that the Holy Qur'an uses the term "get to know one another" in this regard. Such a term conveys the tone of a friendly exchange of information based on equality and impartiality. Thus, this is a fair and balanced divine order which regulates the rights and duties of different nations away from the concepts of aggression and arrogance.

*[O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in*

---

70. See the lecture in: Asharq Alawsat newspaper, issue 6598, London, date 21-12-1996.

*the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware.] Hujurat 13*

The roots of prejudice between the two camps run deep and are due to multiple factors: false information published in the media, negative intellectual stereotypes, the unparalleled amount of offenses to the Muslims throughout the centuries, and other factors which still thwart all plans for establishing dialogic relations. In this context, Juan Goytisolo says:

“We are subjected to a complete process of brainwashing against Arabs and Muslims.”<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, the Orientalist Anne-Marie Schimmel says:

“The Islamic threat reported by Westerners as an undisputed fact is a hostile structure against Islam erected by the media and the writings of some Orientalist bigots.”<sup>72</sup>

Dialogue and coexistence between civilizations and cultures contributes to the rapprochement between different nations and peoples, and aids in the demolition of accumulated barriers of misinterpretations and preconceptions amassed in the memory of the world by various channels throughout the ages.

Hence, dialogue becomes an effective and indispensable tool which requires constant development and expansion in order to reveal the errors in perception arising from intellectual isolation. This will present the true image of Islam. In the present time there is no replacement for integrative dialogue as the tool to face the ideological challenges that besiege Islam and Muslims nowadays.

---

71. Mikhail Suleiman, *the Image of the Arabs in the American Minds*, translated by: Ata Abdul Wahab, CAUS, Beirut, 1987, p. 225 et seq.

72. See the full interview in the Paper of Islamic World, dated 18 to 24 November, 1996, p. 5.

Therefore, the ball is in the court of the Muslims to reveal facts, rectify misconceptions, and remove the thick cloaks of deception which malign Islam and hide the sublimity of its teachings. All calls for aggression and conflict and revenge against the human cultural heritage of the other party should be avoided to allow this initiative a chance to succeed.

In his speech at al Azhar University, Prince Charles commented on the Danish cartoon drawings maligning the Prophet PBUH saying:

“The row over cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad showed “the danger... of our failure to listen and to respect” others’ views.... I look forward to a world in which we share a vision that acknowledges our differences with respect and understanding, that recognizes what others hold sacred, and to a world in which we see that we cannot and must not abuse our great traditions and their teachings as a weapon in the service of selfish worldly power.”<sup>73</sup>

**Therefore, there is an urgent need for highlighting the humanitarian aspects of Islam and its teachings, and the humane perspectives derived from its legislation, which should form the basis of internal and external relationships for Muslims.**

Thus, re-exploration into the integrative system of human values which characterizes Islam is of great importance. These basic and fundamental human values should be highlighted in every meaningful human discourse. Moreover, cognizance of the humane aspects of the Islamic culture and its positive cultural, educational, and behavioral contributions should be represented to the world of today.

Today’s reality forces Muslims to bear the responsibility for repairing the distorted image of Islam. This image has almost turned into

---

73. - [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/4824734.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4824734.stm)

a strategic plan to confine and limit relations with the West. Muslims should be aware of the necessity for confronting such allegations and unmasking such devious plans.<sup>74</sup>

---

74. Among the writings which embraced such allegations was an article entitled “*Clash of Civilizations*” by Samuel Huntington published in the American magazine “Foreign Affairs” in 1993. This article warned people against other people because of their cultures. The author believes that certain cultures –and the Islamic culture above all- are the source of threat for the Western culture and civilization. He believes that these cultures are the enemy against whom the West should fight. This article gained wide recognition since published. Huntington Samuel P., Foreign Affairs, summer, 1993.

## CHAPTER VI

---

**FUTURE PROCEDURAL STEPS FOR PRESENTING  
THE PERSONALITY OF THE NOBLE PROPHET  
REGIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY**



**T**his study contains suggestions on practical steps towards presenting the personality of the noble Prophet (PBUH) and his great accomplishments for humanity. It presents the Prophetic biography with its various civilizational and developmental aspects. These steps are classified as follows:

**First topic:** Promoting Awareness through Example

**Second topic:** Contemporary Means

1. Embassies of Islamic Countries throughout the World
2. The Role of Educational Institutions in Presenting the Prophetic Biography
3. Academic Curriculum
4. Launching the Prophetic Encyclopedia in Foreign Languages
5. Media Institutions



## FIRST TOPIC

### PROMOTING AWARENESS THROUGH EXAMPLE

**T**oday, the world is experiencing a state of confusion with regard to the situation of Muslims from all aspects. The social, educational, and economic state of the Islamic world shows a great gap between the theoretical religious teachings and the lived reality; which often seems to be at odds with these teachings.

Thus, our communities are in desperate need of rectifying their lived reality, to eliminate this estrangement between the theory and the reality. We can start this process by “providing a good example”. Communities are influenced by acts and attitudes more than by words and sermons. Historical evidence proves that actions are the most appealing, influential, and effective tools for transmitting information and influencing others.

The Prophetic biography abounds with events and stories which clearly reflect how the Prophet (PBUH) consistently used this teaching method with both his friends and his opponents with their various backgrounds, beliefs, loyalties, and attitudes towards him (PBUH) and his call.

In the books of biography, it is narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) presented a live and true example of the values of Islam before presenting them

verbally. For example his behavior was just and he displayed tolerance even to his enemies, even before he preached tolerance and justice.

*Mohammed bin Ali bin Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib said that a Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and said that his people had entered Islam and thereafter became poorer. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said that he had nothing more to spend. A Jew behind the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, offered to give a loan to the Prophet, peace be upon him, who agreed and gave it to the Bedouin to give to his people. Then the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, went to a funeral. After they put the deceased in his grave, the Jew came and asked Muhammad, peace be upon him, to pay back the loan saying that the Prophet's family (Bani Abd Muttaleb) were always late in repayment. Omar bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I would break your nose if not for the sanctity of the occasion." The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him said: "O Omar it is better for you to ask him to ask in a better way and to ask me to repay him in a better way." He ordered Omar to offer the Jew some supplies in repayment and to increase the repayment to atone for his threat to the Jew.*

*Omar offered the repayment. The Jew was satisfied and Omar gave him what the Prophet, peace be upon him, ordered. The Jew then told Omar that they had previously witnessed in Mohammad's character (PBUH) all that was described in Moses' book except tolerance. But that, through this incident, the Prophet's, peace be upon him, tolerance was demonstrated clearly. He then said: "I testify there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is his messenger and be my witness for this and for presenting half of what I own to those who believe in Mohammad." Omar advised the Jew to make the offer to the smaller group around the Prophet, peace be upon him, and not to the entire group of believers.*

*Later, the Jew died, and the Prophet, peace be upon him, marched in his funeral carrying his coffin on his right shoulder while Ali carried it on his left.<sup>1</sup>*

The noble Prophet (PBUH) taught his Companions how setting a good example and having a calm and gentle attitude is the effective means for holding dialogues with the other. Several incidents reflect this, such as that of the Jew who was accused of stealing the shield mentioned in earlier chapters.

In Tafsir Al-Tabari, it was stated that the verses below from Surat AlNisaa were revealed to declare innocence of the Jew and disclose the guilt of his accuser, Tu'mah Bin Ubairaq. Tu'mah was a man from the Ansar who stole a shield in trust with his uncle. Tu'mah took the shield and put it in the house of a Jew named Zaid Ibn Sameen. The family of Tu'mah went to the Prophet asking him to declare the innocence of their man, and the Prophet did. The Jew came to the Prophet complaining that he was framed for a crime he did not commit. Hereupon, the below verses from the Qur'an were revealed.

*[BEHOLD, We have bestowed upon thee from on high this divine writ, setting forth the truth, so that thou mayest judge between people in accordance with what God has taught thee. Hence, do no contend with those who are false to their trust, but pray God to forgive [them]: behold, God is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.*

*Yet do not argue in behalf of those who are false to their own selves: verily, God does not love those who betray their trust and persist in sinful ways.*

*They would conceal their doings from men; but from God they cannot conceal them - for He is with them whenever they devise,*

---

1. Quoted by Al-Hakem in his *Supplement of the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim*. He said that it is well referenced. See the supplement, part 2 p 37. Also Ali Bin Abi Bakr AlHaithami, *Grouped Supplements*, Arab Book Publishing House, Cairo 1407 H, Part 8, p. 40. See also Ibn Hayyan book Part 1 p 521, Al-Baihaki, *Great Sunnah*, verses Part 6 p 52, Ibn Al-Jusieh *Zad el Maad* Part 1 page 66.

*in the dark of night, all manner of beliefs [136] which He does not approve. And God indeed encompasses [with His knowledge] whatever they do.*

*Oh, you might well argue in their behalf in the life of this world: but who will argue in their behalf with God on the Day of Resurrection, or who will be their defender?*

*Yet he who does evil or [otherwise] sins against himself, and thereafter prays God to forgive him, shall find God much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace:*

*for he who commits a sin, commits it only to his own hurt; [137] and God is indeed all-knowing, wise.*

*But he who commits a fault or a sin and then throws the blame therefore on an innocent person, burdens himself with the guilt of calumny and [yet another] flagrant sin.] AlNisa' 105-112*

From the Sunnah we find the below example:

*Abi Hadrad AlAslami tells us that he owed a Jew 4 dinars so he complained to the Prophet, PBUH, who said: "Pay the man". Abu Hadrad said: "I don't have the money." But the Prophet (PBUH) repeated the request 3 times (meaning he was insisting on repayment). So Abi Hadrad wore his turban as a shirt and went to the market and sold his shirt for 4 dinars to repay the Jew.*

The good example and great ethics of the Muslims were the reason for the spread of Islam throughout the East and West. The natives of these lands saw the values of truth, justice, equity, and good treatment of opponents personified in the Muslim visitors.<sup>2</sup>

---

2. For more about this point, see: Mohiuddin Abdul Halim, *the Good Example and Its Effectiveness in Calling Forth to the Islamic Principles*, Afaq Al-Thaqafa Wal Turath, issue 18, August 1997, p. 117.

The message of the noble Prophet (PBUH) caused a revolution against the corrupt atmosphere prevailing at the time of its revelation. The first believers in the message were totally committed to its values. This led to an enormous change in their intentions, attitudes, behavior and social activity. Through their changed attitudes, they convinced the world of the success of the message, and its effective transformational attributes.

Thus the truth of the message was demonstrated through the practical behavior of those who followed it. Their tolerance, justice, honesty, fidelity, and transparency in their treatment of others of different beliefs were the most effective tools for the spread of Islam.

In this context, Gustave Le Bon, the famous historian, says:

“Force was not the main factor for the spread of the Qur’an. The Arabs left the conquered free to practice their religions. If it happened that some Christians embraced Islam and took Arabic as their language, this was due to the justice and tolerance they saw from the victorious Arabs the like of which they had not seen from their previous rulers.”<sup>3</sup>

The positive and effective change in Muslims’ attitudes, and the ability to communicate with acts rather than words, is the one and only path towards rectifying the distorted image of Islam. Muslim communities should stay on this path until there is no inconsistency left between the lofty ideals of Islam and the reality in their societies.

The return to the Islamic civilizational identity and values will succeed provided that we keep the doors of communication open with each other and with Western and Eastern societies through social, cultural, and economic relations. Interaction is required to display the “good example”.

Early Muslims were able to enter the hearts of the people of the conquered lands before entering their lands, thanks to their moralities and applied ethics. They embodied the principles they learnt from their noble

---

3. Gustave Le Bon, *the Arab Civilization*, translated by: Adel Zoeitar, Dar Ehya’ Al Turath Al Arabiya, Cairo, third edition, 1956, p. 128.

Prophet (PBUH) and followed his good example in behavior and communication.

Sir Thomas Arnold says:

Christians in the Jordan Valley welcomed Muslim armies under the leadership of Abu Obadiah. They preferred living with them to living under the rule of Byzantines even though they were of their own faith. They sent a letter to Abu Obadiah saying:

“We prefer you to the Byzantines, though they are of our faith, because you keep better faith with us and are more merciful to us and refrain from doing injustice and your rule over us is better than theirs.”<sup>4</sup>

The effectiveness of this approach can be clearly seen in the wealth of historical evidence which describes the role of Muslim traders in the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia and Africa during their trading voyages. The people of these countries turned to Islam because they were impressed with the ethics of these traders.

In the Times magazine, the Globetrotter, J.J. Thomson said:

“If we went to Western Africa and Central Sudan, we would find Islam as a strong body alive with action, enthusiasm, and bravery like in its early days. There, people are entering Islam in throngs as in its early days. Rays of its light are emanating from the streets of Sierra-Leon illuminating the insight of cannibalistic tribes immersed in the swamps of ignorance at the source of the Niger River.

The greatest Islamic conquests took place in Central and Western Sudan by a troop of humble and ingenuous men. In present times, a courageous merchant has taken over. He exerts himself to spread his religion. As a result, the sun of Islam has risen over the entire region.”<sup>5</sup>

---

4. Arnold, *ibid*, p. 55.

5. Quoting Anwar Al Gendi, *Islam Edges to Africa with Its Self-Power*, issue 4, tenth year, September 1969.

In this regard, the German Orientalist Sigrid Hunke says:

“The Arab charmed people of conquered territories with his goodness, bright face, and tender words. His honor and inherited dignity forced those people to take him as an ideal; they followed his example and were eager to reach his social stature, in the sense that they become Arabs. The Arab was the most eloquent ambassador for his religion through his decency and noble attitude rather than through preaching and missionary work. As a result, he attracted huge numbers of people to his religion to an extent that no preaching could ever hope to accomplish.”<sup>6</sup>

In all cultures, individuals, especially children, never do what grown-ups tell them to do, but rather act the way they see them acting; they follow their example. One of the most important methods of education is acting out the required behavior. The Prophetic biography laid the foundation for this concept.<sup>7</sup> Communication scientists of modern ages confirm that non-verbal communication which relies on acts and attitudes is a significant factor in delivering messages. The future of education is in practical, rather than verbal or written, messages.<sup>8</sup>

Although this method has not been stressed enough in the past, it is a must for the present time. It is indispensable for any true progress in the field of communication with the other.

Richard Nixon, the former president of the United States, refers to the importance of values in his words below:

“The fact that the consumption of drugs in the richest country in the world is almost equal to the total consumption of all other countries combined, though its population is no more than one twentieth of the world’s

---

6. Sigrid Hunke, *op. cit.*, p. 366-367.

7. Shaaban Gaballah, *Socialization*, Zein Al Abedeen and others (editors). *Social Psychology: Principles And Applications*, Zamzam Printing house, 1993, p. 67-88.

8. - Lin. Nan. *The Study of Human Communication*, (New York: 1973), pp. 37-39.

population, can never be accepted. The richest country in the world can never have the highest rates of crime in the world to the degree that twenty times as many Americans who died in the Gulf War, were killed in America, during the same period... The richest country in the world can never accept the presence of a group of bad guys who make our biggest cities insecure to an extent that life there becomes unbearable.”<sup>9</sup> Nixon added: “Our most serious social problems: crime, drugs, and imported education, revolve around values and behavior. These issues are not contingent upon dollars; plans which calculate the outcomes in dollars rarely result in benefits. We do not need dollars; we need guidance towards a set of values and rules accepted and applied by all.”<sup>10</sup>

In the previous chapter, we discussed two examples of world issues and what Islamic can offer to address these issues. There are many other common problems where Muslims can work alongside others to contribute solutions.

---

9. Richard Nixon, *the Opportunity*, translated by Ahmad Sidqy Murad, Dar Al Hilal, 1992, p. 34-35.

10. Richard Nixon, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

## SECOND TOPIC

### CONTEMPORARY MEANS

**T**here are several contemporary means through which we can present the biography of the noble Prophet (PBUH), his teachings and their application in tackling the problems of the contemporary world. The most prominent of which follow:

#### 1. Embassies of Muslim Countries

Muslim embassies are important vehicles for communication and dialogue with the various countries of the world. Muslim embassies can play a great role in presenting the personality of the noble Prophet (PBUH) and his great accomplishments for humanity; in addition to the solutions found in the Prophetic biography for current world issues.

Such a mission requires a great deal of perseverance in studying the Islamic teachings and values, as well as a deep understanding of the people and culture of the country of location.

This approach is deeply rooted in the Prophetic biography. It was reported that the noble Prophet (PBUH) sent his messengers (ambassadors)

to the kings and princes of the world. His most prominent messenger was Amr Ibn Al-Aas who was sent in the eighth year of Hijra to Jaifar and Abd from Al Azd tribe in Oman. Jaifar was the king, and Amr Ibn Al-Aas invited them to enter Islam. The king and his brother Abd, as well as many of the Arabs of Oman, accepted and entered Allah's religion.

The noble Prophet (PBUH) was keen to send messengers of high morals and attributes. He chose people of knowledge, eloquence, and good appearance who were capable of representing the greatest image of Islam and its teachings.

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH), in his choice of ambassador, took into account the differences between cultures and interests of various countries. Thus, he chose to send messengers of good appearance to Khosrau of Persia, Caesar of Rome, and Mukawkas (Cyrus) of Egypt. He knew that appearances mattered to those kings.<sup>11</sup> We should apply these lessons in making the proper choice of a representative for all communications with the other.

Almost all countries have Muslim embassies on their lands. **These embassies can serve as cultural and civilizational bridges between Islam and the different nations. This should become a Muslim foreign policy strategy.**

## 2. Activating the Role of Educational Institutions in Presenting the Prophetic Biography

Schools and universities are manufacturing plants for people and future leaders; from both teachers and students. There, people learn different ways of thinking: practical or theoretical, deep or shallow, subjective or objective. Knowledge is acquired and trends are set with regard to many aspects of life.<sup>12</sup>

---

11. For more details, see: Mahmoud Sheit Khattab, *Amr Ibn Al Aas: the Muslim leader*, Kitab Al Umma, The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Qatar, part 2, p. 101 et seq.

12. Abdul Rahman Al Turairy, *The Arab Mind And Its Reformation*, Kitab Al Umma, The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Qatar, 1992, p. 62.

In addition, the university is the place where scientists and researchers exchange knowledge and culture and conduct studies and research.

In general, educational institutions are established in order to provide students with scientific skills and methodological approaches. They teach minds to observe and experiment in order to make the best use of the mental capabilities bestowed to us by Allah.

Therefore, universities have always been the pioneers on the path of social reform. A study of the history of universities in Europe, for example, shows that most social, religious, and intellectual reform movements were launched from universities by professors or students in all branches of science and knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

Since schools and universities are social institutions directed by the policies of host countries, their communities are considered part of the big community. Their role is crucial; they impact the thought and ideologies of generations and determine their paths in the future.<sup>14</sup>

The role of schools in education may have been weakened. This is not attributed to one specific factor; but is related to several factors. However, a deliberate scientific strategy for changing and improving the situation can certainly lead to positive results, if Allah wills so.<sup>15</sup>

Psychologists believe that the primary educational stage is the most appropriate stage for social normalization. During this stage, the mental growth of the child improves, and he becomes more interested in hunting for facts, and is more able to develop concepts and learn principles and

- 
13. Jamal Muhammad Hassan Al Zinky, *How To Realize the Committed Islamic Identity In University Students*, Seminar of the cultural and developmental strategy and the role of the faculties of Arts, and Human and Social Sciences in GCC, Faculty of Arts, Kuwait University, 27-29 March, 2000.
  14. Spring. Joel. *Education, The Worker Citizen, the Social Economic and Political Foundation of Education*, New York, London, Long man, 1980, pp. 195-198.
  15. Adapted from: Mahmoud Muhammad Safar, *A Study In the Civilizational Construction*, Kitab Al Umma, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Qatar, p. 66.

values. He becomes intellectually curious and critical of himself and others; even those older than him. This capability should be effectively tapped and employed in instilling and ingraining the great Prophetic values in these young minds.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the current culture of indoctrinating students should definitely change. It should be converted into a culture which helps students achieve independent thought and self-actualization. The focus of schools shouldn't be on memorizing information from the books of biography and Hadeeth - as currently happens - but should be on teaching students how to practically apply the Islamic values concepts and integrate them into their lived reality and daily lives.

An example is the concept of accepting the other, and recognizing other people's differences. Such values can never be indoctrinated; they should rather be adopted by the teachers and students and practically applied by them. The Prophetic biography and ethics should be effectively used as examples in promoting these concepts.

Students may memorize dozens of texts, Hadeeths, and incidents from the biography; but yet, may not be seeing their connection to real life situations. This schizophrenia produces generations ignorant of the true meaning of their religion and its values.

**Educational institutions: their curriculum, teaching methodologies, and atmosphere should all be designed to fight indoctrination and to adopt the concepts independent thought, expression of opinion, and development of intellectual abilities.**

The noble Prophet's (PBUH) adoption for this approach was unrivalled.

*A young man came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) him and asked: 'O Messenger of Allah, permit me (with special license) to commit fornication (and adultery).' The people started to rebuke him harshly, but the Prophet sat close to him and asked:*

*'Would you like it for your mother?' He replied: 'No, by Allah, may Allah make me a sacrifice for you!' The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their mothers.' He said: 'Would you like it for your daughter?' 'No': he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their daughters.' He said: 'Would you like it for your paternal aunt?' 'No': he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their paternal aunts.' He said: 'Would you like it for your maternal aunt?' 'No': he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their maternal aunts.' Then the Prophet put his hand on the youth and said: O Allah forgive his sin and purify his heart and make him chaste (fortify his abstinence from sexual sins).'' Thereafter, the young man was never seduced by anything.<sup>16</sup>*

In this incident, the noble Prophet (PBUH) did not offer direct words of admonition or rebuke. Nor did he sermonize and outline the punishment for fornication. Rather, he showed the young man the impact of his intended action and guided him gradually and purposefully, until he was persuaded of the error of his intention.

This educational approach should be studied attentively and practiced in real life situations. Memorization of the above Hadeeth will not have the same educational effect.

In summary, the teacher or educator should represent a good example for students. His/her role as a teacher will not be fulfilled by dictating information, or indoctrinating thoughts, concepts, and beliefs.<sup>17</sup>

---

16. Narrated by Ahmed and At-Tabarani.

17. For more information, see: Maged Irsan Kilany, *Objectives of Islamic Education in the Upbringing Of Individuals, Building the Nation, and Promoting Brotherhood In Humanity*, the International Institute for Islamic Thought, USA, second edition, 1997/ 1417 AH, p. 182.

### 3. School Curriculum

School curriculum can definitely play a crucial role if it is based on values derived from the Qur'anic and Prophetic texts. Thus, the required curriculum should embrace Islamic values such as moderation, equanimity, acceptance of different opinions, tolerance, truthfulness, excellence, concern for the environment, and other civilizational values adopted by the noble Prophet (PBUH).

The school curriculum, with all its materials, examples, exercises, and resources can be the cornerstone for promoting Islamic values and guiding towards responsible behavior.

Practical application can be through the presentation of problems faced by the world today –in a manner suitable for each age category– and guiding students to reach a solution based on the teachings of the noble Prophet (PBUH).

The curriculum, especially if related to the Prophetic biography and Hadeeths, should be presented in a new way. The learner should be given the freedom to understand, judge, and adopt. Hence, the intellectual process of determining right and wrong can be rationalized and discussed freely and openly.

It goes without saying that the current teaching methods and techniques desperately need to improve. We should stop focusing on traditional teaching methods which have proven to be ineffective, especially in the midst of the scientific revolution witnessed by the world today. The methods of memorization and indoctrination should definitely be abandoned; and new methods which rely on problem-solving techniques should emerge. Students should be trained in thought processes, choice between alternatives, and appropriate methods of expression.

**School activities can play a role in teaching students about the importance of the Prophetic biography and its solutions for our various problems.**

Therefore, school activities should be developed to allow for scientific analysis, collaboration, and effective interaction with others. The concepts of teamwork, coexistence, freedom of opinion, respect for others' opinions, and positive criticism can be practiced and acquired. All such values were practically established through the Prophetic Sunnah.

*It was reported that the noble Prophet (PBUH) used to work alongside his Companions on different tasks to emphasize the importance of collaborative work.*

We also have to focus on the method for introducing the new curriculum. Oppression and imposition of views on students can never be effective methods of instruction. Instead, discussion and allowing the learner the freedom of expression is one of the best tools for delivering information

In this context, Ibn Khaldun says:

“In the learning process, overworking the body can inflict harm on the learner, especially young children. He who was raised on violence and oppression, whether student, villain, or slave, would be driven towards idleness, deceit, and malice out of fear from the oppression.”<sup>18</sup>

The interaction between the student, his teachers and colleagues in a free atmosphere and the opportunity for experimentation and trial and error, are all significant factors which contribute to the proper mental growth and development of the student. These are the solid grounds established by the Prophetic biography. This definitely vaccinates students against intellectual deviances and their unfortunate consequences.<sup>19</sup>

---

18. Abdul Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *Prolegomena*, Dar Al Qum, Beirut, fifth edition, 1984, p. 243. See also: Salman Khalafullah, *Dialogue and the Formation Of the Child's Personality*, Al Obeikan library, Riyadh, 1998, p. 110.

19. For more information, see: Abdul Rahman Al Turairy, *The Arab Mind and Its Reformation*, Kitab Al Umma, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Qatar, 1992, p. 63.

Thus, educational institutions can play a crucial role in instilling the Prophetic Sunnah, its moralities, and virtues in the Muslim mindset. Muslim values, if properly understood and applied, provide a comprehensive base for an educational and instructional system which can be applied in any environment and at any time.

#### 4. Launching the Prophetic Encyclopedia in Foreign Languages

This type of project will attract Western thinkers and scientists as well as many erudite and experienced researchers in various fields. It will also appeal to those interested in studying the application of Prophetic biography in our contemporary world.

Many Western writers have emphasized the importance of studying and reviewing the noble Prophetic biography; and Muhammad's (PBUH) methods for achieving the dramatic transformation in his world. They see the importance of learning his approach and using it in the fields of social reform and planning.

In her book (*Muhammad: a Prophet for Our Time*), Karen Armstrong says:

“As a paradigmatic personality, Muhammad has important lessons, not only for Muslims, but also for Western people.... Muhammad literally sweated with the effort to bring peace to war-torn Arabia, and we need people who are prepared to do this today.”<sup>20</sup>

There are many reputable unbiased Western writers from whom we can benefit in this effort. We need to utilize the intellectual vision of many even-handed Western politicians, thought leaders, and media reporters of contemporary history; those who refuse to accept the false allegations against Islam and Muslims. Thus, every unbiased voice and every fair view has a role in this project.

---

20. Armstrong. *ibid*, *Muhammad*, p. 19.

The main goal of this Prophetic Encyclopedia is to confront the spurious media, and present, through facts and objective analysis, the true image of the noble Prophet (PBUH) and the value of his accomplishments to the world.

At various points, Prince Charles has asserted that the teachings of Islam are capable of spreading peace and brotherhood among people. He has also confirmed that the clash of civilizations could be easily resolved if the teachings of the Qur'an were followed.

“The world problems could be resolved by following Islamic teachings, as Islam is a religion of peace and brotherhood.”<sup>21</sup>

With regard to the accomplishments of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for humanity, Alphonse De Lamartine says:

“If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls. On the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race.”<sup>22</sup>

Hence, launching the project of the Prophetic Encyclopedia, and inviting many of the fair Western writers to participate, is an absolute necessity and a global demand.

---

21. <http://www.kuna.net.kw/Home/Story.aspx?Language=en&DSNO=917294>

22. Alphonse De Lamartine, *Historie de la Turquie*, Paris, 1854. Vol. II, pp. 276-277.

## 5. Media Institutions

Undoubtedly, the role of media in the social education and thought formation for individuals and societies is truly remarkable. Media offers people a wide range of information, analysis, facts, news, images, and advertisements about certain topics. Thus, it contributes to the formation of trends and values which subsequently leads to the formation of a public opinion about these topics.

Hence, the press, radio, television, satellite channels, and internet can easily influence people's attitudes and ways of thinking.

Those in power are very aware of the importance of the media and try to make it subservient to their goals. They use it to present their case in various ways through its different channels.

The importance of public opinion and its role in effecting change is well-known. It is a focal point of interest for many psychologists, sociologists, politicians, and reporters. Swaying public opinion is the key to the success of any idea advocated by an entity or institution.<sup>23</sup> It is an indicator for the prevalence of certain views and perceptions, right or wrong, which form the attitudes of individuals and societies, and predict their responses to different issues and incidents.

All the research and studies which discuss the impact of the audio, visual, and print media on the socialization process show the effectiveness of their role in shaping and changing views, trends, and attitudes of individuals.<sup>24</sup>

---

23. Muhammad Abdul Qader Hatem, *Public Opinion*, the Anglo-Egyptian library, Cairo, 1972, p. 24. See also: Ismail Ali Saad, *the Public Opinion between Power and Ideology*, Dar An-Nahda Al Arabiya, Beirut, 1988, p. 150. Alfred Sofi, *Public Opinion*, Oweidat Publications, Beirut, 1966.

24. Shahinaz Talaat, *Media and the Development*, the Anglo-Egyptian library, Cairo, 1980, p. 85.

Thus, any society aiming for progress and development can no longer ignore the role of mass media, especially in our Information Age. It is a highly effective tool in directing social and cultural attitudes.

If the media is used properly, it can definitely contribute in presenting the true image of the noble Prophet (PBUH) and his great civilization-accomplishments to the world of today. Unfortunately, thus far, the role played by Western media has been in presenting a completely false image of the Prophet (PBUH), his ethics and attitudes, in an unprecedentedly insulting stereotyped frame.

Robin Wright –the diplomatic correspondent for the Washington Post– asserts this painful fact. In many of her studies, she emphasizes that Islam is one of the most tolerant religions, despite the distorted image of the noble Prophet (PBUH) and his teachings which has been widely spread by the mass media.<sup>25</sup>

However media is a two-edged sword and the different audio-visual forms of Islamic media can, by addressing people through an objective and scientific approach in their own language, lay the foundation for a public culture which respects the sanctities of others and recognizes their contributions. This will help present the true image of the noble Prophet (PBUH). For this effort to succeed the communications should be free from prejudice, hostility, and preconceptions and should maintain an objective scientific tone to present facts that no open mind can deny.

---

25. Robin Wright, Sacred Rage: *The Wrath of Militant Islam*, 2001. “Islam and Liberal Democracy: Two Visions Of Reformation,” *Journal of Democracy* 7.2 (1996), 64-75.



## CONCLUSION & RESULTS

**T**his study presents a cognitive methodological structure to introduce the personality of the noble Prophet (PBUH) to the contemporary world. This is done through a discussion of the accomplishments of the Prophetic message and the Prophetic biography for the entire human race, and an analysis on how this legacy can be used to address the challenges faced by the world nowadays.

This is a novel approach which is missing from the many studies, books and research on the noble Prophet (PBUH) and his biography. Therefore, our study seeks to present the Prophetic biography from this important perspective, by emphasizing the quantum leap realized through the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) in all civilizational and cultural fields; a transformation which shook the whole world out of its stupor and ignorance to a new state of cognitive vigor and civilizational iridescence, in a record timeframe.

The study presents his accomplishments (PBUH) in the most critical and complicated aspects of human life, namely: women, slavery, dealing with the different other, and building civilizations. The study also provides an applied approach for deducing global civilizational values from the Prophet-

ic biography and Sunnah. These values represent the cure for the current global crisis and can protect mankind from grievous impacts. Two models for this applied approach were provided in the study: the family as an entity, and global prejudice and extremism.

The most important conclusions of this study can be summarized as follows:

- Re-evaluation of the methods for presenting the Prophetic biography is a necessity. The biography of the Prophet (PBUH) is not a set of sporadic educational stories and religious sermons, but is a strategic plan of action characterized by its comprehensiveness, interdependence, and integration. Thus, it is capable of changing and reforming the various aspects of human life.
- The Prophetic biography offers an integrated methodology for tackling the problems of humanity at all times and in all places. This was achieved in the past and can be achieved again. History bears witness to the success of Islamic values in curing the most severe ills of humanity: the condition of women, slaves, discrimination, ignorance, environmental concerns, etc.
- The importance of focusing on practical behavior and converting our love for the noble Prophet (PBUH) into a lived reality; acting out the values, having unbiased attitudes, civilized behavior, and proactive concern for global issues. This is the only meaningful adherence to his Sunnah (PBUH).
- The development of Arab-Muslim communities to achieve cognitive, scientific, and technical progress is a necessity. We also need to develop educational and instructional institutes in accordance with the Islamic value system.
- The importance of study, research, and strategic planning in order to stimulate social and diplomatic interaction and cooperation between community organizations regionally and internationally, and

to strengthen the bonds between cultural figures and organizations in the East and West with the goal of resolving common global issues.

- The importance for Muslims to play an effective role in presenting ideas to resolve the problems of humanity, especially with regard to economic and social issues.
- The development of a proper methodology for Islamic discourse directed to non-Muslims, and focusing our efforts on the West where the fear of Islam and Muslims is prevalent.
- Utilizing the intellectual vision of many evenhanded Western politicians, thought leaders, and media reporters of contemporary history; those who refuse to accept the false allegations against Islam and Muslims. Thus, every unbiased voice and every fair view has a role in presenting the true image of Islam, its accomplishments and its Prophet, PBUH.
- The importance of developing the culture of dialogue locally and internationally while focusing on the topics that concern the international community; thus paving the way for Muslim scientists and thought leaders in various fields to contribute to the solution of world problems and concerns.
- The importance of promoting a positive international public opinion about the legacy of Islam and its ability to contribute to solutions for the problems of the contemporary world. This can be achieved by applying the grand civilizational values in the noble Prophetic biography in a well planned step by step approach starting with the individual, i.e. every Muslim should personify the Islamic values.
- Encouraging Muslim scholars to study the Prophetic biography from all aspects, and its approach in applying Islamic civilizational values in the midst of the Jahiliya<sup>26</sup> environment, drawing on the similar-

---

26. The stifling atmosphere of ignorance which prevailed at the time of revelation.

ities with the world of today. This should give valuable lessons on their application in our current challenging conditions.

- The importance of using contemporary means for presenting the Prophetic biography to the world: i.e. activating the role of Muslim embassies, educational institutions, improving school curriculum, launching a project for a Prophetic encyclopedia in foreign languages (based on analysis, deduction, and present day application), and activating the role of media.
- Launching the Prophetic Encyclopedia project and inviting all interested unbiased scholars, as well as scientists and writers, especially Westerners, to contribute. This Encyclopedia should have a new style which does not depend solely on narrations but includes analytic and deductive elements. Moreover, there should be a focus on the methodology used by the noble Prophet (PBUH) to change reality and cause the civilizational quantum leap for Arabs.
- The need for reconsidering the methods of presenting the Prophetic biography in school curriculum; abandoning the methods of memorizing and indoctrination and introducing methods of analysis and deduction. Students should be trained in applying the values of the Prophetic biography to address the problems and issues of their communities.

## REFERENCES

- Andrae, Tor. *Mohammed: the Man and His Faith*. (New York 1957)
- A. J. Toynbee. *CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL*(New York, 1948)
- Amira El Azhary Sonbol. *Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islam in History* (New York, 1996)
- Arthur Cotterell, *From Aristotle to Zoroaster* (1998)
- B. Lewis. *Other People's History in Islam and the West* (New York 1993)
- Bernard Lewis. *The Arabs in History* (USA 1950)
- Bernard Lewis. *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*. Oxford Univ Press 1994.
- Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (New Jersey)
- Bertold Spuler. *The Muslim World. Vol. I The Age of the Caliphs* (Leiden 1960)
- Burn, ARR. *Persia and the Greeks* (London 1984).
- C. E. Bosworth, *Barbarian Incursions: The Coming Of The Turks Into The Islamic World* (Oxford 1973)
- Clara M. Henning. *Cannon Law and the Battle of the Sexes* (New York 1974)
- Coul ton, G. G. *Medieval Panorama* (Cambridge 1938)

- Dandemaev, M.A. and Lukonin *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (Cambridge 1989)
- David Michael Olster. *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: rhetoric and revolt in Byzantium* (1993)
- De Lacy O' Leary, D.D. *Arabia Before Muhammad* (New York 1927)
- Deniz Kandiyoti, *Women, Islam and the State*, Middle East Report, No. 173, Gender and Politics. (Nov. - Dec., 1991)
- Dodgeon M. H., and Lieu S. N. C. *The Roman Eastern Frontiers and the Persian Wars* London 1991
- Draper, J. W. *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*. (London, 1864)
- D.S. Margoliouth. *Mouhammed and the rise of Islam* (London 1978)
- Dobbs, D. *Family Matters: Aristotle's Appreciation of Women and the Plural Structure of Society*. *American Political Science Review* (USA 1996)
- E. Krentz. *The Historical Critical Method* (Carlisle, 1992)
- Emilie Amt. *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook* (New York 1993)
- Esposito, John *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford 1998).
- Francesco Gabrieli. *Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam* (Italy, 1968)
- Francesco Gabrieli, *The Arabs A Compact History* (USA 1957)
- Gibbon, Edward. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: 2004)
- George Bernard Shaw. *The Genuine Islam* (Singapore 1936)
- Hamilton Gibb. *Studies on the civilization of Islam* (USA. 1982).
- H.A.R. Gibb. *WHITHER ISLAM a Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World* (New York 2000)
- H.A.R. Gibb. *WHITHER ISLAM* (London 1932).
- Henri Jajfel. *Individuals and Groups in Social Psychology*. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* (London 1979)

- Henrietta Leyser. *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England 450 – 1500* (New York 1995)
- Jacobus, Neusner. *Judaism in Modern Times* (USA, 1995)
- James A. Michener. *Islam: The Misunderstood Religion*. in *READER'S DIGEST* (American edition), May 1955
- Jerry Falwell. *Listen America* (New York 1981).
- Joel T. Rosenthal. *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History* (Georgia 1990)
- John Bagot Glubb, *The life and Times of Muhammad* (London 1970)
- John Esposito. *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford 2005).
- John M. Darely and Russell H. Fazio, *Expectancy Confirmation Processes Arising in the Social Interaction Sequence*. *American Psychologist*, vol. 35, no. 10 (October 1980)
- Joseph Frankel. *International Relations in a Changing World* (Oxford 1988)
- Karen Armstrong. *The Gospel According to Woman* (London 1986)
- Karen Armstrong. *Muhammad a prophet for our time* (USA 2006)
- Kelly, Marjorie. *Islam. The Religious and Political Life of a World Community* (New York 1984). Lefkowitz, M., and M. Fant. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome* (USA 1992)
- Louis M. Epstein. *The Jewish Marriage Contract* (New York 1973)
- Michael Bonner. *Poverty and Economics in the Qur'an*, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xxxv:3 (Winter 2005)
- Madeleine Pelner Cosman. *Women at Work in Medieval Europe* (New York 2000)
- Mark Alan Epstein. *The Ottoman Jewish Communities and their role in the 15th and 16th centuries* (1980).
- Marcus J. Borg, Marcus J. *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith* (1994)
- Mark Wittow. *The Making of Byzantium 600-1025* (USA 1996)

- Marshall G. S. Hodgson. *Rethinking World History* (Cambridge 1993)
- Martin Luther. *Lectures on Genesis*, Vol 1 of *luther's Works* (USA 1958)
- Mary T. Malone. *Women and Christianity* (Ottawa 2000)
- Maureen Fant. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome* (Johns Hopkins, 1992)
- Maxime Rodinson, *Muhammad* (New York, 1980)
- Menachem M. Brayer. *The Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature: A Psychosocial Perspective* (N.J. 1986)
- Nancy van Vuuren. *The Subversion of Women as Practiced by Churches, Witch-Hunters and Other Sexists* (Philadelphia)
- Nicholson. *Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge 1930)
- Olmstead, A.T. *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago 1948)
- Olivioir Zunz & Alan S. Kahan. *The Tocqueville Reader* (Oxford, 2003)
- Paul F. Secord and Carl W. Backman. *Social Psychology* (New York 1974)
- Percy Sykes. *A History of the Persians* (1951)
- Peters, F E. *Muhammad and the origins of Islam* (New York 1994) Pomeroy, S. B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York, 1976)
- R.A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*. (Cambridge 1956)
- R.E. Friedman. *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco 1987).
- RH Barrow. *Slavery in the Roman Empire* (1998). Robert Briffault. *The making of humanity* (London, 1938)
- Robert G. Hoyland. *Arabia and the Arabs from the bronze age to the coming of Islam* (London, 2003)
- Rodriguez, Junius. *The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery* (1997)
- Samuel Sandmel. *Jewish Understanding of the New Testament* (1957)
- Sandra, Mackey. *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation* (USA 1996)
- Schimmel, Annmarie. *And Muhammad is His Messenger* (USA 1985)

- Simon Heffer. *Moral Desperado - A Life of Thomas Carlyle* (1995)
- Susan W. Schneider, *Jewish and Female* (New York 1984)
- T. Arnold and A. Guillaume. *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford 1931)
- T. Arnold. *The spread of Islam in the world* (London 2003)
- Tajfel. *Social Stereotypes and Social Groups* (USA 1980)
- Thena Kendath. *Memories of an Orthodox youth* (New York 1983)
- Thomas Carlyle. *On Heroes and Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* (USA 1993)
- W. C. Smith. *Islam in Modern History* (London 1963)
- Wiebke Walther. *In Islam Women From Medieval To Modern Times* (New York 1993)
- Wilhelm Roepke, *The Social Crisis of Our Time* (USA 1998)
- W. Montgomery Watt. *ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY TODAY* (London 1983)
- William Montgomery. *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (London 1966)
- W Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad At Medina* (1956 Oxford)
- Encyclopaedia of Islam *Online*. Ed.
- The Encyclopedia Of Religion. (New York 1986)
- Encyclopedia of World Biography, 2nd ed. Gale Research, 1998
- The Catholic Encyclopedia
- The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia..
- Encarta Encyclopedia 97 CD
- Britanica Encyclopedia. 1999. Inc CD-Rom.
- <http://www.betham.org/kulanu/iansilver.html>.
- <http://www.betham.org/kulanu/iansilver.html> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Carlyle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Carlyle) - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender\\_roles\\_in\\_Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_roles_in_Islam)
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/empire\\_03.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/empire_03.shtml).<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Muslim>. Castle, Stephen.