

"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

STATEMENT OF Faith

Holy Bible & Holy Qur'an



11 The Biblical
story of
Adam & Eve

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Shariah Law

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Retribution: Qur'an
and Bible

47 Death penalty
in Qur'an & Bible

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 189 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah..



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

www.muslimsunrise.com



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Hazrat
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Qadiani^{AS}



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

From the Holy Qur'an

Chapter 41: Ha Mim Al-Sajdah

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾
كِتَابٌ فَصَّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾
بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۚ فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٥﴾
وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا تَدْعُونَا
إِلَيْهِ وَفِي أذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنَكَ
حِجَابٌ فَأَعْمَلْ إِنَّنَا عَمِلُونَ ﴿٦﴾

[41:3] *This is a revelation from the Gracious, the Merciful.*

[41:4] A Book, the verses of which have been expounded in detail — the Qur'an in clear, eloquent language — for a people who have knowledge,

[41:5] A bringer of glad tidings and a warner. But most of them turn away and they hear not.

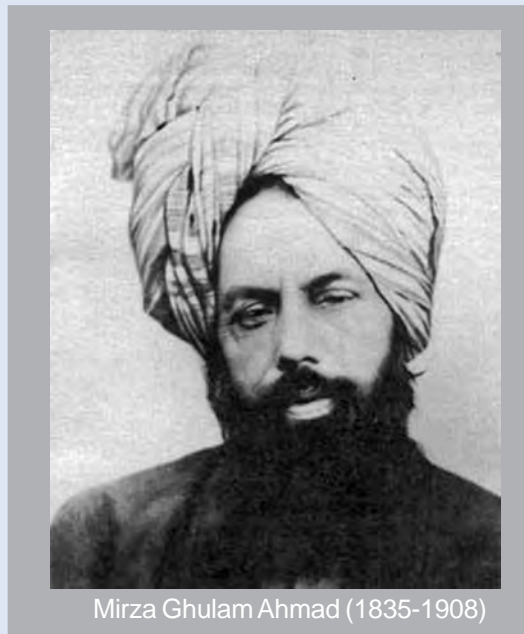
[41:6] And they say: 'Our hearts are under covers *and are protected* against that to which thou callest us, and in our ears there is a deafness, and between us and thee there is a screen. So carry on thy work; we *too* are working.'

In the Words of the Promised Messiah

I call Allah to witness that the Holy Quran is a rare pearl. Its outside is light and its inside is light and its above is light and its below is light and there is light in every word of it. It is a spiritual garden whose clustered fruits are within easy reach and through which streams flow. Every fruit of good fortune is found in it and every torch is lit from it. Its light has penetrated to my heart and I could not have acquired it by any other means. And Allah is my witness that if there had been no Quran I would have found no delight in life. I find that its beauty exceeds that of a hundred thousand Josephs. I incline towards it with great inclination and drink it into my heart. It has nurtured me as an embryo I nurtured and it has a wonderful effect on my heart. My self is lost in its beauty. It has been disclosed to me in a vision that the garden of holiness is irrigated by the water of the Quran, which is a surging ocean of the water of life. He, who drinks from it, comes to life; indeed, he brings others to life. (A'ina-e-Kamat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol 5, pp.545:546)

We had raised an objection to the current Gospels that the Gospels do not provide for the development of all man's faculties and that even the portions of them relating to moral qualities are taken from the Torah. This caused humiliation to the Christian priests. To this some Christians replied that:

Divine books are concerned only with morals and that the punishment of offences is not appropriate for a Book of God, inasmuch as offences



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

should be punished according to changing circumstances which are unlimited and it is not proper that there should be a fixed law laying down penalties. Every penalty should be such as in accord with the times and is helpful for the warning and restraint of offenders. Fixed penalties are not beneficial for the reform of people. In the same way, civil, criminal and revenue laws should not be fixed and rigid, as would create difficulties under changing circumstances. For instance, they might adversely affect commercial conditions which have become current and cannot be avoided, or a penal law might not be helpful where offenders have become accustomed to one kind of punishment, or may not be amenable to it.

I would say that this type of thinking proceeds from people who have not studied the Holy Quran with care. The directions contained in the Holy Quran with regard to civil, criminal and revenue matters are of two types. One, which lays down the details of punishment or of procedure, and the other which only pre-

scribes the principle and does not lay down any specific direction. The purpose of the latter is to provide guidance for the meeting of new circumstances. For instance, at one place the Holy Quran lays down the rule of a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye. This is a detail. In other place, the principle is set forth:

“The penalty of an offense is chastisement in proportion thereto.” (42:41)

On reflection we find that this principle is laid down for the widening of the law in case where the specific law cannot be carried into effect. For instance, if a person who has lost his own teeth breaks the tooth of another, he ceases to be amenable to the rule of a tooth for a tooth, for has no teeth himself. In the same way, if a blind person should destroy the eye of another person, he cannot be deprived of his own eye, for he has none. The Holy Quran lays down general principles to meet such cases and doing so encourages everyone to deduce rules suitable to every case. It is a pity that the Torah does not follow this method and the Gospel is wholly deprived of this teaching. It only lays down a few moral exhortations, but they are not part of any code or system of law. The statement of the Christians that the Gospel has left legal matters to the intelligence of people is not a matter of pride, but one of remorse and shame, for whatever is not laid down as universal law and is not spelled out in terms of any regulatory principles, is liable to be misused and become an evil, however good its purpose might be. (Kitab-ul-Bariyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol 13, pp. 87-88)

Editorial

Muslims have a great love and respect for Jesus^{as}. He was a beloved prophet of God who preached the worship of one God and taught the Gospel. His teachings and words have been referred to and recorded in the Holy Qur'an.

Mary^{as}, the mother of Jesus^{as}, is also revered by Muslims. The Holy Qur'an narrates her story and declares that she was the most pious woman of her times. She is presented as a model for all believers since she was pure and righteous, yet endured humiliation and slander only for the sake of God.

There are many similarities in what was preached by Jesus^{as} and what the Holy Qur'an professes. Worship of one God is common in the Old Testament as well as the Gospel of Jesus^{as}. The first commandment declares the worship and unity of God. The Holy Qur'an preaches the Unity of God throughout its pages and the holy prophet Muhammad^{saw}'s conviction to the Unity of God is unmatched. Muslims believe that all the

goodness offered in the previous scriptures has been accommodated in the Holy Qur'an. We believe that there is no further need of previous revelations and that can be established by comparing the teachings of the Holy Qur'an with any other book. It is the only scripture that certifies the validity of the previous scriptures as truly revealed by God.

There are so many other commandments that are similar in Islam and Christianity, not to mention Judaism. Respect for parents, love for the neighbor, care of the orphans, widows and the needy are some of the many common themes. In addition, the prohibition of many sinful activities such as adultery, usury, lust, avarice, greed etc., are common grounds between the two religions. This is in spite of the differences in details of these prohibitions and commandments.

That is where we need to focus our attention. It is not prudent and fruitful if we simply criticize another faith for its beliefs. Comparative analysis would be more productive in illustrating one as better than another. This breeds

enlightening conversation and nurtures mutual understanding.

Instead of criticizing the Holy Qur'an, in cases such as about *Jihad* and treatment of hostile enemies, we must be shown how the Bible presents a better alternative. Similarly, instead of criticizing the Bible about its stance on the inferiority of women, we must show how the Holy Qur'an presents their status in a better way. Just to criticize one and reject without offering an alternative is a futile exercise in the promotion of ignorance and intolerance. It is not sufficient to declare one as bad without proving the superiority of the other.

In the current issue, we have presented topics that are common criticisms against Islam. We contrast how the Holy Qur'an and the Bible present the same subjects and why we believe that the Holy Qur'an is superior. This can serve as a platform for future discussions on socio-economic issues to analyze the teachings and solutions presented by both books to facilitate the personal decisions we make as individuals.

'Everything will Perish except God': Life of Hadhrat Sahabzadi Nasira Begum Sahiba

Summary of Friday Sermon
Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza
Masroor Ahmad ^{at}, Head of the
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,
August 5, 2011

Hudhur began the Friday Sermon today
by reciting the Quranic verses:

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ
وَيَبْقَى وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ
وَالْإِكْرَامِ

*“All that is on it (earth) will
pass away.” (55:27)*

*“And there will remain only the
Person of thy Lord, Master of Glory
and Honor.” (55:28)*



Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad ^{at}

the whole Community in this. Hudhur
quoted a few verses of the poem, which
broadly translate as follows:

*The world is like an inn,
whoever one meets will be
parted
Even if one stays for a
hundred years, one
ultimately separates
There is no room for
complaint, this very house
is transitory*

Hudhur explained that the Imam of the age
who came to bring man closer to God, thus
drew attention at a time of rejoicing to the fact
that real happiness lies in Divine nearness.
The world indulges in idle, vain ways and
means at time of rejoicing but the Promised
Messiah^{as} taught that all our attention should
be drawn towards God and for this each act of

ours should be to attain the pleasure of God.
Once this insight is realised, the strands of
our times of joy and sadness will flow towards
attaining the pleasure of God. The Promised
Messiah^{as} came to complete the mission of
the Holy Prophet^{saw}. For him there was no
greater joy than for his children to cherish love
of God and be saturated in the love of the
Prophet^{saw} and to read and act upon the Holy
Qur'an. After Syedna Mahmood^{ra} finished
his first reading of the Holy Qur'an, the Prom-
ised Messiah^{as} held a reception and this poem
was written for that occasion. Each couplet of
this poem is replete with heart-felt prayer and
praise and glory of God. Acting upon the
blessed model of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, the
Promised Messiah^{as} told his children and his
followers not to fall in love with this world for
a time will come when the world and all that is
in it will have to be left behind. It is pointless
to love this world for it will not last. Lasting
benefit is in having a connection with the Be-
ing that always was and always will be and
that Being is God, the Master of Glory and
Honour.

Hudhur said the aforementioned verses
cite two important matters. One is that every-
thing is prone to decline and will gradually
perish and each human ultimately dies. The
other point is that those who endeavour to
attain God's pleasure should be hopeful.
Those who ever search for God, who endeav-
our for the piety of their children, doubtlessly
depart from this world but they are granted an
eternal life in the Hereafter and are taken in
the loving embrace of God as they hear: 'So
enter thou among my chosen servants, And
enter thou My Garden.' (89:30 – 31)

Hudhur said the advent of the Promised
Messiah^{as} took place to connect man with
God and make him understand the subject of
'So enter thou among my chosen servants,'.
Thus, at a time of rejoicing he articulated in
the poem that search for eternal life and un-
less one finds God, one cannot discover this
everlasting life. It is stated in Surah Al Qasas:
'And call not on any other God beside Allah.
There is no God but He. Everything will per-
ish except Himself. His is the judgement, and
to Him will you be brought back.' (28:89)
Hudhur said this is the objective which we
have to achieve, as God also states: 'And I

Hudhur quoted
from the writings of
the Promised
Messiah^{as} that
everything is
destined to perish and ultimately only God
will remain and that He has decreed death
for everything apart from His Being.
Hudhur said at the Ameen ceremony of
his son Syedna Mahmood^{ra}, the
Promised Messiah^{as} wrote a poetic
composition entitled 'Mahmood's
Ameen', which is full of prayerful and
advisory verses. He addressed these
verses to Syedna Mahmood as well as
to his two other sons. In fact, he included

have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.’ (51:57) Hudhur said the significance of such worship is understood once one is firm on the belief that ‘There is no God but He’ and all else will perish.

Hudhur said God draws attention to such matters to those who believe in Him with sincerity. He also provides opportunities for attaining high standards of worship. The month of Ramadan comes every year so that we recognise God and save ourselves from destruction. Fortunate are those who avail of this opportunity and having done so, continue to strive towards it for the rest of the year. Those alone endeavour with resolve who understand that: ‘Everything will perish except Himself.’ No doubt therein is the teaching that death is a reality but those who absorb themselves in God achieve a new life. Who are those who are absorbed in ‘the Person of thy Lord’? These are those who understand the objective of creation. Indeed, fortunate are those who make an effort to comprehend this subject and then act upon it. May God enable each one of us to understand this subject and act upon it and may this Ramadan take us closer to this, for which our elders made endeavours and prayed for and breathed this spirit in the new generation.

When a dear one, an elder departs from this world one is further drawn to this subject. Indeed each person who has firm faith and belief in God should be further drawn to this subject at such a time. Hudhur said that recently, his mother passed away. Inna lillahe wa inna illahe raji’oon. When Hudhur reflects over her life, he notes her standard of worship as a model. Her reading of the Qur’an for hours, deliberating over it and her engrossment in Salat were exemplary for Hudhur. Although she did not experience the time of the Promised Promised Messiah^{as} but she saw the early times and had the love and prayers of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} and had the blessings of the companions of the Promised Promised Messiah^{as}. She had the positive and distinctive influence of the time closer to that of the Promised Messiah and she was the eldest daughter and second child of Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra}. She carried herself with dignity, the sort of dignity which should be evident in a believer. She had angst to cultivate love of God; this angst was heart-felt and could be seen in her poetic compositions. Hudhur said judging from the engrossed manner in which she offered her Salat, Hudhur knows her feelings were not superficial like poets who wander in wilderness. In a poetic composition she wrote what is broadly translated as follows:

Your love, Your mercy, Your forgiveness too
I seek Your pleasure each moment
Having lost everything in His obedience
I only seek my Master’s support
May You alone be in my heart
I seek the mantle of Your mercy

Hudhur said it is related in Hadith that as a funeral procession passed by, the Companions spoke well of the deceased. The Holy Prophet said ‘it has become obligatory’. The Companions asked what had become obligatory. The Prophet^{saw} answered that Paradise had become obligatory for the person because when people praise the virtues of the deceased, God makes arrangements for his or her forgiveness.

Hudhur said people who knew his mother are writing her many attributes in the numerous letters of condolence that he is receiving on her passing away. In light of these letters and what Hudhur had himself observed, he hoped and prayed that her prayer ‘I seek the mantle of Your mercy’ is fulfilled and God has wrapped her in the cover of His mercy and forgiveness.

Hudhur prayed: ‘O my Dear God, extend the treatment to my mother that she sought in this prayer, and make us, her children also understand this concept. In this world and after death, keep us also wrapped in the cover of Your mercy. May we never be distant from the expectations that she had from her children. May God also enable her next generations to attain His pleasure.’

Hudhur said his mother was the eldest daughter of Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} and Syedda Mahmooda Begum sahiba and was born in 1911. Her mother was the daughter of Dr. Khalifa Rasheeduddin. The Nikah of the parents of Hudhur’s mother took place in 1902 and they were married in October 1903. The Promised Promised Messiah^{as} wrote to Dr. Khalifa Rasheeduddin that ‘Mian Mahmood’ was pleased with this match and this was a testimony that this was according to Divine will. Hudhur said certainly this was the case as their son was given the mantle of Khilafat. The Nikah of Hudhur’s parents took place in 1934 and Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} gave a lengthy sermon at the occasion. Two Nikahs were announced at the time, first was that of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III and the other of Hudhur’s parents. Hudhur read out some excerpts from the sermon for the Jama’at in general and the family of the Promised Mes-

siah (on whom be peace) in particular so that they realise their responsibilities and for Hudhur’s mother who always strived for high levels of Tarbiyyat of everyone, to be rewarded by God for Hudhur’s attention is drawn to this because of her passing away.

In his sermon Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II cited the Quranic verse: ‘And among others from among them who have not yet joined them. He is the Mighty, the Wise.’ (62:4) and said that this signified the coming of the perfect spiritual manifestation (Buruz) of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. He said it was not only the prophecy rather also an appeal by the Prophet^{saw} that when the evil of Dajjal (antichrist) appeared, a few people of Persian descent will rise against it. Citing an incident from the life of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} said during an expedition there was lack of order among the Muslims so much so that only a dozen Companions remained around the Prophet^{saw}. At this time, the Holy Prophet^{saw} had it announced that Prophet of God was calling on the Muslims. The Companions rushed to get to him trampling everything in their way. Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} said that the call the Prophet^{saw} made regarding people of Persian descent was far greater in glory, in belief, in confidence, in love and in hope than the call he made to his Companions. He explained that the particular word (Rijaal) used by the Prophet^{saw} in his prophecy connotes not just the people of Persian descent, rather it also signifies their generations to follow will have the same responsibility. Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} thus passed the message and the trust onto the family of those of ‘Persian descent’. He said that he thus passed on the responsibility to the next generation, be they his children or the children of his brothers.

Hudhur prayed that having listened to this heartfelt message, may God make us feel responsible and may the passing away of the eminent elder of the family draw the Jama’at in general and the family of the Promised Messiah^{as} in particular towards the important obligation that the Promised Messiah^{as} has stated.

Briefly citing the life-history of his mother, Hudhur said given the times, her father stressed on her religious and worldly education and she was educated up to the FA standard. On 17 March 1925 a Madrassa was opened for girls and Hudhur’s mother was one of the early students in it. She passed the qualification of ‘Maulwi’ in 1929 from the Madrassa. Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} also wrote a poem on the Ameen of his children which is full of prayers. Mentioning Hudhur’s mother, Hadhrat Sahibzadi Nasira Begum, the poem says:

*My Nasira , a
virtuous star
Wise, dutiful, a
pure gem*

Hudhur said these attributes are not simply borne out of the love of a father. Many Lajna who worked with Hudhur's mother have verified these sentiments. A former sadr of Lajna wrote that she was very keen regarding Tarbiyyat and always thought of new ideas and plans in this regard. She wished for each girl and each woman from Rabwah to have a very high standard of Tarbiyyat and to maintain the dignity of Purdah and general deportment. If she found someone not conducting themselves as they should, she would go up to them and lovingly explain about maintaining dignity.

Hudhur said that in an address during his first Jalsa as Khalifatul Masih, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV spoke about Hudhur's mother. He said that he had a sister who strictly abided by Purdah. She followed whatever she saw Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} do. Some younger women of the time thought that such ideas were of earlier times. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV then added that the earlier times he knew of was the time of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. He said this sister of his truly followed her strict ways while firmly abiding by Taqwa.

Hudhur said his mother had served as Lajna sadr for Rabwah for a long time and during her term she always aspired and worked hard for Rabwah Lajna to secure prominent position within Pakistan. This was not simply to be high on the league table but was owing to the thought that Rabwah was the seat of Khilafat and no one should have the occasion to say that there was 'darkness under the lamp'. Of course, God's pleasure was her objective. Someone has written to Hudhur that his mother's decisions had great foresight. She always consulted others and respected each person whom she consulted. One of her approaches to increase education and knowledge was to ask every member to memorise two couplets from the books Durre Sameen and Kalaam e Mahmood for meetings. Not only did this enhance spiritual knowledge, it was also most helpful towards Rabwah winning first position in Bait Bazi competitions.

*German capital Berlin's first
mosque opened, a cause of
celebration for the local
Ahmadiyya community.*



Hudhur said his mother related one of her dreams to Hudhur in which she saw the Holy Prophet^{saw}. She once told Hudhur about a dream she had about the bright future of German Jama'at. When Hudhur recently visited Germany and observed the increasing connections and networks of the Jama'at there, he was reminded of the dream.

Hudhur said he is aware that his mother had many poetic couplets memorised. Imam sahib's wife has written to Hudhur that during the journey to an out of town trip, rather than chat, she encouraged everyone to have a Bait Bazi session. Hudhur said his father Hadhrat Mirza Mansoor Ahmad had also committed many couplets of Durre Sameen to memory. It seemed as if he remembered the entire composition of 'Aye Khuda Aye Karsaz'. Hudhur said during their family travels, they always had Bait Bazi sessions; Hudhur's father had one team and Hudhur's mother the other. Hudhur said his mother knew the entire Qaseeda by heart. After the passing away of Hudhur's father whichever granddaughter slept with her, had the task of helping her revise Qaseeda. Hudhur said she remembered part of Qaseeda till her last days. She also read the Qur'an with great concentration. If she ever had any spare time during the day from house work, which she did in supporting her household help as well as undertake Lajna work, in addition to her morning recitation, she would sit and read the Qur'an with

deep reflection but it was not her habit to unnecessarily mention her knowledge in spite of her vast reading practice. As she had 'Maulwi' qualification, her knowledge of Arabic was good. She was most sympathetic and compassionate by nature and helped people with cash or by giving grain and also drew others' attention to do the same. A few well-off people gave their charity to her so that she would distribute it to the deserving. As she was Rabwah sadr Lajna for a long period she knew people and was aware of their situation. During her office term, she was not a sadr only as an administrator, rather, she was in touch with almost every family. During her term as sadr Rabwah Lajna was prominent in every department.

Many acquaintances of her are writing to Hudhur and mentioning how hospitable she would be when people went to visit her and would offer seasonal refreshments. She was very discerning and could gauge situation by looking at faces, asked after people and gave them good advice and prayers. She would draw attention regarding Tarbiyyat of children. As she had been a sadr for a long period, the vari-

ous Lajna meetings would take place in Hudhur's family home. Hudhur said they had a large veranda where everything was arranged. Promptly after Asr Salat, Hudhur said, everyone had to leave home because it used to be occupied by Lajna. 150 to 200 ladies would gather there and she would personally arrange for refreshments to be served. Hudhur said if one was indoors, one had to remain there for a couple of hours as the house was taken over by Lajna. An old class fellow of Hudhur has written to Hudhur remembering how once she heard a Haji sahib's voice and asked Hudhur's friend to go and see if Haji sahib had eaten or not as it was meal time. Once she came to know that someone was going through hard times and wished to send their children abroad. She had her Prayer mat sent to that person with the message that she had prayed for them on the particular Prayer mat and with God's grace all their children will have the chance to go abroad. The person has written to Hudhur that extraordinary set of events followed and all their children could go abroad. He has written that there are sympathetic people around but her concern was so unique that she made specific prayers and then sent a message.

Hudhur said his mother related one of her dreams to Hudhur in which she saw the Holy Prophet^ﷺ. She once told Hudhur about a dream she had about the bright future of German Jama'at. When Hudhur recently visited Germany and observed the increasing connections and networks of the Jama'at there, he was reminded of the dream. Another of her attribute was that she was very particular about all kinds of chandas. As long as Hudhur was in Pakistan, she used to ask him to organise it for her and would repeatedly say that the payments should be accurate. She had various sources of income and if the estimated income differed from what was received, she would ensure that the balance in chanda was paid forthwith.

Dr. Noori has written to Hudhur and has also forwarded a letter that Hudhur's mother sent him in 1999 in reply to Dr. Noori's letter to her following Hudhur's release from prison [*where Hudhur was a prisoner of conscience*]. She wrote:

'Dear Noori,

Assalamoalaikum warahamtullah wabarakatahu. I have received your letter in which you have expressed delight on the safe release of dear Masroor. It is great grace of Allah, otherwise the enemy had very dangerous plans. With His blessings God has demonstrated his power. We could not thank Him enough. Almost everyone in Rabwah as well as people outside Rabwah

Hudhur said therein is her humility that she does not mention her own prayers that she is bound to have made as a mother. Rather, she mentions the prayers of people of Jama'at. She also does not say may God protect my children, rather she prays for everyone.

made many heart-felt prayers. God accepted their prayers. Alhamdulillah, Thumma Alhamdulillah. May God also protect everyone in future.'

Hudhur said therein is her humility that she does not mention her own prayers that she is bound to have made as a mother. Rather, she mentions the prayers of people of Jama'at. She also does not say may God protect my children, rather she prays for everyone. Hudhur said thus is the distinction of the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} and her expression here is borne of the high standard of Tarbiyyat that Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} gave her.

Hudhur said his mother had great self-control but Hudhur's son told him that when he visited her a few years ago she became very emotional at Hudhur's mention. and their children be fulfilled. Hudhur said after Khilafat her relationship with Hudhur took on a different tone and Hudhur would feel this over the telephone. Hudhur said he used to ring her prior to going on tours and she, knowing Hudhur well for no one knows one more than one's mother, that he was quiet and said little, would pray that may God bless Hudhur's words and his speeches. She would tell him that she was offering Nawafil and making prostrations of special prayers. When Hudhur met her at Qadian in 2005 it was an amazing situation for Hudhur; a unique experience. Her connection with earlier Khulafa that Hudhur had seen in the past was now extended to Hudhur by her and the mother and son connection was not there. It was replaced by a connection of Khilafat which had respect and deference.


Dr. Ibrahim took her interview there [in Qadian] in which Hudhur is also mentioned. In the interview she said that she had respect and regard for Hudhur because he was the Khalifa of the time. Hudhur said his dear mother gave precedence to this relationship over every other relationship. Hudhur said when he went to meet her [in Qadian] she would have happiness and

brightness in her eyes and her face would burst with joy. Whatever time Hudhur could find from the engagements of Jalsa he would go and see her, she would be loving towards Hudhur and they would sit together and talk for some time. But this was only over a period of 15 days. When she departed from there, she did so with prayers.

Dr. Furrukh has written to Hudhur to say that when he went to see her to pay his condolences at the passing away of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{ra} she asked him to pray to be enabled to take the Bai'at of the next Khalifa and also to develop an emotional connection with him. Hudhur prayed may God bless her with Paradise.

In 1913 when Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra} wished to start the newspaper Al Fazl, his wife Hadhrat Umme Nasir offered her jewellery to fund it initially. He wrote that God had inspired his wife in a way that Hadhrat Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) was inspired to help the Holy Prophet^ﷺ. She gave two pieces of her jewellery to be sold to fund the launch of the newspaper. One of these were her own gold bracelets, the other were her childhood gold bracelets that she had kept for the use of her daughter Nasira Begum. By selling this jewellery the newspaper was launched. Hudhur appealed that the readers of Al Fazl remember the dear daughter of Hadhrat Musleh Maud^{ra}, his mother, in their prayers when reading the newspaper. Although not on a conscious level, but she also took part in the installation of Al Fazl which today is also published as Al Fazl International. ♦

Hudhur prayed that may God continue to elevate her station in Paradise and may her prayers reach us. Hudhur said he would lead her funeral Prayer in absentia after Friday Prayer.



The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a Helper suitable for him."
Genesis 2:18

The Biblical Story of Adam and Eve

By Bushra Bajwa

Was Adam The First Man on Earth?

Both the Qur'an and Bible relate the story of Adam and Eve: their creation and downfall in the Garden. While the stories told in each book are generally comparable in most respects, some differences do exist. A side by side comparison of the narrative as detailed in the Qur'an and the Bible, together with the use of science and logic, can help one to the true story of Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve were, according to the Book of Genesis, the first man and woman created by God: "*And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*" (Genesis 2:7). Then God said that "*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a companion fit for him*" (Genesis 2:18) and thus God created the first woman. Eve, according to the Book of Genesis, was created from the rib of Adam: "*And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman, and He brought her to the man*" (Genesis 2:21).

In the Qur'an, however, it is stated that God said to the angels that "*I am about to*

place a vicegerent in the earth" (2:31). The Arabic word used for "vicegerent" is *khalifa*, and the word *khalifa* denotes a successor, which means that according to the Holy Qur'an, Adam, who lived about 6000 years ago, was not the first man on Earth. The world has passed through many cycles of creation and civilization. Adam, the antecedent of the present human race, is the first link in the present cycle, and not the very first man in God's creation. When the stage of the full development of the mental faculties of man was reached, God sent His revelation to the most perfect man of that generation, Adam. It is not correct to say that God formed man out of clay and breathed His spirit into him, rather the creation of man was the culmination of a gradual process. The Qur'an says: "*And He has created you in different stages and different forms*" (71:15). Furthermore, the Promised Messiah^{as}, founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, states that

The Qur'an also does not support the view that Eve was created from the rib of Adam. In the Qur'an it states ***“O ye people! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul and of its kind created its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women” (4:2)***

we do not claim that all mankind who are now found in different parts of the earth, are the progeny of the same Adam. Hence, we cannot say whether the original inhabitants of America, Australia etc. are the progeny of this last Adam or some other Adam gone before him¹. Scientific evidence supports the Qur'an's decree. Discovery of fossils or dead remains by scientists of earlier humans prove that Adam was not the first man on earth. The fossilized skulls of two adults and one child discovered in the Afar region of eastern Ethiopia have been dated at 160,000 years, making them the oldest known fossils of modern humans, or Homo sapiens². **Scientists also believe that the first humans in Australia date to 50,000 years ago³ and the first humans arrived in America about 15,000 years ago.⁴** Thus, the proclamation of the Bible that Adam who lived about 6,000 years ago, was the first man, is in direct conflict with Science.

The Qur'an also does not support the view that Eve was created from the rib of Adam. In the Qur'an it states *“O ye people! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul and of its kind created its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women” (4:2)*. The words do not mean that woman was created out of the body of man, but that she belonged to the same species as man, possessing identical aptitudes and propensities⁵.

The Tree Of Knowledge, Or a Source of Evil?

Genesis 2 and 3 relate the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is narrated that God set the man in the garden



The difference in the narrations of the Qur'an and the Bible is in the representation of the tree. According to the Bible, the forbidden tree was the tree of knowledge of good and evil...

“to work it and watch over it,” permitting him to eat from all the trees in the garden except the Tree of Knowledge, *“but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis. 2:17)*. Similarly, in the Qur'an, Adam and Eve are forbidden to eat from the tree: *“And We said, ‘O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and eat therefrom plentifully wherever you will, but approach not this tree, lest you be of the wrongdoers’” (Qur'an, 2:36)*.

The difference in the narrations of the Qur'an and the Bible is in the representation of the tree. According to the Bible, the forbidden tree was the tree of knowledge of good and evil: *“You will not certainly die,”* the serpent said to the woman: *“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis, 2:4-5)*. However, if the tree represented knowledge, as suggested in the Bible, forbidding man to eat from the tree would be depriving man of knowledge and thus be in conflict with the purpose of man's creation. The Qur'an states *“so he caused them to fall into disobedience by deceit. And when they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden. And their Lord called them, saying, ‘Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you, verily Satan is to you an open enemy?’” (7:23)*. According to the Qur'an, the tree was a source of evil which made Adam exhibit a weakness. The word used in this Qur'anic verse for nakedness, ‘sayy'ah’, is used in this context to signify *“object of shame”* or *“weakness”*. Every person has some weaknesses that are hidden even from himself,



Original Sin or Forgiveness?

but which become exposed at times of fatigue, stress and temptation. Thus when Adam was tempted by Satan, he became conscious of some of his natural weaknesses⁶. Furthermore, the Qur'an does not state that Eve initiated the fruit eating, but that Adam and Eve were both responsible: *"But Satan caused them both to slip by means of it and drove them out of the state in which they were"* (Quran 2:37).

Original Sin or Forgiveness?

In the Bible, after eating fruit from the tree of knowledge, Adam and Eve, aware of their nakedness, hide themselves from God. Adam blames Eve for giving him the fruit, while Eve blames the serpent. God curses the serpent, causing it to lose its legs and to become an eternal enemy of the human race *"upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life"* (Genesis. 3:14). To the woman he said, *'I will greatly increase your pains in child-bearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.'* To Adam he said, *'Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it were you taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return'* (Genesis 3:16–19). Not only were Adam

and Eve reprimanded and punished for the sin they committed, according to the Book of Genesis, their entire progeny has been eternally polluted with sin and will also be punished for it.

In the Qur'an, however, it states that Adam and Eve sought forgiveness from God: *"They said 'Our Lord we have wronged ourselves and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall surely be of the losers'"* (7:24). And God forgave them: *"Then Adam learnt from his Lord certain words of prayer. So He turned towards him with mercy. Surely, He is Oft-Returning with compassion, and is Merciful"* (Qur'an 2:38). The idea of original sin does not exist in Islam. Arguably, a just God would not eternally condemn the entire progeny of Adam and Eve for the sin they committed and repented. According to Islam, sin is neither transferable, nor inherited: *"No one can bear the burden of another"* (Qur'an 35:19).

Serpent or Satan?

Also in contrast to the Biblical story, the Qur'an relates that it was Satan that tempted Adam and his spouse and caused them to err: *"But Satan caused them both to slip by means of it and drove them out of the state in which they were"* (Qur'an 2:37). Satan is "any evil or harmful being or thing, whether a spirit or a human being or an animal or a disease or any other thing"⁷. The Satan that caused Adam to slip was not a serpent, but a wicked man from among the human race. He was a member of the family which Adam had been told to avoid⁸.

Conclusion

There are some similarities in the Qur'anic and Biblical narratives of Adam and Eve. However, scientific discoveries reject the Bible's claim that Adam who lived 6,000 years ago was the first man on Earth. Also, the Biblical story degrades women for initiating sin. In addition, it is irrational to believe that all of mankind will eternally suffer for the sin committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as detailed in Genesis. The story of Adam and Eve as described in the Qur'an does not contradict science and logic, which lends support to the fact that the Qur'an is an authentic and most perfect book. ♦

Endnotes

1. Malfooza'at, Vol. 10, Page, 426
2. Sanders, R. (June 11, 2003). 160,000-year-old fossilized skulls uncovered in Ethiopia are oldest anatomically modern humans. UC Berkley News.
3. Mayell, H. (February 24, 2003). First humans in Australia dated to 5000 years ago. National Geographic News.
4. Lovegren, S. (February 2, 2007). First Americans arrived recently, Settled Pacific coast, DNA study says. National Geographic News.
5. **The Holy Quran. Arabic text with short commentary. Published under the auspices of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (2003). Page181.**
6. **The Holy Quran. Arabic text with short commentary. Published under the auspices of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (2003). Page313.**
7. **The Holy Quran. Arabic text with short commentary. Published under the auspices of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (2003). Page27.**
8. **The Holy Quran. Arabic text with short commentary. Published under the auspices of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (2003). Page313.**

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الرِّجَالُ قَوْمُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ
 اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا
 مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۗ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ
 حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ
 وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ
 وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۚ
 فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾

“Men are guardians over women because Allah has made some of them excel others, and because (men) spend (on them) of their wealth. So virtuous women are obedient, and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah’s protection. And as for those on whose part you fear disobedience, admonish them and keep away from them in their beds and chastise them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely, Allah is High and Great” (Holy Qur’an 4:35)

Chastising A Wife in Islam

Maham Khan

Does the Holy Qur’an allow men to beat their wives? We would answer ‘no’. Yet the question still lurks at the back of our minds. Should we then consider the possibility that there could be more that

meets the eye when reading verse 4:35?

In comparison, take the following verse:

“And if a woman fears ill-treatment or indifference from her husband, it shall be no sin for them that they may be suitably reconciled

to each other; and reconciliation is best...” (4:128).

Apparently for a woman, there is no three-step program for restraint that verse 4:35 has provided for men. It does hint at a separation if the wife fears unjust treatment from her husband, by suggesting that they can be “reconciled” which is the better for the both of them. However, even though both these verses aim at ending the estrangement between the couple and saving the marriage, the way to go about it differs with gender. It seems a woman can separate from her husband if he might be harsh with her or even betray her, while a husband could resort to punishment if his wife refuses to desist from her ill-behavior.

Yet Prophet Muhammad^{sa} is recorded to have said in his *ahadith* or sayings, that “he who treats his wife best is the best among men and I am the best among you” (Kathir). He never raised a hand against any of his wives. While the Holy Qur’an does record a time when he was upset with them and even an instance when his youngest and favorite wife Aisha was falsely accused of adultery (24:12-14), his only reaction was to separate himself from his wives. And while verse 4:35 speaks of a woman’s *nushooz* or “rising against her husband” and not some ordinary disobedience or even adultery (for which, punishment has been prescribed in the Holy Qur’an, for both men and women), the Holy Prophet^{sa} conveyed, by his own example, how he would treat his wives if he were to be somehow displeased by them: he separated himself from them.

Various translations (e.g. of Yusuf Ali, Pickthall etc) of the root word *dharaba* from which *idhribuhun* in verse 4:35 is derived of, read *strike* or *beat*. Owing to many such renderings, even ‘chastise’ seems to mean ‘beat.’ The verse quoted in the beginning of this essay is from Maulawi Sher Ali’s translation, which reads ‘chastise.’ In various Qur’anic verses the word *dharaba* has been translated to ‘strike’ or to ‘go forth,’ meaning to leave or to separate.

For example, we read verse 2:274 as, “(Alms are) for the poor who are detained in the way of Allah and are unable to move about (*dharaban*) in the land.” And again in the following verse *dharaba* is translated as ‘sets forth’: “Dost thou not see Allah sets forth (*dharaba*) a parable of a good word?” (14:25).



Yet Prophet Muhammad^{sa} is recorded to have said in his ahadith or sayings, that “he who treats his wife best is the best among men and I am the best among you” (Kathir). He never raised a hand against any of his wives.

However, verse 8:51 contains the word *yadhriboon* which is derived from *dharaba* just as *idhribuhun* is and it reads, “And if thou couldst see when the angels take away the souls of those who disbelieve, smiting (*yadhriboon*) their faces and their backs and (saying):Taste ye the punishment of burning.” This is perhaps the only verse that supports the translation of beating or even chastise.

The intention of this article is not to advocate another translation of the concerned verse. In fact it is to defend it as it is. Critics of Islam hasten to accuse it of violence against women and ignorant translators of the Holy Qur’an, despite their being Islamic scholars, add to the misconception with their faulty renderings. It would do us good to understand that the word ‘chastise’ does not have a violent connotation to it. We should also appreciate the significance of this word since we do come across sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that many have mistakenly taken as permission to hit women when he has said that if any beating should even occur, it should not be such that could leave a mark on the wife’s body, (Tirmidhi, Muslim). And as he has also said that he is the best among men who treats his wife with kindness, as such, the word ‘chastise’ takes over an ambiguous meaning.

If a man were to lightly hit his wife,

which is how the word *dharaba* is understood in verse 2:61 where Moses^{as} was asked to strike the rock with his rod, the issue still remains a hot button with critics. How much does ‘lightly’ quantify? If the Holy Prophet^{sa} has said not to leave a mark on a woman’s body, how is she supposed to be beaten then? Furthermore, verse 4:35 ends with the warning that if disobedient wives obey then “do not seek a way against them,” is it possible that any woman would come to her senses after a beating? Even children are not to be treated that way. They either remain in fear or repeat the offense in defiance. Point is, perhaps the Holy Prophet^{sa} could have given a practical demonstration since Muslims consider him to be the living example of the Holy Qur’an. And the truth is, there is no such record.

The label ‘wife-beater’ certainly didn’t spring up with the message of the Holy Qur’an 1400 years ago. Men have always used and abused women. In fact, many chose aggression as a way to ‘handle’ their wives. Moreover, masculinity was equated with violence. Shakespeare’s misogynistic play, ‘Macbeth’ brings out the evil that not only men are capable of but the violence that sprouts from them when women themselves incite them. Lady Macbeth is the classic example of such a wife who goads her husband to kill the King and

accuses him of being less than a man for getting cold feet. Knowing his nature she says,

“Hie thee hither,(That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;(And *chastise* with the valour of my tongue(All that impedes thee from the golden round,” (Macbeth, Act 1 Scene V).

According to English dictionaries, Lady Macbeth is ‘severely rebuking’ her husband and not beating him. This is exactly how the Qur’anic verse 4:35 should be understood. When a wife begins to “rise against” her husband as verse 4:35 describes, the husband should admonish her or try to correct her, then leave her alone in her bed and if she still resists him, then to chastise her or be severe with her. This is where the punishment comes in: either severely criticise her or like the Holy Prophet^{sa} did, separate himself from her for a while. Separation in itself is a physical punishment. For the woman as well as the husband, since he has already shunned intimate relations with her by not sharing the marital bed.

For readers to suggest that Islam permits beating the wife as a last resort, is incomprehensible. No such incident is found from the life of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. And the Holy Qur’an does not promote any such behavior. Beating is inhumane conduct and the Holy Prophet had come to free womankind of precisely such cruel treatment. No rationale can support the beating of a woman into submission.

THE PROBLEM OF FUNDAMENTALISM AND VIOLENCE IN RELIGION

Violence in the Bible and Jihad in the Qur'an

By Khaula Rehman MD

Many Christians and Jews, perhaps unconsciously, view the Qur'an in absolute contrast to their own scriptures. In their minds the Qur'an teaches savagery and warfare, while the Bible offers a message of love, forgiveness, and charity. For the prophet Micah^{as}, God's commands to his people are summarized in the words "act justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Christians recall the words of the dying Jesus^{as}: "Father, forgive them: they know not what they do." Likewise, there are verses in the Holy Qur'an to promote tolerant and kind behavior. The Holy Qur'an says, "And good and evil are not alike. Repel evil with that which is best. And lo, he between whom and thyself was enmity will become as though he were a warm friend." (Al Qur'an 41:35)

This article is to give the Christians and the Jews a balanced view of the two scriptures, the Bible and the Qur'an. There are no verses in the Holy Qur'an to trigger and promote genocide, but there are in the Bible:

When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. When the

*Christians recall the words of the dying Jesus^{as}:
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do." Likewise, there are verses in the Holy
Qur'an to promote tolerant and kind behavior.*

Lord your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the Lord your God gives you from your enemies. This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby. However, in the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the Lord your God has commanded you.¹ (Deuteronomy 20:10-17)

There are no verses in the Holy Qur'an to destroy polytheism with sword and kill all polytheists and even their livestock, regardless of whether they are at war or not, but in the Bible there are:

If you hear it said about one of the towns the Lord your God is giving you to live in that

troublemakers have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods you have not known), then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly. And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. You must destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock. You are to gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God. That town is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt. (Deuteronomy 13:12-16)

There are no verses in the Holy Qur'an to kill people for sexual misconduct but there are in the Bible:

If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death. (Leviticus 20:10)

And:

If a priest's daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she must be burned in the fire. (Leviticus 21:9)

There are no verses in the Holy Qur'an ordering to attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. There is nothing in the Qur'an ordering, 'do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys,' but there is in the Bible:

Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'" "

So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand from Judah. Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. . . . But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed. (1 Samuel 15:1-9)

There are no verses in the Holy Qur'an describing Allah as a Man of war but in *Exodus 15:3*, the Bible tells us the Lord is a man of war. Such war verses are not limited to the Old Testament only. In *Mark 7:9-10*, Jesus is critical of the Jews for not killing their disobedient children as prescribed by Old Testament law. In *Luke 19:22-27*, Jesus orders killed anyone who refuses to be ruled by him. The New Testament quotes Jesus Christ, "Think not that I am came to bring peace on earth: I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (*Matthew 10: 34*) At another place the New Testament quotes Jesus, "Then said he unto them, 'But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise his knapsack: and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.'" (*Luke 22: 36*)

The Holy Qur'an does not prescribe death sentence for the sin of arrogance but the Bible does:

Anyone who shows contempt for the judge or for the priest who stands ministering there to the Lord your God is to be put to

death. You must purge the evil from Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:12)

The Holy Qur'an does not prescribe to kill witches and fortune-tellers but the Bible does:

Do not allow a sorceress to live. (Exodus 22:18) And: A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads. (Leviticus 20:27)

The Holy Qur'an gives freedom of speech to followers of all other religions and does not prescribe killing them for preaching their religion but the Bible does:

If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), do not yield to them or listen to them. Show them no pity. Do not spare them or shield them. You must certainly put them to death. Your hand must be the first in putting them to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone them to death, because they tried to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again. (Deuteronomy 13:6-11)

The Holy Qur'an does not prescribe capital punishment for stubborn and rebellious children but the Bible does:

If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard." Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

Now, the Christian apologists could be writhing in pain and anger and asking a host of questions, for example: "Why are you cherry picking?", "Why don't you take the holistic picture and appreciate the message of compassion in the Bible?", and "Why do you not hear the message of Jesus Christ^{as} of turning the other cheek?"

Muslims can respond affirmatively that we accept Jesus^{as} as a kind hearted prophet of God and the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} in the Qur'an has been called as a mercy for the whole

mankind, based on his conduct towards all people that he dealt with in his lifetime.²

Now I can hear through the grapevines, the Christian apologists offering host of explanations, for these verses! They are saying statements like, there are different explanations of these verses in different Judeo-Christian traditions and sects, the Old Testament has been superseded by the New Testament, do not take these verses literally in our present times, look at the context of these verses in time and history.

I say yes my dear, yes indeed, the Muslims have explanations also, for the so called 'sword verse' of the Holy Qur'an and other similar verses that sometimes hatemongers like to obsess about and the USA national media unilaterally comments on, fairly regularly!³ Let the discussions begin, as we hold hearings about the Holy Qur'an in different juries across the West. Let us be fair and reasonable and put the Bible on trial as well. Last but not least, the Christian apologists tell me that even if these verses are there in the Bible, so what? We do not take Bible seriously anymore and do not act on the Biblical injunctions anymore. But I remind them that according to a recent poll, more than 60% of the USA population still takes the Bible to be literal word of God.⁴ So, let us talk, let us talk about both the Bible and the Holy Qur'an in a mature fashion. According to the Holy Qur'an, Jihad even when it means armed struggle, it implies only defensive war and not a pre-emptive strike. Let me introduce two Exhibits in defense of the Holy Qur'an.

My Exhibit A: Fundamental versus allegoric: War and Peace in Islam:

<http://www.alislam.org/library/articles/War-and-Peace-in-Islam-20080402MN.pdf>

Exhibit B:

War Verses of the Holy Qur'an:

http://muslimsunrise.com/dmddocuments/2010_spring.pdf#page=22

(Endnotes)

¹ All Bible references and quotes are from New International Version.

² Al Quran 21:108.

³ Al Quran 9:5.

⁴

<http://legacy.rasmussenreports.com/2005/Bible.htm>

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What is Shariah Law?

Shariah Law Concept of Enforcement



Shari'ah

Dr. Lutf-U-Rehman

The idea of implementing the Shariah Law through the legislative process of a country is not new. Muslim majority countries have faced this debate for many decades. The driving forces behind such concepts are usually politico-religious parties who find it very hard to come into power through the normal process of elections. This is their attempt to grab power in Muslim majority countries. Over time they have succeeded to varying degrees in this goal.

Hadhrat *Khalifat-ul-Masih IVth* has described the line of argument by the religious elite as follows:

“It is generally understood that if the majority in a country are Muslims, then the Muslims have a right rather, an obligation to enact Shariah Law. It is argued that if they believe in the Holy Qur’an and if they believe also that the Holy Qur’an is a comprehensive Book which relates to every area of human activity and directs man how he should conduct himself in every sphere of life, then it is

hypocrisy not to act on those claims. They should follow the logical conclusion and enact Shariah Law and make it the only law valid for the country.”

(‘Shariah: Relationship Between Religion & Politics in Islam.’ A speech delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad Khalifat-ul-Masih IVth, at the Inter religious Consults, Suriname, on 3rd June 1991)

Then he points out various problems that will be encountered if an attempt is made to enact Shariah law as the only law of the land.

1) If Muslims are permitted to have Shariah Law based upon their Holy Book, then other religions will have the same right in their countries. For example, India will be free to have a law based upon their religious scriptures. Jews can enact the law of the Talmud for their countrymen. Christians will also be free to force the population to follow their religious law in their countries. Today, with most countries having multiple faiths in them, this can produce chaos and substantial communities can become sec-

ond class citizens with only limited rights.

2) Since legislation will be based in the scriptures of a certain religion, people belonging to other faiths will have no say in the formulation of that legislation and will be excluded from the process, even though they may be affected by it. In a secular state the citizens acquire these rights by being a citizen regardless of their beliefs or any other discrimination such as race, color or creed.

3) Even if legislative bodies were to be elected without any religious consideration, the interpretation of the law based in religion will be challenged by the religious scholars and they will have the final say as they are the scholars of the religion. Therefore even when the religious scholars will not be elected, it will become necessary to concede power of legislation to them. This would by definition result in a theocratic state.

4) Over time all religions divide and many sub groups appear. Within Islam there are at least 73 different sects whose interpretation of Shariah Law differs from others. The most stark example of this was seen during the 1953 judi-

cial enquiry report after Anti-Ahmadiyya riots in Pakistan. The *Ulema* (religious scholars) from different sects of Islam could not agree on the definition of a Muslim. It is common knowledge that religious scholars of various denominations do not agree on even basic regulations such as how to perform *Salat* (prayer). This presents another serious hurdle in implementing a law which is based on religion. The majority sect in a religion will enact the law according to their interpretation. But the majority sect may make up only a small fraction of the total population of the country. Hence a small minority will dictate the legislation for the majority of the people of that country.

5) All religious people believe that they have the perfect truth as revealed by God to their prophet through their Holy Book. They believe that there is no error in that which has been revealed to them. Therefore the question is not finding an acceptable answer to a problem, rather it is only a question of implementation. There is no room for debate, as we already know the truth. And of course the truth will be as interpreted by the majority faction which may be only a small fraction of the total.

Therefore Hadhrat *Khalifat-ul-Masih IV*th said, “These and many such issues make the question of imposition of Shariah almost impossible.”

There was a great debate in Pakistan (teeming with fundamentalist Muslims) in the late 80’s and early 90’s about imposition of Shariah Law in the country. Ninety percent of Pakistan’s population is Muslim; the differences in the interpretation of Shariah Law made it impossible to become law.

The law passed in Pakistan is that they will accept the supremacy of the Qur’an, and they will agree that no legislation will be made contrary to the fundamental Qur’anic teaching. But beyond that, they will not adopt any rules or regulations which spring from laws as if they were legislative instructions from God.

Hadhrat *Khalifat-ul-Masih IV*th further opined:

“So as such, we must think many, many times, before we can even begin to ponder over the question whether anywhere in the world, the law of religion can be imposed as a legal tender. Personally, I doubt it.”

(‘*Shariah: Relationship Between Religion & Politics in Islam.*’ A speech delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad *Khalifat-ul-Masih IV*th, at the Inter religious Consults, Suriname, on 3rd June 1991)

Once this historic address was finished, *Khalifat-ul-Masih IV*th was asked some questions.



If Muslims are permitted to have Shariah Law based upon their Holy Book, then other religions will have the same right in their countries. For example, India will be free to have a law based upon their religious scriptures. Jews can enact the law of the Talmud for their countrymen. Christians will also be free to force the population to follow their religious law in their countries. Today, with most countries having multiple faiths in them, this can produce chaos and substantial communities can become second class citizens with only limited rights.

Hadhrat Khalifatul-Masih IV

Question: Is there a particular confusion in the western world about Shariah?

Answer: Thank you for this pointed question. But I thought that such questions are outside the realm of this discussion.

What we are discussing is whether it is possible to adopt religious law as the law of the country: by any state or any other religion, for that matter.

I believe it's not possible. It's not possible even if you genuinely and fervently so desire, in the name of God, even then it's not possible. We have gone so far away from religion. We have become hypocrites. The whole human society has become hypocrites. There is hypocrisy in politics and society everywhere. And hypocrisy does not permit honesty to flourish. It does not permit the word of God to take root. That is the main problem.

Question: I feel that we cannot really apply a law that came for older times to the modern times. Please explain.

Answer: I have studied this question in depth. I believe that religion can be permanent and universal; provided its principles are deep-rooted in the human psyche. The human psyche is unchangeable. And that is exactly what the Holy Qur'an claims. It says it is *Deen-ul Fitra*: meaning a faith or a law based on human nature. And also '*La tabdeela lekhalqillah*' meaning that the creation of God and whatever he has created in you, the dispensation, the dispositions, etc. and the basic propensity to do something or not to do so, all these remain the same.

Consequently, any law which is rooted in human psyche must also be universal and permanent. But, the Holy Qur'an does not stop there. It does not monopolize this truth. It goes on to say that all religions, at their nascent stages and at the stages of their development, were fundamentally the same and they all carried such basic truths related to human nature. This is referred to by the Qur'an as *Deen-ul-Qayyema*. It says there were three fundamental features in every religious teaching:

First: To mend your relations with God, to be honest and devoted to Him.

Second: To worship God only. In the Qur'anic sense, worship does not mean just to pay lip service, but to try to acquire God's attributes.

Third: To serve mankind and spend in the cause of the needy.

These are the three fundamental features, according to the Holy Qur'an, which are common to all religions. However, with the passage of time and through interpolations, they



were changed later on. So, what is needed is rectification of the change. Not a new faith. And that is what has been happening with the advent of every prophet.

So, it is a highly complex question and also not directly related to the issue we are discussing. I hope this much should suffice.

As far as the question of whether Islamic law, or any other religious law, can be imposed perforce, I say 'no' because it is against the spirit of all religions themselves. The Holy Qur'an says in Chapter 2 verse 256: *Laa Ikraha fid-Deen*

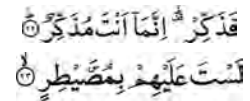
This is a statement of the Holy Qur'an of course; but it is a universal statement which can never be changed. It is an example of how laws can become permanent and universal. It says there is no coercion in faith or in matters of faith. No coercion is permitted. So, here is the question: If one religion imposes its law on a society where people of other religions and denominations also live, how will this verse stand against your attempt to coerce? Not only vis-à-vis the people from other religions, but vis-à-vis people from the same reli-

gion who are not willing?

So, this is the fundamental question. Therefore the conclusion is that coercion is not a valid instrument in religion. The only authority in Islam, who was genuinely capable of being given the right to coerce, was the Founder of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Why? He was a living model of Islam and when enquired about his character, his wife, Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} said, he was the living Qur'an.

So, the only person who could be genuinely entrusted with the faith of others, and be permitted to use coercion where he felt that rectification was to be made by force, was the Holy Prophet^{sa}

Yet, addressing him, Allah says in the Qur'an,



"Innama anta mothakkir lasta 'alaihim bimosaitir."

"Admonish therefore, for thou art but an admonisher; thou art not (appointed) a keeper over them," (88:22-23)

So, that is why I say coercion is not possible, nor permitted by God. Moreover, what prevents a Muslim from following the Muslim law? Why should he wait for the whole legislation to be changed?

Most of Islam and most of Christianity and most of Hinduism can be practiced without there being the law of the country. The more so since the general principle accepted by the modern political thinkers is that religion should not be permitted to interfere with politics and politics should not be permitted to interfere with religion.

Interference is what I am talking about, not Cooperation. Cooperation is the second part of the same subject. So, if a society is permitted to live according to their religious aspirations, why should the religious law (Shariah Law) concerned be made law of the land?

It is clear from the above explanation of Hadhrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IVth that Shariah cannot be implemented through the use of legislative process.

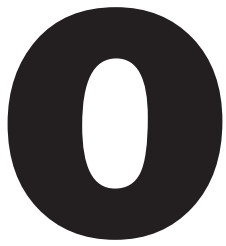
Shariah is a code of conduct, a guideline which is applicable to one's own self. No law is required to follow this code of conduct. Every Muslim is free to adopt this code in his personal life. As for others, we can only deliver the message but not enforce it. ♦

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The Holy Quran on Trial

Mubasher Ahmad, M.A., LL.B.



On 20th of March 2011, a Christian pastor in Gainesville,

Florida, by the name of Terry Jones, put the Holy Qur'an on trial. He presided over this trial as a judge and had a jury comprising of 12 members of his church. On receiving the 'guilty' verdict of the so-called jury, he oversaw the burning of the Holy Qur'an. This was done after the Holy Qur'an had been soaked in kerosene oil for one hour. His reason for burning the Qur'an was that its teachings didn't correspond with his own theology.

This shocking event is suggestive of the Nazi German authorities who had conducted a campaign to burn all books which did not correspond with Hitler's ideology. Clearly, the pastor brought shame on himself by rekindling the intolerant practices of the ancient Christian religious courts. One of the many appalling examples of intolerance of ancient Christian religious courts is the trial of a young innocent girl by the name of Joan of Arc who was found "guilty" and then burned alive at the stake in 1431. Later, Joan of Arc was raised to the status of a Saint by the Catholic Church; and those who had burnt her alive were disgraced in the corridors of history. Terry Jones is not the first person who has launched a malicious attack against the Holy Qur'an.. Since the very outset, when the Qur'an was in the process of being revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, the pagan Arabs in their ignorance and disbelief were quick to raise objections against the

Holy text. Although they could see the awe-inspiring beauty of its Arabic verses, and its stunning effect on the hearts of its listeners, but still, they did not believe it was the Word of Allah. To dissuade others from the effects of its beauty, they would find faults with the Holy Prophet^{sa}. They alleged that the prophet was a soothsayer – a *kahin*¹; or that he was a sorcerer, a magician – a *sahir*², or he was just a poet – a *sha'ir*³. At times they would also assert that he was under a paranormal influence, or (God-forbid) he had gone insane – and they used to call him a *majnoon*⁴. At times they would say that the text of the Qur'an was prepared by others; and at other times they claimed that the contents of the Qur'an were stolen from older scriptures, and it contained nothing more than "fables of the ancient"⁵ dictated to him by some foreigners⁶.

All of these false accusations are recorded in the Holy Qur'an itself along with complete and satisfactory responses. Each and every allegation is fully rebutted, and the Holy Qur'an stands out clearly as a winner. One of the dazzling proofs of the victory of the Qur'an is evident in the fact that within the life time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, a vast majority of Arabia accepted the Qur'an was the Word of Allah, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was its sole recipient, and that it was not a product of some soothsayer, magician, poet or a mad-man!

The very same pagan Arabs who used to find faults with the Qur'an, after accepting its truth turned into staunch believers that the Holy Qur'an was a miracle in itself; it was a perfect guidance for mankind for all ages to come; it was a blessing, a mercy, a light, a healing, and a clear answer to all important questions concerning life and hereafter, seen and unseen.

The world saw the marvelous phenomenon that the teachings of the Holy Qur'an turned the morally depraved Arabs into Godly men and women. It was with the blessings of the Holy Qur'an that the ignorant masses of Arabia turned into sincere and loyal servants of Allah. They rejected idol worship, and whole-heartedly accepted *Tawheed* – the Oneness of God. They became the teachers and leaders of the world, creating a superb new civilization unmatched in the history of mankind.

However, witnessing the popularity and effectiveness of the Holy Qur'an, some Christian, Jewish and Hindu scholars took it upon themselves to attack and defame the Holy Qur'an; and this continues to the present time. Their main allegations were and remain three-fold: 1) the authenticity of the text of the Quran; 2) the structure and style of its *Surahs* (*Chapters*); and 3), some of its teachings.

With regards to scriptural authenticity, much effort is made to prove that the present text of the Qur'an is not that existed at the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. These scholars claim that the text of Qur'an has "evolved" from one version to another – some of its verses have been changed, and some deleted by early Muslims⁷.

Concerning the structure and sequence of the Qur'anic *Surahs* they allege that these are haphazardly put together based on their length – the longer ones in the beginning and the shorter ones towards the end, without any coherent connection between their subject matter. They also say that different subjects are disorderly patched within each *Surah*, and its narration jumps quickly from one subject to another.

The third type of accusation is against some of its teachings. For example, these scholars accuse the Qur'an of depicting a Paradise as a place for men to engage in sensuous pleasures. They also allege that the Qur'an teaches inequality between genders: it gives more rights to men than it grants to women⁸.

They also claim that the Qur'an sanctions brutal aggression against non-believers and it promotes violent jihad to spread its message⁹. Moreover, they argue that the teachings of the Quran are not compatible with the modern scientific knowledge.

In response to all such attacks and many more on the Holy Qur'an, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and *Imam Mahdi*^{as} through his writings and discourses proved that all these allegations were not only baseless, but that the Holy Qur'an was far superior than all other religious scriptures – those belonging to the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Jains, the Zoroastrians, the Jews or the Christians. With cogent arguments he proved that the Holy Qur'an points out the deficiencies of previous scriptures, and corrects all their

shortcomings. He emphasized that the Qur'anic claim of its superiority over previous religious scriptures was true, and he challenged the entire world to counter his arguments written in defense of the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an carries a complete, comprehensive and final moral and spiritual law. Not only does it make claims of perfection, it also provides undeniable proof with regards to the truth of its claims based on rational reasoning. In light of what the Promised Messiah^{as} has imparted to us, our verdict is absolutely and emphatically certain that the Holy Qur'an is *al-Furqan* (Criterion), and as such, it clearly discriminates between what is truth and what is falsehood.

“Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Verily, falsehood is bound to vanish”¹⁰.

God Almighty has made a promise in the Qur'an that He Himself shall safeguard its text¹¹, and we openly and vigorously claim that God has kept His promise. There is no change in the text of the Holy Qur'an even to an iota.

It is exactly the same as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. The Arabic language is a living language, spoken by millions in many countries, while the original languages of other religious scriptures such as the Bible and the Vedas are no more in use. Our verdict is that the text of the Holy Qur'an has remained the same throughout the centuries all over the world.

We also can show that the subject matter of one *Surah* is connected with the preceding and proceeding *Surahs*, and that internally there is cohesion within various parts of the *Surahs*. This connection is fully explained in the Ahmadiyya Commentaries of the Qur'an such as *Tafseer-e-Kabeer* by Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifat-ul-Masih II^{ra12 13 14}

As for the concept of the Paradise, the fact is that matters of life yet to come are unknown and inconceivable to human mind, and some translators have made it difficult for the non-Arabs to understand its correct concept. Therefore, we have to make them understand that the language used in the Holy Qur'an is metaphorical designed to indicate the mysterious dimensions of life after death.

Moreover, the Holy Qur'an protects the rights of women who are equal in the sight of God. Allah *Subhaana wa Ta'ala*

clearly states in the Holy Qur'an: “*Whoso does good works, whether male or female, and is a believer, We shall surely grant them a pure life; and We will surely bestow on such their reward according to the best of their works*”¹⁵. Also, the Holy Qur'an explicitly states that there is no compulsion in matters of faith¹⁶. Jihad is not an act of offensive aggression. It is a permission to defend the faith and religious liberty for all who worship God. The Holy Qur'an declares: “*Permission to take up arms is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged, and God indeed has the power to help them – those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly, only because they professed ‘Our Lord is Allah.’ And if God had not repelled some people by means of others, then cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is oft remembered, would surely have been destroyed.*”¹⁷.

Thus, the Qur'an certainly does not instigate Muslims to start killing non-Muslims randomly. The permission to fight is given in self-defense against an armed aggression for the protection of freedom of conscience and religion. It is to safeguard the fundamental human right to worship God, whether it is done in churches, synagogues, cloisters or mosques.

We do not recognize any conflict between the Holy Qur'an and scientific findings. Nature is the Work of God and the Qur'an is the Word of God, therefore, there is no conceivable contradiction between the two. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly encourages scientific study and observation of all that exists in the universe, calling the natural mysteries and wonders as the Signs of Allah¹⁸. Nothing in the Qur'an contradicts science.

The Holy Qur'an grants spiritual eminence to the believers, and salvation is found through acting upon its teachings, but only the *mutahhir* – the pure of heart – can benefit from it, not the doubting disbelievers and the wrong-doers¹⁹. The best defense of the Holy Qur'an is to follow in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet^{sa} who was the Qur'an personified. Once when someone asked Hadhrat Aisha^{ra} about the Holy Prophet's^{saw} way of life, she said that he was the Qur'an in action²⁰. It becomes all the

more necessary for us to do so in the present day environment, because some extremists among the Muslims have twisted its teachings and as a result they do not behave according to its true teachings. As such, they provide ammunition to non-Muslims to attack the Qur'an.

In addition to correcting the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the Qur'anic teachings by unwise militant Muslims, we have to get fully engaged in presenting the Holy Qur'an as a solution to many serious problems of our present day society – whether they are social and moral problems or political and economical challenges. The Holy Qur'an presents solutions to many of the predicaments that our American society is suffering, and presents workable solutions – be it alcoholism, drug abuse, nudity, sexual promiscuity, pornography, same sex marriages, racism, crime, discrimination or be it the failure of interest based financial system, high use of credit, and disparity between the rich and the poor. ♦

Endnotes:

- (1) (52:30); (69:43)
- (2) (10:3); (38:5); (51:53).
- (3) (15:7); (37:37); (68:52).
- (4) (21:6); (37:37); (52:31); (69:42).
- (5) (6:26); (8:32); (16:25); (23:84); (25:6); (68:16); (83:14).
- (6) (16:104); (25:5)
- (7) Lester, Toby. *What is the Koran?* Atlantic Monthly, January 1999.
- (8) Spencer, Robert. 2009. *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran*, pp. 155-177.
- (9) *Ibid.*, pp 178-205.
- (10) (17:82)
- (11) (15:10); (75:18); (85:23)
- (12) *Tafseer-e-Kabeer* by Hadhrat Mirza Bashir ud Din Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II (rz)
- (13) *The Holy Qur'an with English Translation and Commentary*, Published by Nazarat Nashro Ishaat, India.
- (14) *The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text with English Translation & Short Commentary*, Edited by Malik Ghulam Farid, Islam International Publications Limited.
- (15) (16:98).
- (16) (2:257)
- (17) (22:39,40)
- (18) (2:165); (3:191-192); (6:96-99); (13:4, 5); (16:69); (21:32); (30:23, 25); (39:43).
- (19) (17:83); (56:80).
- (20) Hadith: *Sahi Bukhari*

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By Shahina Bashir

Science and religion have been at odds with each other over centuries. According to the hostility model, the belief in science or religion necessarily implies the rejection of the other. However, the reality is not that black and white. There have been and still are great scientists who are strongly grounded in religious beliefs.

The question which arises in the minds of people is why is there such a heated debate between science and religion? Are they really incompatible? Perhaps the answer lies in what is written in the scriptures. This article will focus on science as portrayed in the two major world scriptures, the Bible and the Qur'an.

A note about the origin of the Bible and the Qur'an

Most Biblical scholars are in agreement that the Bible- both the Old and the New Testament, have been written by various authors. Evangelical Christians believe that the Bible was written by men who were inspired by God. Many believe that the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses^{as} himself. However, there is again a controversy regarding this authorship. Bart Ehrman, a New Testament scholar, says that the authors of the New Testament are not who they claim to be. For example, Apostle Peter is thought to be the author of II Peter but in reality it is someone else. Fundamentalist Christians believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. Scholars on the other hand disagree on such a claim.

The Qur'an, unlike the Bible, has quite a different origin. It was not written by many authors neither was it actually written by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. Muslims believe the Qur'an to be a direct word of God revealed to

Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel. Whenever Muhammad^{sa} received the revelations first he would memorize them and subsequently he would direct scribes to write them on various types of materials including animal hide, bark, and parchment. The entire Qur'anic revelation was completed in a period of 23 years. After the death of the Prophet^{sa}, his first successor, Abu Bakr^{ra} (d. 634 A.D.), put the revelations into one complete book. It was the third successor, Uthman^{ra} (d. 656) who standardized the Qur'an and distributed copies to major Islamic capitals.

The creation story in the Bible

The Bible in the book of Genesis, chapter 1 describes the creation of the heavens and the earth (Verses 1-25). The creation of the universe, according to Genesis, took five days and man was created on the sixth day.

Day 1: God created light

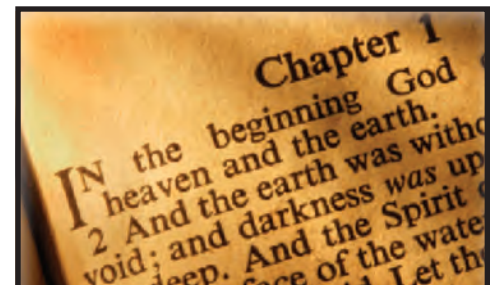
“In the beginning when God created the heavens and earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep... Then God said, ‘Let there be light’... and God separated the light from darkness... And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” (Verses 1-4)

Day 2: God separated the sky and the oceans-

“And God said, ‘Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters and let it separate the waters from the waters’... God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.” (Verses 6-8)

Day 3: God separated land from the oceans-

“And God said, ‘Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.’ God called the dry land



إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى
 الْعَرْشِ ۗ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ
 حَثِيثًا ۗ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ

The creation story in the Qur'an

Surely, your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods; then He settled Himself on the Throne. He makes the night cover the day, which pursues it swiftly. And He created the sun and the moon and the stars, all made subservient by His command. Verily, His is the creation and the command. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (7:55)

Earth, and the waters that were together he called Seas. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation'...And there was evening and there was morning, the third day." (Verses 9-11)

Day 4: God created the sun, the moon, and the stars, and made them attach to the dome

"And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' God made the two great lights- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night- and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth...And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day." (Verses 14-19)

Day 5: God ordered the seas to bring forth living creatures and birds to fly in the air

"And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.'... And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. (Verses 20-23)

Day 6: God ordered the land to produce living creatures of every kind and God created humankind "in our image"

"And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind.'... Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image...' And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." (Verses 24-31)

The creation story of the universe as narrated in the Bible shows incompatibility with what is now understood from the scientific data about the way our universe came into existence. The fundamentalists Christians say that the six days of creation as mentioned in Genesis refer to literal six days where each day consists of twenty-four hours. This understanding presents a problem since the scientific data suggests that the universe is several billion years old and life took a few billions of years to come into existence.

Apart from the age of the universe the sequence of events with respect to creation mentioned in Genesis has some obvious contradictions. The first such contradiction is apparent from Chapter 1, verse 3 which talks about the creation of light which appeared on day 1 of creation. However, the source of the light, that

is, the sun and the stars did not appear until the fourth day. Similarly, vegetation appeared on the earth on the third day. How could there be any plant life when the source of energy for the existence of the plant life had not been yet created? Literalists have a solution to this discrepancy. According to them, light came from God before the sun and the stars were created.

But here the matter gets even more complicated because there is a second rendition of the creation story in Genesis chapter 2. This narration is in direct contradiction to the first description. The second account of creation is as follows:

"In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up- for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth,...then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground..." (Verses 4-7)

In these verses it appears that God created man first and then plant life came into existence after that. Whereas, in chapter 1, verses 9-11, God had ordered the land to produce vegetation of various kinds.

The creation story in the Qur'an

In contrast to the Biblical narration of creation, the Qur'an does not relate the events in a sequence as we saw in Genesis, chapter 1. Verses that describe the creation of the universe are scattered throughout the Book.

Chapter 7, verse 55 of the Qur'an says, "Surely, your Lord is Allah Who has created the heavens and the earth in six days."

Although the word "day" is used here translated from the Arabic, *yaum*, it should not be taken to mean that the day is a twenty-four hour period. Elsewhere in the Qur'an, it has been clarified that one day in God's terminology could mean several thousands of years. The Qur'an says in chapter 70, verse 5,

"The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years."

The Qur'an's description of the creation of the universe does not conflict with science., which attributes the creation of the universe to the "Big Bang".

We read in the Qur'an in chapter 21, verse 31, "Do not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were a closed-up mass, then We clove them asunder? And We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?"

It is clear from the above verse that what is

described is nothing other than the “Big Bang” which scientists have alluded to when speaking about the creation of our universe. The Qur’an not only talks about the beginning of creation but it gives an apt description of its ending. This is mentioned in chapter 21, verse 105.

“Remember the day when We shall roll up the heavens like the rolling up of written scrolls by a scribe. As We began the first creation, so shall We repeat it — a promise *binding* upon Us; We shall certainly perform it.”

It is clear from the above verse that the universe is not eternal. The rolling up of the heavens is likened to what the scientists describe as the formation of black holes.

Evolution in the Bible & Qur’an

Fundamentalist Christians are opposed to the concept of evolution and they adhere to what is referred to as “Creationism”. Creationists believe that God created each species and which was put on earth by Him. Many organizations have sprung up in the USA whose primary job is to see that public schools teach an alternative to evolution. The push is to expose high school biology students to the subject of creationism and Intelligent Design.

The literalists see the creation story in Genesis, as mentioned earlier, as a solid proof to reject any reference to evolution.

Although there are many Christians who try to find a middle ground and suggest that evolution and the Bible can be in harmony, it is clear by reading Genesis 1 that there is no room for a compromise. In matters of evolution the Qur’an throws a different light.

In his book, “Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge, and Truth”, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rh}, the second Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, writes about the “step by step progressive stages”. He quoted verse 20 from chapter 84 in which humans are told about their continuous journey of moving from one stage to another:

“That you shall assuredly pass on from one stage to another.”

But the evolution spoken about in the Qur’an is not one of random chance.

“And thy Lord creates whatever He pleases and selects whomsoever He pleases. It is not for them to choose. Glo-

rified be Allah, and far is He above all that they associate with Him.” (Quran 28:69)

Man, according to the Qur’an, goes through four major stages of evolution. The first stage involves lifeless material. As humans moved onto the second stage they were physically considered to be humans but their mental stage was like that of animals. In this stage the humans had no verbal communication skills. By the third stage humans were able to think logically. In the final stage they learned to exist in a society. The evolution of man from a lower form to that of an intelligent being occurred under Divine guidance.

Quran and science

Considering that the Qur’an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad^{sa} some 1500 years ago and that the Prophet^{sa} himself was illiterate, it is a marvel when one finds Qur’anic verses that confirm scientific findings. Let’s take the example of astronomy. Here is what the Qur’an has to say on this subject:

Expanding universe-

“And the heaven We built with Our own powers and indeed We go on expanding it.” (51:48)

No other scripture talks about the concept of the expanding universe. This idea of the expanding universe is of significant importance to the scientists in order to gain a better understanding of how the universe was initially created.

The movement of the heavenly bodies in an orbit-

“And He it is Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each gliding along in *its* orbit.” (21:34)

The verse above is in complete accordance to what Copernicus and Galileo claimed. Contrary to the Church’s belief of geocentric universe, the Qur’an speaks about a heliocentric universe.

Apart from astronomy, the Qur’an describes the human embryologic process in a manner which is in complete corroboration with science.

“Then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; then We fashioned the clot into a *shapeless* lump; then We fashioned bones out of this *shapeless* lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed it into another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators.” (23:15)

The description of the stages of human development in the womb is unique to the Qur’an. No other Holy Scripture has mentioned embryology in such precise form. There was no way that Prophet Muhammad^{sa} had any notion of this science in the seventh century.

In search of the truth

A truth seeker does not take things matter-of-factly. Those who are believers, be they of any faith, owe it to themselves to not follow their religions blindly. The Qur’an repeatedly exhorts mankind to use their understanding. They are asked to ponder and search. Chapter 45, verse 14 of the Qur’an reads,

“And He has pressed into your service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, all of it entirely. In that there are Signs surely for a people who reflect.”

Professor Abdus Salam, a Nobel Laureate once wrote: “The Holy Qur’an enjoins us to reflect on the verities of Allah’s created laws of nature; however, that our generation has been privileged to glimpse a part of His design is a bounty and a grace for which I render thanks with a humble heart.”

In conclusion, the science vs. religion debate can be put to an end if there appears to be no controversy between the Holy Scriptures and scientific data. Those who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible would have to think more carefully. A comparative study of various religious books should be a guiding principle for sincere seekers of truth. ♦

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Marital Relationships in Islam and Misconceptions

By Usman and Sohaib Awan

Marital relations have been tackled by many contemporary researchers, in light of ever- increasing divorce rates. In today's time, especially in the United States, the roles of a husband and wife have become so intermingled that each believes the other is unnecessary. In this essay we shall demonstrate the relationship between husband and wife as prescribed by the universal religion, Islam.

The Holy Qur'an mentions several accounts of marital relationships through the accounts of prophets and other ordinary people. We feel it is important to examine the diction of the Qur'an to analyze these relationships discussed. The two words that are frequently used to describe the women in relation to their husbands are *zauj* and *imra'ah*, meaning *spouse* and *woman* respectively. What is interesting is that these words actually define the quality of the relationship between the husband and wife. For example, when there is cohesion and prosperity meaning, children in the relationship, the word used is *zauj*. But when there is no goodness in the marriage or goodness coming from the marriage the word used is *imra'ah* or *woman*. In the case of Abraham^{as}, the Qur'an cites the *zauj* of Abraham to be Hagar, but the wife of Abu Lahab is described as *imarahu* (his woman) in Chapter 111. Let us analyze the word choice of the Qur'an. Between Abraham^{as} and his wife Hagar there was always love. Hagar, however, was referred to as *imra'ah* until she bore Ishmael^{as} to Abraham^{as}. Thus, after the criteria were met, the relationship was characterized by the word *zauj*. In the case of Abu Lahab we find that though there may have been compatibility, as both husband and wife are known for their wickedness, there was no goodness coming out of the relationship. Consequently, the Qur'an referred to Abu Lahab's wife as 'woman', instead of 'spouse'. Thus, the Qur'an puts the relationship of husband and wife into perspective, through the feeling of love between the husband and wife, and their gift to mankind, their children.



“And of His Signs is that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that, surely, are Signs for a people who reflect,” (30:22)

If we look more closely, we see that marriage, ideally is the bringing together of not only two people but also two families. If the marriage is healthy, the family relations will also benefit from it. In an ideal society this is a key factor in promoting peace and harmony within the community. Therefore, the relationship one has with his or her spouse is pivotal in not only their own relationship, but also in relations of people on a larger scale and of the future (children) of the society. Thus, the All-Knowing God stresses the importance of love in the relationship between husband and wife, “And of His Signs is that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that, surely, are Signs for a people who reflect,” (30:22). This verse also describes the qualities of a healthy marriage, again using the word *azwaaaj* (plural of *zauj*) in reference to ‘wives.’ Con-

sequently, the relationship of a husband and wife is not limited to those two people; it resonates to a much larger scale.

Let us delve deeper into how Islam actually describes the relationship between husband and wife. Some non-Muslims argue, by citing various verses, that Islam treats the husband as the master or ruler over his wife. One such verse is, “Men are guardians over women because Allah has made some of them excel others, and because they (men) spend of their wealth. So virtuous women are those who are obedient, and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah's protection” (4:35). At first glance, the Qur'an seems to be portraying a bias towards the husbands. However, the beauty of the Qur'an is that the objection is answered in the very same verse and explains the reasoning. Men and women are both equal in the eyes of God spiritually. There are many verses in the

Qur'an that refer to this as being true, for example in Chapter 33 verse 36 God states: "Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who submit themselves to Him . . . men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him – Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward."

Spiritually, the reward is the same for both male and female. However, what seems to be troubling is the physical rank given to men over women. This verse, contrary to what others may suppose, does not give the slightest allusion to the use of force to subdue women. This physical strength is to be used, as the original verse mentions to, "spend of their (men's) wealth" and to provide for the family. Therefore, the husband has not been given any higher spiritual rank but a physical one, in which he must use to support his wife and family.

The original verse also points to another aspect of the marriage that we would like to discuss: the husband as a guardian. This guardianship status is important in that it describes the man's responsibilities. The husband must protect the family against any outside threats (e.g. the weather, animals, other people) for which he must use his physical and monetary means he has been given by God. Furthermore, the verse also instructs the women to guard the secrets of their husbands. In his commentary, The Promised Messiah^{as} explains that the injunction for wives to guard the secrets of their husbands may refer to actual secrets that he may have but it also extends to guarding and taking care of the home. The following verse in the Qur'an, further supports this reciprocal guardian relationship: "They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them," (2:188). As a garment covers one's nakedness and provides a feeling of comfort and protection for a person, so should a spouse fulfill his or her duties and become a shield for the other. This analogy of garments coincides with the meaning *zauj* we have been discussing, by instilling love between the husband and wife.

In light of the above verses, we can see that the Qur'an does not portray the husband as a master over his wife, rather

One of his most widely known sayings in regards to wives is, "Best of you is one who is best in his treatment of his wife and I am the best of you in this treatment,"

(Tirmidhi)

both must do their duties and guard one another in their distinguished ways. In fact, the idea of the husband being a master may have been deduced from the Bible. The following example, is not meant to bring down or degrade the Bible at all, rather it is to show that the teaching of the Qur'an is based on the human psyche and universal to all. Again we feel it necessary to go to one of the original languages of the Bible to describe how husband-wife relations are portrayed. The Hebrew words *ish* and *ba'al* are used in reference to husband, respectively meaning *man* and *master* or *lord*. Going back to the story of Abraham^{as} and Hagar, however this time in the Bible, we see the word used *ish*, literally meaning man, with regards to Abraham^{as} and his relationship to Hagar. However, in other parts of the Bible the word *ba'al* (master) is used. For example Exodus 21:22 states, "If men strive, and hurt a woman with a child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him." The husband in the verse comes from the term, *ba'al* meaning master or lord. Therefore, the

concept of husband being a master is not supported in the Qur'an, and may just have some connection with the Biblical word *ba'al*. As we have tried to show, a relationship cannot be classified as one between spouses or *zauj*, if the husband rules over his wife; mutual love and compromise is required.

Thus far, we have tried to demonstrate the relationship between husband and wife through Qur'anic verses and to remove a common misconception. Now we would like to briefly shed light on the perfect exemplar, The Holy Prophet^{sa}. One of his most widely known sayings in regards to wives is, "Best of you is one who is best in his treatment of his wife and I am the best of you in this treatment," (Tirmidhi). Consequently, it is important for us to look at what the Holy Prophet^{sa} said about this topic and how he himself practiced it. He loved his wives and did not hesitate to help around the house, completely contrary to the customs of Arabia at that time. On the topic of a husband's duties to the family, the Holy Prophet^{sa} has said: "Of the dinar (money) you spend in the cause of Allah; the dinar you spend in procuring the freedom of a slave; the dinar you give away in charity to the poor and the dinar you spend on your wife and children, the highest in respect of reward is the one you spend on your wife and children." This tradition puts into perspective of how important a husband's duties are to his family.

In conclusion, it is important for us to look at the different verses in the Qur'an which refer to husband-wife relationships and we must also look at the specific terminology used. In order for the marriage to be classified under the term *zauj* one must try to follow the example of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, the living example of the Qur'an. In this way we can have peace within our families and communities, and peace in the future generations. ♦

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the Law of

RETRIBUTION

The Holy Qur'an and Bible

By Anwer Mahmood Khan

It is a gruesome historical fact that the first recorded murder took place when the elder son of Adam^{as}, namely, Cain killed his younger brother, Abel out of sheer jealousy as the underlying cause. We find this historical fact recorded both in the Bible and the Holy Qur'an.

In the Old Testament we read:

Abel became a shepherd of a flock, but Cain cultivated the land. In the course of time Cain presented some of the lands produce as an offering to the LORD. And Abel also presented [an offering]— some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but He did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you furious? And why are you downcast? If you do right, won't you be accepted? But if you do not do right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must master it.” Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let's go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Genesis 4:1-8

In the Holy Qur'an we find: 2:28-31

28: “And relate to them truly the story of the two sons of Adam, when they each offered an offering, and it was accepted from one of them and not accepted from the other. The latter said: ‘I will surely kill thee’. The former replied, ‘Allah accepts only from the righteous.

29. “ ‘If thou stretch out thy hand against me to kill me, I am not going to stretch out my

hand against thee. I do fear Allah, the Lord of the Universe.

30. “ ‘I wish that thou should bear my sin as well as thy sin, and thus be among the inmates of fire, and that is the reward of those who do wrong.’

31. “But his mind induced him to kill his brother, so he killed him and became one of the losers.”

This was the first incident that triggered the laws of retribution. Historically, man created his own sets of retaliation as he never considered this a community act and revenge of such acts was the order of the day. This fire of revenge did not subside the first generation but the feud carried on and the retaliation continued for generation after generation.

Chronologically, the prophet Moses^{as} received the Torah, Jesus Christ^{as} received the Gospel, and then the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was revealed the Holy Qur'an. Accordingly, we will review how the law of retribution is presented first in the early scriptures. We then will study the Holy Qur'an and observe how the Quranic teachings not only supersede the earlier teachings but present the wisest and most practical approach to the subject of crime and punishment.

In the Old Testament, the law of retribution is covered in four passages. Let us study each in detail.

In Exodus (21:23-24) we read:

“And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

In Deuteronomy (19:21) we read:

“And if any mischief follows, then thou shall give life for life. Eye for Eye, tooth for

tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

In Leviticus (24:19-20) we read:

“And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast.

...and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death. Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country; for I am the Lord your God.”

In Numbers (35:30-31) it is written:

“Whoso killeth any person the murderer shall be put to death. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.”

All the above passages describe the law of retribution in the Old Testament. The law of retribution, or “*lex talionis*” (Latin, *lex* (law) and *talio* (like)); the punishment is like the injury or the law of equivalency. Historically, we find that prior to this law murders and assassinations were considered personal offences and these were retaliated by individuals themselves. Sometimes these forms of revenge would persist for generations, with no end in sight. The Old Testament presented this law to limit the extent of punishment and to discourage cruelty. The principle of this legislation is one of equivalency; that is to say, the punishment should correspond to the crime and should be limited to the one involved in the injury. We also find this law in the Code of Hammurabi, which seems to be the first written and codified law to require physical injury for physical injury. In the light of these codes some historians opine that there was a time when monetary compensation redressed personal injuries because the state did not consider such acts to be crimes against society.

Philosophers generally share two perspectives for the motives of this law. The Utilitarian or “forward looking” view asserts that the essential benefit of this law is to produce betterment of society in terms of deterrence for future losses. In contrast, the “backward looking” view focuses only on punishing crimes according to their severity, thus serving the dictates of justice.

Overall, we can infer from these passages that the law of retribution in the Old Testament has the following features:

1. The punishment must fit the crime and no more
2. The law serves to deter the committing of future crimes in society
3. Justice is served by its application
4. Future feuds and excessive harm in families is severely checked.
5. The State has to get involved to make the decisions for its application
6. Killing is a crime that will no longer be handled by individuals, as it would be considered personal vengeance.
7. The law does not give any allowance of clemency under any circumstances (such as: real remorse by the culprit, forgiveness by the heirs, offering of blood money, etc). It is thus simply a “cut and dry” law that is completely blind to new evidence.
8. The focus is on the balance and punishment regardless of reformation.

Let me cite a recent example of the famous 1998 execution of Karla Faye Tucker in Texas. A drug addict, she had killed a woman she found hiding in her bed sheet out of jealousy, and was sentenced to death, first spending 14 years in jail. During her incarceration, she developed and displayed serious remorse, and through serious reading of the Bible, had changed her entire life to truly become a model prisoner. She requested that her death penalty be converted to life imprisonment, but her request was declined. She finally was executed by lethal injection. She was the first woman in Texas to receive the death penalty. A Professor of Philosophy at the University of Denver commented on her case and presented a new theory of character creation. She writes:

“It is helpful to begin with a motivating example. In 1983, Karla Faye Tucker



Karla Faye Tucker in Texas. A drug addict, she had killed a woman she found hiding in her bed sheet out of jealousy, and was sentenced to death. Some posed the standard arguments purporting to show that capital punishment is always wrong. Others held that the original sentence had been unfair; Tucker had been under the influence of drugs, and her attorneys argued that the state had not proved premeditation, a requirement for a capital sentence in Texas.

committed a horrific murder for which she was sentenced to death. During the fourteen years of appeals she (at least to all outward appearances) repented of her crime, underwent a complete conversion to Christianity, and became a model prisoner and spiritual support and advisor to other inmates. She requested that her sentence be commuted to life. Her requests were ultimately denied, and she was executed in 1998. Her case occasioned a nationwide debate in the United States in which many spoke against her execution. Some posed the standard arguments purporting to show that capital punishment is always wrong. Others held that the original sentence had been unfair; Tucker had been under the influence of drugs, and her attorneys argued that the state had not proved premeditation, a requirement for a capital sentence in Texas. A third commonly expressed sentiment was that she had changed so much since the crime that even if she deserved to die on the day she was sentenced, she did not deserve death any more. This third position seems plausible and whole-

some, and yet it raises some interesting puzzles for punishment theory.”

Sister Helen Prejean wrote in her book *Death in Texas* the following comments about the “eye for an eye” law:

The argument in favor of clemency for Karla Faye Tucker went like this: *Yes, she's guilty of a horrible crime—she killed two helpless people with a pickax—but she seems genuinely remorseful for her crime; she seems to have undergone a genuine, life-changing religious conversion. Even the warden and corrections officers attest that for fourteen years she's been a model prisoner. Couldn't she spend the rest of her life helping other prisoners to change their lives? Is a strict “eye for an eye” always called for?*

On television screens across America, people saw Karla Faye Tucker's beautiful face as she talked about reading the Bible in her prison cell (she admitted to stealing the Bible, not realizing it was free for the asking) and discovering Jesus, who “changed my life.” In following Christ, she said, she had truly been made into a “new creation.”

Pope John Paul, the President of Italy, the President of Russia, and several senior U.N. officials requested President George Bush for clemency, yet these pleas were rejected and she was executed by one stroke of pen. Look at her personal character at this execution order:

By the time Tucker climbed onto Texas's lethal injection gurney, whispering, "Lord Jesus, help them to find my vein," her name had become a household word, not only in the United States, but around the world. Larry King's in-depth interviews with her on CNN made people feel they knew her personally.

(*New York Review of Books*, Death in Texas; January 13, 2005)

This is an example of a case where the "eye for an eye" law was administered to its full measure. Also, it offers a glimpse of a Christian character by the last statement of the culprit following Jesus' teachings. Now let us turn to the teachings of Jesus^{as}.

Christianity and the Law of Retribution

Although Jesus Christ^{as} was sent to fulfill the law and not to legislate or create new laws, some people believe that Jesus^{as} essentially rewrote these laws and negated the essence of the earlier laws. A common example presented is as follows.

In Mathew 5:38-42, we read:

"You have heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' but I say to you, do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you."

Jesus said in Matthew 5:17,18 that He did not come to destroy the law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Let us apply this principle (Quran 42:41 to the case of Karla Faye Tucker. Although justice was meticulously served, it ignored the basic fact that Karla with her extreme remorse and repentance reformed herself Even her heirs had acknowledged that to exercise the dictates of the law and execute her with lethal injection was not required.

Let us survey the different Christian denominations with regards to their acceptance or rejection of capital punishment.

Catholics:In general, Catholics believe that capital punishment by the State is lawful retribution for crimes committed

Orthodox Christian: hierarchy rejects capital punishment. Russia, for example, abolished it in the tenth century.

Anglican and Episcopalians: At the Lambeth conference held in 1988, the Anglicans and Episcopalians condemned capital punishment by stating:

This Conference: ... (a). Urges the Church to speak out against: ... (b) all governments who practice capital punishment, and encourages them to find alternative ways of sentencing offenders so that the divine dignity of every human being is respected and yet justice is pursued.

The Southern Baptists, in their convention of 2000, officially sanctioned capital punishment. Similarly, Martin Luther, John Calvin and other Protestants have also approved of the death penalty when administered by authorities.

Islamic Law of Retribution and its application in the modern day cases.

What about the Islamic law of retribu-

tion? An in-depth study of the Holy Quran presents an overall principle of handling all possible situations confronted humankind. This could be considered *the magna carta* of Islamic teachings. Allah says in Surah Al-Shura 42-41:

"And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and his act brings about reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers."

A very broad teaching to handle the crimes is presented here that has no equal in Torah or Gospel. The subtle definitions of means and ends have been delineated when an offense is addressed. Punishment and forgiveness are the two means to achieve the end, i.e. justice and reformation. Neither of the two means are the goals to be achieved. In contrast, the Torah spells out the end to be justice only, and ignores the broader aim of reformation of the self. The Holy Quran states that neither punishment nor forgiveness is the objectives; rather, the objective is to dispense justice in the society along with the reformation of the individual as well. This verse instructs us that, in principle, the law of equivalency (which states that the recompense of an evil is the like thereof) may satisfy one as a means to secure justice, but may not reform the person: perhaps reformation could have been better achieved by forgiveness. In other words, the greater good for the society is both the dispensation of justice and the reformation of the person as well as

that of society.

Let us apply this principle to the case of Karla Faye Tucker. Although justice was meticulously served, it ignored the basic fact that Karla with her extreme remorse and repentance reformed herself. Even her heirs had acknowledged that to exercise the dictates of the law and execute her with lethal injection was not required. Indeed, the protest letters written by law enforcement agents, world leaders and the Pope himself supported this view. Had they adopted the Islamic principle and understood that punishment is only the means and not the end, and that holding reformation as an end goal is far more superior of a virtue than to meet the dictates of justice, especially when the heirs already excused her.

This verse is the overall guide for all digressions; specifics have been covered elsewhere in the Quran as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ
فِي الْقَتْلِ ۗ الْحَرُّ بِالْحَرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ
وَالْأُنثَىٰ بِالْأُنثَىٰ ۖ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ
شَيْءٌ فَأَتِيَ بِهِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَّى إِلَيْهِ
بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَىٰ بِكُمْ فَلاَ
عَذَابَ إِلَيْهِ ۗ

O ye who believe! equitable retaliation in the matter of the slain is prescribed for you: the free man for the free man, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But if one is granted any remission by one's brother, then pursuing the matter for the realization of the blood money shall be done with fairness and the murderer shall pay him the blood money in a handsome manner. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. And whoso transgresses thereafter, for him there shall be a grievous punishment.

In the commentary Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad writes:

“We note a distinct difference between the laws mentioned in the Torah and the Quran. In the Quran, there are two options open to the authorities when exercising punishment; a) they can check with heirs and if they settle for ransom money then the death penalty can be reduced to ransom; b) if the heirs forgive the culprit for any reason then the state can let go the culprit. These options are not part of the Torah law of retribution.”

The next verse is quite interesting and has many profound implications:

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيٰوةٌ يَا اُولِي
الْاَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾

And there is life for you in the law of retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may enjoy security.

Here, the Holy Quran is stating that there is “life in retaliation”. How could this be when the person is already dead? What it suggests is that by taking the life of a culprit, hundreds of lives in the greater society are protected. A perfect case is that of the serial killer, Richard Ramirez, who is still waiting his execution by gas chamber in a California prison. He killed 15 people and attempted to kill five others.

Looking at this serial killer, how one could comprehend that forgiveness or “turning the other cheek” would be suitable retribution for his crimes? Had he been released, he could have killed additional people. Therefore, the Quranic teaching that there is life in retaliation is a universal truth. There are many organizations around the world that would like to terminate the death penalty for serious offenders. This has already been predicted in this verse, since the Arabic phrase *Oolul Albab* refers to “men of thinking”, and in essence states that when this movement ensues, oppose it as the life is in the law of retaliation.

In closing, I will cite an excerpt from the writings of Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} on this subject. He said:

“Again there is apprehension that justice and mercy cannot both coexist in the entity of God because justice demands punishment while mercy calls for forgiveness. This is a

They do not realize that God's justice is a kind of mercy! It is entirely for the good of human beings.

trap in which the shortsighted Christians are caught because of lack of judgment. They do not realize that God's justice is a kind of mercy! It is entirely for the good of human beings. For instance, if God Almighty issues an order about a murderer from the point of view of His justice that such a criminal should die, it does not benefit God in any way. He issues such an order so that mankind should not put an end to itself by killing one another.

So it is God's Mercy towards mankind. God has promulgated such ‘human rights’ for social peace to prevail and that one group of humans must not oppress another group and create turmoil in the world. So all the rights and punishments which are there concerning property, life and reputation are in fact mercy towards mankind.” (*Kitab-ul-Bariyya*, page 73).

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An Introduction to the Bible

By Arif Humayun



The Bible is the most read book in the world with about 4 Billion copies sold and has two parts – the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is the scripture for two of the three Semitic religions – Judaism and Christianity and brings together documents identifying their founders, early followers, and their beliefs. The Old Testament, also known as the Hebrew Bible, is the Jewish canon while the New Testament is the Christian canon. The designations “Old” and “New” were adopted after 200 AD to distinguish the books of the Mosaic (old) covenant and those of the “new” covenant in Christ.

The Old Testament

The books of the Jewish Bible are believed to have been written over several centuries, beginning in the 10th century BC – by which time the Hebrews are settled in Canaan, or Palestine – but many parts of the Old Testament (OT) indicate that the scribes were writing much older oral tradition, some events dating back to the 18th century BC. The Jews consider the Torah (‘instruction’ or ‘law’ in Hebrew) – the first five books of the OT – to be the holiest part of the Bible. In non-Jewish sources these books are sometimes called the *Pentateuch* (‘five scrolls’ in Greek, from a translation done in Alexandria).

Genesis, the first book of the Torah, begins with a resolutely monotheistic story of the creation and provides stories which are echoed in other religions – man’s fall into a state of sin through disobedience (Adam and Eve eating the apple), the great flood which swept away sinful mankind except for one small group of survivors (Noah and his family), etc. Describing Abraham as the patriarch of a nomadic tribe, it identifies Hebrew people and their movement through Mesopotamia (from Ur to Harran) and then down into Canaan – a land which, God promised his descendants will inherit.

Genesis also describes God’s pact with Abraham that God will help Abraham’s people in return for their fulfilling God’s law. God informs Abraham about a yet to be born son at which Abraham and his wife Sarah are surprised because of their old age. However, Sarah gives her Egyptian maid Hagar as “wife” to Abraham and the first son Ishmael is born. Later God foretells Abraham about the birth of his second son Isaac to be born to Sarah and foretells him that Ishmael will be the father of “twelve princes” and Isaac will be the father of “twelve tribes.” Genesis records the fulfillment of both prophecies. Genesis also records the story of God testing Abraham’s resolve by first asking him to leave his son in a desert and then asking him to sacrifice his only son.

The second book of the Torah – Exodus – establishes the religious identity of the Hebrew through Moses’ leadership and inspiration who brings them out of slavery from Egypt. God’s revelation of His name, the Ten Commandments, and promises to Moses for favoring Jews as his chosen people, and bringing them into the promised land of Canaan if they obeyed God’s laws, is reiterated in Exodus.

Exodus and the other three books of the Torah document Moses and his elder brother Aaron wandering with the Hebrews in the Sinai desert. The third book, Leviticus, mainly deals with proper details of ritual and sacrifice while the fourth, Numbers, describes the social and political structure of the tribes on the slow journey towards the Promised Land. The fifth book, Deuteronomy, is an amplification of God’s law for his people. At the end of Deuteronomy Moses glimpses the land promised by God to Abraham, but dies before he can enter it.

Subsequent OT books can broadly be classified into three categories – historical, prophetic and poetic. The historical books continue the story of the children of Israel while the prophetic books, castigate the Israelites for their sins and warn them of the wrath of God to come, and the poetic works, ranging from the devotional (Psalms) to the more literary (Song of Solomon). In Jewish Bibles the warnings of the prophets are interspersed with the history, of which they are indeed an important part.

The New Testament

The current New Testament (NT) consists of twenty-seven short Greek writings, commonly called *books*. The first five of which are historical in character, four of which written by Matthew, John, Luke and Mark, form the core of the New Testament and are regarded as Canonical. The books of the New Testament were not written by Jesus himself or by his principal disciples. Strange as it may sound, they deal only with the last two or three years of Jesus’ life and devote what might seem an excessive detail in the week immediately preceding his alleged death. The NT

books were written decades after Jesus' departure from Judea by people whom he may never have met. Books were also written by Jesus' main disciples and, according to Church records, were commonly used in the early Church, were not included in the current NT.

The year 325 AD is an important landmark in the Christian calendar because the Roman Emperor Constantine I convened the First Council of Nicaea (present-day Ýznik in Turkey). Emperor Constantine I (ruled from 306 to 337 AD) accepted Christianity and ended the persecution of Christians in 313 AD. The month-long Council adopted the Nicene Creed (Christological issue of the relationship of Jesus to God the Father), settled the procedure for calculation for the date of Easter, and promulgation of early canon law. The four NT books were selected as canon and all other books were declared illegal and destroyed. Later in 331 Constantine commissioned fifty Bibles for the Church of Constantinople.

Original Source Material and Versions

The OT or Hebrew Scriptures are the collection of books that form the first of two parts of the Christian Biblical canon. Although not a history book in the modern sense, the OT is the primary source for the history of ancient Israel and Judah. The oldest material in the Hebrew Bible – and therefore in the Christian Old Testament – was assembled in its current form at various points between the 5th century BCE (the first five books, the Torah) and the 2nd century BCE,¹ but as already stated contains recollection of events dating back many centuries. This material is found embedded within the books of the current Hebrew Bible/OT.² The contents of the OT canon vary among churches, with the Orthodox communion having 51 books – the shared books are those of the shortest canon – that of the major Protestant communions with 39 books. All OT canons are related to the Jewish Bible Canon but with variations. The most important of these variations is a change to the order of the books: the Hebrew Bible ends with the Book of Chronicles, which describes Israel restored to the Promised Land and the Temple restored in Jerusalem; in the Hebrew Bible God's purpose is thus fulfilled and the divine history is at an end. In the Christian OT the Book of Malachi is placed last, so that a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah leads into the birth of the Christ in the Gospel of Matthew.

The Jewish Bible is called the Masoretic, after the medieval Jewish rabbis who compiled it. The Masoretic Text (i.e. the Hebrew text revered by medieval and modern Jews) is only one of several versions of the original scriptures of ancient Judaism, and no manuscripts of that hypothetical original text exist. In the last few centuries before Christ, Hellenistic-Jewish scholars produced a translation of their scriptures in Greek – the common language of the Eastern portions of the Roman Empire since the conquests of Alexander the Great; these originated with the translation of the Pentateuch in the mid-3rd century BC. This translation, known as the Septuagint, forms the basis of the Orthodox and some other Eastern OTs used in the Greek-speaking church. The OTs of the Western branches of Christianity were originally based on a Latin translation of the Septuagint known as the *Vetus Latina*, which was later replaced by Jerome's Vulgate, which continues to be highly respected in the Catholic Church. Protestant churches generally follow translations of a scholarly reference known as the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. In 1943, Pope Pius XII issued the *Divino Afflante Spiritu* which allows Catholic translations from texts other than the Vulgate, notably in English the New American Bible. The canon of the Septuagint included the books of the later Hebrew canon, with the addition of several others, most of which were those now reckoned deuterocanonical by Roman Catholics and apocryphal by Protestants.

Suffice it to say that the current OT text cannot be regarded as the original word of God, preserved in its pristine purity. The Old Testament itself provides evidence to this effect:³

“How can you say, ‘We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us’?

But, behold, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie”.

The wise men shall be put to shame, they shall be dismayed and taken;

lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord,

The New Testament does not have original source materials either; it has different versions based on explanations and clarifications by priests which were later included in the texts. An excellent account of the oldest NT documents, on which the Bible is based, is contained in a book titled “Gospel Parallels” published by Thomas Nelson & Sons. It classifies the origins and dates of all surviving Biblical manuscripts based on their texts or families. It states:

None of the original manuscripts of the New Testament have survived, nor, presumably any direct copies of the original manuscripts. “What we have are copies of copies. Into these copies crept errors; moreover additions and “corrections” were sometimes made by the copyists, for the Bible of the early church was the Old Testament, and it was not imperative to copy gospels and epistles - still uncannonized- exactly word for word.....No manuscript can be better than that from which it was copied...⁴

How did these families, or types of text, arise? It is quite obvious that errors, corrections and additions made in Rome would be perpetuated in manuscripts copied at Rome, and not at Alexandria or Antioch or Caesarea. Each religious center in the Church would preserve and add to its own peculiar readings and gradually the texts in and around the various leading communities took on their own characteristics. Moreover, when the bishops and scholars edited New Testament texts for local use by copying from the various manuscripts in their own communities, the character of the text in these communities became fixed...⁵

It is also clear from the above evidence that the New Testament texts have been through numerous human interpolations and as such can, in no sense, be regarded as God's original word. Such acknowledgements are also contained in the preface of the various Bibles. Details of the scriptural interpolations in the OT and NT can be found elsewhere.⁶

Endnotes:

¹ Bible: Growth of Literature.” *Encyclopedia Americana*. Grolier Online . Retrieved March 5, 2010.

² *Encyclopædia Britannica*: “Written almost entirely in the Hebrew language between 1200 and 100 BCE”; *Columbia Encyclopedia*: “In the 10th century BCE the first of a series of editors collected materials from earlier traditional folkloric and historical records (i.e., both oral and written sources) to compose a narrative of the history of the Israelites who now found themselves united under David and Solomon.”

³ Jeremiah 8:8-9

⁴ Gospel Parallels, Pub: Thomas Nelson & Sons, (1967), p v-s (7)

⁵ Ibid p vi

⁶ A. Humayun, *Islam: The Summit of Religious Evolution*, Islam International Publications.

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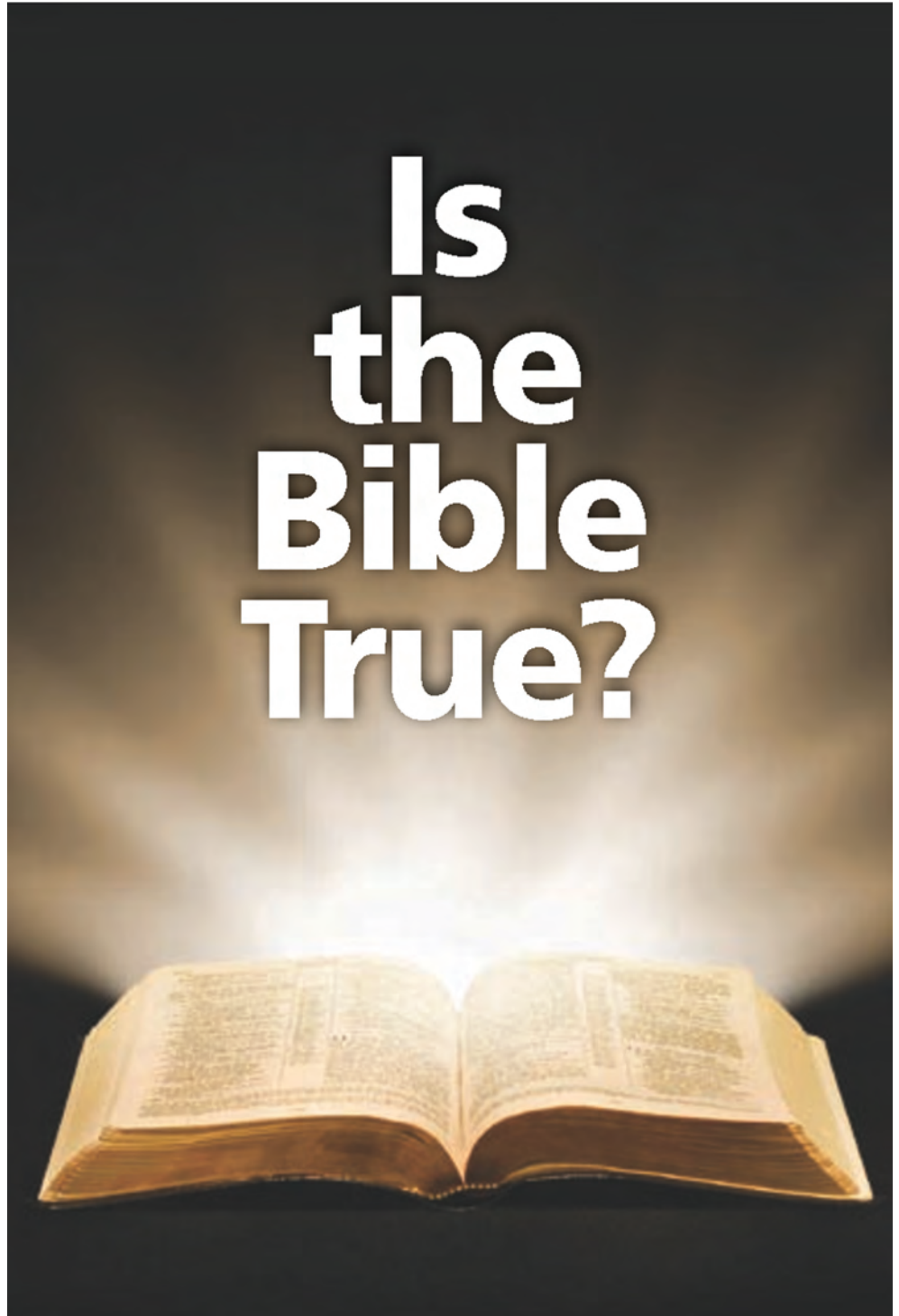
The reality of the Bible's history

By: Valerie Long Bhatti

The Bible is a book that carries various meanings for different people of faith. In regards to history, there are some people who believe that this book contains no historical errors, others who think it is entirely made up of inaccuracies, and still others who think it is a mixture of both: real people and places, but fictional stories. In order to be considered historically accurate, these Biblical facts would need to be corroborated with other historical documents of the time, archaeological finds, or scientific evidence. Even this, however, does not necessarily mean that the event was factual in its entirety.

Owing to its age and relative preservation through the millennia, it is certainly a text to be considered when studying the history of those particular times and peoples. Archaeologists, historians, and even some scientists have dedicated their careers to search for historical truths in the Bible. Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review* and *Bible Review*, stated in a 1993 symposium on the search for a historical Jesus⁴⁵:

“Christians belong to a faith community, and faith, by definition, is not a subject to objective scientific verification. Faith deals with ultimate questions, things that are beyond the testable, the empirical or the provable by reason. So we will not speak here of questions of faith.



Those questions are for each of us to answer. Each of us must also decide how our faith intersects with what we judge to be the most likely historical scenario.”⁴¹

While it may never be possible to prove whether or not something really did happen in the Bible, it is up to the readers to examine the evidence found thus far and use their com-

mon sense to decide what, if anything, happened.

The Old Testament

Many scrutinize the first book of the Bible, Genesis, because this book contains a majority of the well-known Biblical stories. These include the creation of the world, creation of

mankind, the flood, the Tower of Babel, Abraham^{as}, Jacob^{as}, and the beginning of Egypt's involvement via stories about Joseph^{as}. The remainder of the Old Testament contains the most known Biblical figures such as Moses^{as}, David^{as}, and Solomon^{as}.

Noah's^{as} flood is a story that many have sought to prove as historically accurate, from scientists looking for evidence of a great flood to archaeologists searching for the Ark's remnants. The area where Noah^{as} lived was Mesopotamia. Within the vicinity, archaeologists discovered tablets of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, which is among the earliest surviving written documents. A story of a flood is written on those tablets. In the Gilgamesh flood myth, the gods were disturbed by mankind's general discord and decided to destroy the world. One of the gods warned Gilgamesh in his dream to build a boat, abandon his worldly possessions, in order to save himself, his family, neighbors, and some animals. It rained for many days until the world appeared to be covered in water. Gilgamesh landed his boat on a mountaintop and sent out birds after a few days to see if the water had cleared.² The story of Gilgamesh is quite similar to the Biblical verses regarding the great Flood.

Scientific expeditions have further proven the existence of some sort of a large-scale flood. An environmental marine research team from Tel Aviv University and a non-profit agency called EcoOcean, have made some interesting discoveries. EcoOcean's Andreas Weil says,

"We found that indeed a flood happened around that time. From core samples, we see that a flood broke through the natural barrier separating the Mediterranean Sea and the freshwater Black Sea, bringing with it sea-shells that only grow in a marine environment. There was no doubt that it was a fast flood — one that covered an expanse four times the size of Israel. It might not have been Noah, as it is written in the Bible, but we believe people in that region had to build boats in order to save their animals from drowning. We think that the ones who survived were fishermen — they already had the boats."³

Two very different types of evidence show that there was a great flood during ancient times in Mesopotamia.

Archaeologists have had the most success finding external sources that corroborate the Old Testament, when people and events that involved authority figures of im-

portance are mentioned. In regards to places, the Bible mentions different powerful nations of the ancient world such as Ur, the hometown of Abraham^{as}, the lands of the Hittite Empire, Jericho, and Babylon. Several people of power were proven to not only exist outside of the Bible, but accomplished the tasks that the Bible says that they did. The House of David^{as}, meaning the family lineage of King David^{as}, has been found on an inscription in Tel Dan. The inscription proves that David^{as} not only existed but that he and his family were considered very important and the ruling family for many years.⁴ The Bible also relates in Isaiah 44:28, "Who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please'; he will say of Jerusalem, 'Let it be rebuilt,' and of the temple, 'Let its foundations be laid.'"

Archaeologists discovered a nine-inch cylinder dating back to approximately 539-530 BCE, which describes the rule of Cyrus. He allowed for the captives of Babylon to return home and restore their temples.⁵

The New Testament

The New Testament books are the main resources for Christians. They examine the life of Jesus^{as} in the first few books and the remainder of the books are thought to be written by the followers of Jesus^{as} to carry on what they believed to be his message and mission. The search for the historical Jesus^{as} began in the early 18th century and still continues to be a topic that fascinates scholars. It is nearly impossible to really discover who the historical Jesus^{as} was, based on the texts that have been collected thus far. The oldest historic texts that have been gathered regarding the life of Jesus^{as} can be found in the Gospels. In the case of the Gospels, however, age does not necessarily result in accuracy, nor have the books remained in an unaltered condition.

There are alleged historical facts found within the Gospels that are not at all factual. For example, in the Gospel of Luke, he begins Jesus'^{as} life narrative with a decree from Caesar Augustus, which required people to leave where they resided and work to return to their homeland for a census. No such census was ever issued.⁶ Luke needed to get Jesus^{as} to Bethlehem in order to fulfill a Judaic prophecy.⁷ The combination of a real historic person and fictitious decree confuses many into believing that this actually occurred.

Although Jesus^{as} is not really mentioned in any texts contemporary to his time, Bibli-

cal scholars have examined the social and religious history from the period of Jesus^{as} and have compared the Gospels, in order to devise an accurate account of some of the teachings of Jesus^{as}, that many scholars call the Gospel of Q. Much of his life narrative described in the Gospels cannot be proven. The crucifixion of Jesus^{as} is perhaps the most believed story in the account of his life and can be authenticated by other means. Scholars discovered a tomb in India, which many believe to be the tomb of Jesus^{as}. Outside the tomb is a set of footprints, which appear to have scarring. Although the scars are not in the same spot on the foot, they would, however, line up if a nail had been driven through them.⁸

Documents written so long ago are essential to studying history but are not always reliable. They tell whatever happened through the point-of-view of the author, which may or may not be the entire story. Although much of what the Bible says cannot be proven through historical or scientific means, it can still be used as a general resource to show how people thought and lived their daily lives.

Endnotes:

¹ Shanks, H. (1994). The search for Jesus: modern scholarship looks at the Gospels. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society

² The Epic of Gilgamesh. (1972). New York, NY: Penguin Books.

³ Marine team finds surprising evidence supporting a great biblical flood. (2007, September 10). Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/09/070907150931.htm>

⁴ David Inscription: The House of David. (2008). Retrieved from <http://teldan.wordpress.com/house-of-david-inscription/>

⁵ The Cyrus Cylinder Retrieved from http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/c/cyrus_cylinder.aspx

⁶ Luke 2:1-3 "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be recognized. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered."

⁷ Crossan, J.D. (1994). The search for Jesus: modern scholarship looks at the Gospels. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society

⁸ Khan, A. (2010). Rozabal—the tomb of Jesus Christ(as)? Review of Religion, Retrieved from <http://www.reviewofreligions.org/2727/rozabal-%E2%80%93-the-tomb-of-jesus-christas/>

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INFIDEL

By Any Other Name

By Azhar Ahmed Hussain

It is not uncommon to hear an Islamic terrorist call for a holy war against the *infidels*, claiming that it is in accordance to Islamic principles. Aside from the obvious fallacy of declaring that Islam permits aggression, the term *infidel* is itself a term entirely foreign to Islam. Ironically, one of its uses was to denigrate Muslims and Islam during the time of the Crusades.

When Pope Urban II addressed the Council of Clermont in 1095, he launched one of the most notorious military campaigns in human history. In the nearly 400 years European forces attempted to capture Jerusalem and Palestine¹, an unprecedented era of cultural and linguistic exchange occurred, including the term Infidel. In the time since the Crusades, the use of infidel has crept its way into the common nomenclature of

some Muslims who now use the term to label non-Muslims. However, the usage of infidel in this manner is entirely incorrect. In the Qur'an, Allah applies the term *kafir* to non-Muslims or those who hide and cover the truth of Islam and deny the oneness of Allah. One theory ascribes the label of *kafir* as one who rejects the current messenger. The acceptance of infidel by many Muslims is the embodiment of outside influences diluting the continence of Islam. Furthermore, because of its violent history *infidel* carries with it the underlying implication that violence or subjugation is somehow acceptable regardless of religious doctrine clearly stating otherwise.

From Latin to the Crusades

After its advent, Islam expanded at an exponential pace, within a few short centuries the Umayyad Caliphate stretched from Spain to India. Shortly thereafter, the Seljuk Turks gained control of Asia Minor (Turkey) and rumors spread of an oppressive Seljuk Empire. Robert the Monk mentions that Seljuk rulers tortured Christians and desecrated churches², though no evidence exists to support such a claim.

In response, Pope Urban II called for an armed Crusade to capture Palestine. Fulcher of Chartres relates that Pope Urban II imposed on the Christian faith: "*Let those who have been accustomed to unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful go now against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have begun a long time ago.*"³

With this directive, all who believed in the message of Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and Islam

were labeled *Infidel*- unfaithful. The term infidel is short for the Latin term "*infidelis*," *Fidelis* is the Latin term for the word faithful; the prefix "in" negates the term, making *infidelis* a translation of "untrue," "perfidious," and "faithless."⁴

D.P. Simpson, "Cassell's Latin Dictionary," (New York, Cassel's 1977) 278."

The application of this term to Muslims is mostly a misnomer. Islam is a religion which believes in and is faithful to the oneness of Allah and that Hadhrat Jesus was a messenger of God. Muslims, however, believe that Prophet Muhammad^{saw} is the last law bearing prophet-which according to Pope Urban II was justification for labeling Muslims *infidel*. In the 1000 years since *infidelis* was uttered by Pope Urban II, it has continued to cause untold and unjust murder worldwide. Due to its negative and iniquitous connotation, some Muslim terrorist organizations use infidel to label non-Muslims in addition to Muslims who do not subscribe to their interpretation of Islam.⁵ These groups then justify terrorist acts and murders by implying that such actions are permitted against non-Muslim *infidels*- a view which is entirely against Islamic teachings.

Kafir according to the Qur'an

Though some Muslims use *infidel* to label non-Muslims, it is not found in the Holy Qur'an. Allah provides the term *kafir* which, though not formally defined, is described through verses in the Qur'an as a dynamic word which applies in many different ways. One description of the term *kafir* is used for those who do not believe in the oneness of

Allah and practice polytheism. Another attribute of a *kafir* is a person who rejects all of Allah's Messengers and Prophets. One final description of the term *kafir* is one who hides and covers from the truth of Islam.

The Holy Qur'an (5:73-74), states: "*In-deed, they are the disbelievers (kafir) who say, 'Allah, he is the Messiah, son of Mary,' whereas the Messiah himself said, 'O Children of Israel, worship Allah who is my lord and your lord.' Surely they disbelieve who say, 'Allah is the third of three'.*" The significance of these verses lies in its inference that one such application of the word *kafir* could be directed toward Christianity, due mainly to its belief that Jesus was Allah. However, Allah does not specifically say that all Christians are *kafir*. One possible explanation could be that some Christians do not believe that Jesus was literally Allah, for example the Unitarian church.⁶ These groups recognize the inherent logical fallacy created by polytheistic belief of the Trinity and follow the Old Testament verse (Deuteronomy 6:4) which states, "Hear O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."

Another application of the word *kafir* specifically mentioned in the Qur'an is directed to those who reject the messengers of Allah. The Qur'an declares (4:151) "*Surely, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and seek to make a distinction between Allah and His Messengers, and say, 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others,' and seek to take a way in between.*" This verse is important to Muslims because it declares that they are bound to the belief in continuity of Allah's apostates from Hadhrat Adam to the Promised Messiah.

The final aspect of *kafir* lies in the roots of the word itself. The root *ka fa ra* translates to 'he covered' or 'he hid' which lends evidence to the theory that one possible definition of *kafir* could be one who actively hides from the truth of Islam. The Qur'an furthers this by stating (11:6) "*Now surely, they fold up their breasts that they may hide their evil thoughts from Him. Aye, even when they cover themselves up with their garments, He knows what they hide and what they reveal.*" The process of active disbelief in the oneness of Allah and the divine nature of his messengers, *l'kafiroon*, requires an active participant who intentionally disregards key facts.

The converse difference in between *in-*

fidel and *kafir* further lends weight to the divine aspect to the Qur'an as the absolute word of Allah. Though the distinction between these two words may seem somewhat arbitrary, the implication of the use of one over the other has historically proved to carry a heavy burden.

The treatment of non-Muslims according to Allah

From the Crusades to the present, *infidel* has shown to be a word followed by untold horrors of war and destruction. There is no handbook which exists that regulates how one should act toward an *infidel*, modern day users of the term have only the example of its previous employers to follow. The only precedent for the treatment of infidels that exists is one of subjugation and perverted justification for genocide; a far cry from the peaceful nature of the Holy Qur'an. According to the absolute word of Allah, anyone who falls under the jurisdiction of *kafir* is provided every protection from bodily or spiritual harm from the hands of Muslims. The Holy Qur'an boldly states (2:257) "*There is no compulsion in religion,*" which grants unabated freedom of conscience and thought. Furthermore, the Qur'an also states (88:22-23) "*Admonish, therefore, for thou art but an admonisher. Thou art not appointed a keeper over them.*" and finally, in the surah titled *Al Kafiroon* Allah closes by instructing "*for you your religion and, for me my religion.*" Allah states in the Holy Qur'an that those who are *kafir* are answerable only to Allah and are at the mercy of his judgment as seen in verse (88:25) "*But whoever turns away and disbelieves, Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment.*"

The Treatment of Non-Muslims

The example of the Holy Qur'an is mirrored perfectly by the Holy Prophet who signed the Charter of Medina with Arab Jewish Tribes, though they reject Allah's messengers Hadhrat Jesus and Hadhrat Muhammad. This groundbreaking document guaranteed the right for Jews to self governance as well as the right to practice their religious beliefs without restriction.⁷ In addition, he also wrote a letter to the Monks of St. Catherine's Monastery granting full protection and freedom to practice their faith unabated. This letter ends with

the Holy Prophet declaring that this covenant of brotherhood will last until the Day of Judgment.⁸

Though these people could be considered *kafir* according to the Qur'an because of their rejection of all of Allah's messengers, and their belief in the Trinity, Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw} reflected the Qur'an's teachings by offering peace and allowing them to follow their religion. Contrary to the Qur'an and the example set by the Holy Prophet, some misguided and mal-intentioned Muslims label these people *infidel* and use it as an excuse for murder.

Despite the guidance provided in the Holy Qur'an, some Muslims believe that it is permissible to slander non-Muslims with *infidel*. From the Crusades to the present, where the word *infidel* has been used, it has caused despair and death. As innocuous as the difference may appear, it is important for Muslims to understand the distinction. Allah instructs that though they have a different faith, they are to be given the liberty to practice their religion. The example of Prophet Muhammad^{saw} follows this guidance and sets the standard for Muslims to follow. It is through adherence to the tenants of the Holy Qur'an and by following the precedent of the Holy Prophet that *infidel* will cease to exist. ♦

Endnotes

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³Oliver J. Thatcher and Edgar H. McNeal, *A source Book for Medieval History*, (New York: Scribners, 1905) 513-17

⁵ Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Murder in the Name of Allah*, (Cambridge, Lutterworth 1989) ch 8.

⁶ George W. Cooke, *Unitarianism in America: A History of its Origin and Development*, (Boston: American Unitarian Association 1910) 13.

⁷Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, "Absolute Justice, Kindness, and Kinship- Three Creative Principles," (Tilford: Islam International Publications 2008) 334-335)

⁸Tommy Kallon, "The Holy Muhammad^{saw}: A Prophet of Peace and Reconciliation," Speech, (alislam.org)

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Big Society: Equalities and Social Justice



The Bible and the Quran on Justice

By: Shazia Sohail

The Bible speaks extensively about the importance of justice, bearing true witness, and caring for the poor, the orphan and the widow. There is no doubt that the Christian teachings are merciful in nature, and the Qur'an testifies to it. The end goal of both the Biblical and Qur'anic injunctions is to create personal and social harmony. The difference lies in the scope and range of justice the two scriptures aim to deliver. The Qur'an teaches absolute justice to all mankind, with no racial, gender or class discrimination. The Bible's scope is limited to the Israelites, and is prejudicial to women and slaves.

The Holy Qur'an takes it upon itself to attest to the just nature of all previous Messengers and Scriptures in "Verily, We sent Our Messengers with manifest Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that people may act with justice" (57:26). Thus, according to Islamic belief, all deviations from justice found in the Bible are attributable to human interpolation. This verse also defines Justice as "balance." The Qur'an repeatedly draws attention to the perfect balance in the universe¹ through a uniform application of the physical laws. Any breach in the equilibrium of forces in the universe would make the whole system collapse. Similarly, giving people anything short of what is their due will cause disorder:

"And O my people, give full measure and full weight with equity, and defraud not people of their things and commit not iniquity in the earth, causing disorder" (11:86).

Due to the immense importance of this subject the Qur'an outlines specific requirements of justice.

Justice in Governance

The Holy Qur'an does not stipulate the type of government or a system of Justice a country should have. It does, however, spell out the responsibilities of a ruler or a ruling body. Every institution and individual of a country must:

Protect the Honor, Life and Property of its People: The Qur'an states, "Verily, Allah commands you to give over the trusts to those

entitled to them, and that, when you judge between (or rule over) individuals, you judge (or rule) with justice" (4:59). Thus the basic rights of a people reside as a 'trust' with the government and are to be accounted for directly to God Almighty.

Always Act with Justice, between Individuals and between People: The words "when you judge between individuals, you judge with justice," admonish that when settling matters between people, justice, also defined as 'balance' or 'middle path' should be the yardstick. In other words, the government should settle disputes in a manner that all sides get their due, and equilibrium is restored. This is not a mere suggestion, but a strict command: "Be strict in observing justice, and be witness for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against your parents or kindred" (4:136). Again, one is answerable to Allah directly while dispensing justice.

Enter the Testimony of a Witnesses with Impeccable Character Only: "And those who calumniate chaste women but bring not four witnesses — flog them with eighty stripes, and never admit their evidence thereafter, and it is they that are the transgressors;" (24:5).

Require that Witnesses Must Testify: "And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called" (2:283).

"And conceal not testimony; and whoever conceals it, his heart is certainly sinful" (2:284).

Protect the Witnesses: "And let no harm be done to the scribe or the witness" (2:283).

Require the Witness to Tell the Truth: "O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of

Allah, bearing witness in equity;" (5:9).

Fully Comply with the Judgment Pronounced: "O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you" (4:60).

"But no, by thy Lord, they are not believers until they make thee judge in all that is in dispute between them and then find not in their hearts any demur concerning that which thou decides and submit with full submission" (4:66).

Judge with Strict Impartiality: "O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do" (5:9). The rights of minorities are sought to be protected in this verse.

Not Corrupt the Course of Justice through Bribery: "And do not devour your wealth among yourselves through falsehood, and offer it not as bribe to the authorities that you may knowingly devour a part of the wealth of other people with injustice" (2:189). 'Bribery' is any favor bestowed with a view to obtain a biased or partisan outcome.

Not let Hostility towards a People Incite a Muslim or a Muslim State to Act Unjustly towards Them: Justice towards one's enemy is a unique feature of the Holy Qur'an and Islam. No other religious scripture contains such an injunction. Muslims are required to be just even in times of war, with self-defense being the only motive for war:

"And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress. Allah loves not the transgressors" (2:91).

"And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it" (8:62).

"And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do" (5:9).

Settle National Matters by Consulta-

tion: Islamic governance is required to be democratic to the extent that all matters of statehood are to be determined after ascertaining and considering the opinion of a wide range of citizens:

"Those who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what We have provided for them" (42:39).

Provide the Provision of Food, Clothing and Shelter to the Citizens: "It is decreed for thee that thou shalt not hunger therein nor shalt thou be naked. And that thou shalt not thirst therein, nor shalt thou be exposed to the sun" (20:119-120). The Holy Qur'an recognizes that no system of justice can effectively be implemented if the basic needs of people have not been adequately met.

Provide a Peaceful and Secure Environment with an Equitable and Orderly Economic System and Health Care: The Holy Qur'an identifies and criticizes an abusive ruler by stating, "When he is in authority, he runs about in the land to create disorder in it and destroys the tilth and the progeny of man; and Allah loves



JUSTICE

Judge with Strict Impartiality: "O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do"(5:9). The rights of minorities are sought to be protected in this verse.

not disorder “(2:206). The Arabic word employed for “tilth” in this context refers to agriculture, economy, and health of women, and the “tilth and the progeny of man” refer to general health care. Thus, in the spirit of “a ruler is a steward and is accountable for his charge” a just government will strive to restore the basic amenities of life to its people, and establish peace and prosperity by regulating agriculture, economy, and health care.

Provide Total Religious Freedom: “There should be no compulsion in religion” (2:257).

“We know best what they say; and thou hast not been appointed to compel them in any way. So admonish, by means of the Qur’an, him who fears My warning” (50:46).

“Thou hast no authority to compel them” (88:23).

“And if thy Lord had enforced His will, surely, all who are on the earth would have believed together. Wilt thou, then, force men to become believers?” (10:100)

These verses put an end to the myth that Islam seeks to punish blasphemy or apostasy. Thus, the laws promulgated in many Muslim countries to punish blasphemy and apostasy are totally unjust, un-Islamic, and against the teachings of the Qur’an.

Always Honor Treaties and Agreements: “And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants” (23:9).

“And those who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants” (70:33).

“But if they seek your help in the matter of religion, then it is your duty to help them, except against a people between whom and yourselves there is a treaty. And Allah sees what you do” (8:73).

Never Instigate or Participate in, Rebellion against the State: “And when it is said to them, ‘Create not disorder in the earth,’ they say, ‘We are only promoters of peace.’ Beware! It is surely they who create disorder, but they do not perceive it” (2:12-13).

Take the Middle Course: In contrast to the Bible, Islam does not prescribe extremes. The Old Testament teaches an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; and the New Testament preaches the “turn the other cheek.” The Holy Qur’an establishes a middle ground stating, “The recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and thereby brings about a reformation, his reward is with Allah” (42:41). Thus, Islam legally entitles

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one to exact retribution as stated in the Old Testament. However, if the victim feels that forgiveness may bring about moral reformation in the perpetrator, then the Qur’an advises turning the cheek as mentioned in the New Testament.

Must Punish a Murderer: In the case of a murder “Equitable retaliation in the matter of the slain is prescribed for you” (2:179), meaning, the authorities must punish a murderer. The general rule is to put the murderer to death. However, the option to forgive in lieu of monetary compensation, albeit with the sanction of competent authorities, rests with the aggrieved party: “But if one is granted any remission by one’s brother, then pursuing the matter for the realization of the blood money shall be done with fairness and the murderer shall pay him the blood money in a handsome manner. This is alleviation from your Lord and a mercy” (2:179).

Socio-Economic Justice

Islam recognizes and safeguards an individual’s right to possess, enjoy, and transfer property but also imposes the moral obligation that in all wealth all sections of society, even animals, have a right to share: “In their wealth they acknowledge the right of those who asked and of those who could not” (51:20). Such moral exhortations not only foster the will to comply with the minimum legal requirements of dissemination of resources but also to bring about one’s own spiritual and moral growth through generous and equitable spending practices based on the premise that it is

God alone Who is Self-Sufficient and the source of all prosperity; it is men who are in need, and can achieve prosperity, not through miserliness and holding back, but through beneficent spending in the service of His creatures (47:39). The object of Islamic economic system therefore, is to bring about a wide distribution of wealth through moral exhortation and legal sanctions pertaining to taxation, law of inheritance, loans, and commercial practices. Punishments in the Quran

As far as Islamic injunctions of punishment are concerned it must be pointed out that the benefits of Islamic laws were enacted first and the punitive injunctions were revealed at a much later stage. In its early stages Islam revealed its teachings of beneficence, and the rights of the people in an Islamic state. Once a society of law abiding, pious, and righteous people was created, in which the standards of conduct had already been raised to a very high level, only then were the laws governing punishment revealed and enacted. ♦

Endnotes

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Quantum Theory: Sign of a Personal God

By Zia H Shah MD
and Sardar Anees Ahmad

$$(E = \gamma M_0 C^2)^\infty$$

Determinism

A deist believes God created the universe, but rejects the notion of a Personal God – a God who answers prayers or intervenes in human affairs. Many deists are strict determinist, believing that causality governs the entire universe. Albert Einstein, by his own admission, held such a conception of God, “I do not believe in the God of theology who rewards good and punishes evil. My God created laws that take care of that. His universe is not ruled by wishful thinking, but by immutable laws.”¹

Einstein’s own views resulted from his own remarkable scientific discoveries, as well as that of Newton. Through these discoveries, great technological advancements surfaced and scientists came to believe that determinable laws governed the entire universe.

In turn, Einstein’s strict adherence to determinism lead him to reject the notion of free will: “If this being is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also His work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an almighty Being? In giving out punishment and rewards He would to a certain extent be passing judgment on Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him?”²

Unlike his earth-shattering discoveries regarding space, time, gravity and light, however, Einstein’s determinism would not be able to command respect. Ironically, science itself would debunk Einstein’s determinism.

Quantum Theory

In 1912, Neils Bohr began research under Ernest Rutherford. Rutherford, by this time, had not only discovered the phenomenon of radioactive half-life but had also revolutionized man’s understanding of the atom. Rutherford

postulated that the atom was like a miniature universe with electrons rotating around a positively charged nucleus. Rutherford, however, discovered a problem in his model. If his model was true, the electron should rapidly orbit into the nucleus – i.e. if Rutherford was correct, atoms could not exist and, therefore, nothing could exist. Bohr resolved the dilemma by demonstrating that electrons only occupy various defined orbits. Werner Heisenberg would later corroborate Bohr’s atomic model but would find himself struggling with a new problem of his own.

The Bohr-Heisenberg atomic model implied that there was a level of uncertainty regarding an electron’s location. One night Heisenberg went out for a walk, confused as to how the position of an electron is uncertain. In an epiphany, Heisenberg realized that observation is the key. Called the “uncertainty principle,” he realized that observation of an electron disturbs the electron and therefore it is impossible to know both the position and momentum of a particle. This discovery meant that uncertainty was a fundamental quality of nature and that the future of any physical system at the subatomic level is unpredictable.

Before quantum theory only one aspect of indeterminacy existed, arising from not knowing the “initial conditions.” If such conditions were known, using Newtonian and Einsteinian physics, everything could be determined. Scientists believed that these laws applied to planetary motion as well as subatomic particles.

Despite mathematical proofs and experimental evidence, Einstein rejected Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle. Einstein knew that if Heisenberg were correct, extreme determinism was false. For how could determinism describe the universe when it cannot detect the whereabouts and motion of a single atom? For more than three decades, Einstein attempted to formulate a grand model explaining the nature of the entire universe within the paradigm of determinism. But it was not to be.

In fact, on a large scale, such as that of the

observable physical world, nature is comprehensible. However, quantum mechanics implies there is a limit to which man can understand reality – at the quantum level, especially, nature is uncertain to some degree.

Quantum Theory and Determinism

One should appreciate the power of the idea that the universe operates in a deterministic fashion at some levels, but according to the rules of quantum mechanics is indeterministic in other scales. To create an orderly observable world not in need of constant intervention, God implemented fixed, discernable laws. Applying these laws to every stage of existence, however, would have precluded the possibility of free will. Quantum indeterminacy allows for free will while allowing deterministic laws to operate on larger scales.

Quantum indeterminacy further allows for a deist to accept the possibility of a Personal God – a God Who can intervene if needed and a God Who answers man’s prayers. In principle, this is what Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} alludes to, “If God has created the universe, then one can be certain that in keeping with His infinite entity, He would have left innumerable ways to influence the universe so that His divinity is not suspended in any way at any time.”³

Endnotes

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³ *Barkat-ud-Dua*, p. 27

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Bukhari-Volume 3, Book 41, Number 576:

Narrated Hudhaifa:

I heard the Prophet saying, “Once a man died and was asked, ‘What did you use to say (or do)?’ He replied, ‘I was a business-man and used to give time to the rich to repay his debt and deduct part of the debt of the poor.’ So he was forgiven (his sins.)” Abu Masud said, “I heard the same from the Prophet.”

Bukhari-Volume 3, Book 41, Number 591:

Narrated Al-Mughira bin Shu’ba:

The Prophet said, “Allah has forbidden for you, (1) to be undutiful to your mothers, (2) to bury your daughters alive, (3) to not to pay the rights of the others (e.g. charity, etc.) and (4) to beg of men (begging). And Allah has hated for you (1) vain, useless talk, or that you talk too much about others, (2) to ask too many questions and (3) to waste the wealth (by extravagance).

Bukhari-Volume 3, Book 41, Number 592:

Narrated Abdullah bin ‘Umar:

I heard Allah’s Apostle saying, “Everyone of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a lady is a guardian of her husband’s house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master’s property and is responsible for it.” I heard that from Allah’s Apostle and I think that the Prophet also said, “A man is a guardian of his father’s property and is responsible for it, so all of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and things under your care.”

Bukhari-Volume 4, Book 51, Number 5:

Narrated Sad bin Abu Waqqas:

The Prophet came visiting me while I was (sick) in Mecca, (‘Amir the sub-narrator said, and he disliked to die in the land, whence he had already migrated). The Prophet said, “May Allah bestow His Mercy on Ibn Afra (Sad bin Khaula).” I said, “O Allah’s Apostle! May I will all my property (in charity)?” He said, “No.” I said, “Then may I will half of it?” He said, “No”. I said, “One third?” He said: “Yes, one third, yet even one third is too much. It is better for you to leave your inheritors wealthy than to leave them poor begging others, and whatever you spend for Allah’s sake will be considered as a charitable deed even the handful of food you put in your wife’s mouth. Allah may lengthen your age so that some people may benefit by you, and some others be harmed by you.” At that time Sad had only one daughter.

Q. Why is no other book needed after the Holy Quran?

A. The Holy Quran is the Perfect Book which undertook the entire project of human reform and is not addressed only to one people. It seeks the reform of all and has set forth all grades of human development. It teaches savages the manners and ways of humanity and thereafter instructs them in high moral qualities. Thus there is no need of any other book beside the Holy Quran.

Q. What is the true purpose of a human being's life in this world?

A. Different people being short-sighted and lacking high resolve, appoint different purposes for their lives and limit themselves to worldly goals and ambitions. But the purpose that God Almighty has appointed for man in His Holy Word is as follows:

I have created men and jinn so that they may know Me and worship Me [51:57]. Thus the true purpose of man's life is the worship of God, His understanding and complete devotion to Him. It is obvious that man is not in a position to appoint the purpose of his own life, for he does not come into the world of his own accord, nor will he depart therefrom of his own will. He is a creature and the One Who created him and invested him with better and higher faculties than those of all other animals. Whether anyone penetrates to it or not, the purpose of man's creation without a doubt is the worship and the understanding of God and complete devotion to Him.

Q. What three types of self have been discussed in the Holy Quran as the springs all actions?

First Source:

The Self That Incites to Evil

A. The first spring which is the source of all natural states is designated by the Holy Quran the *Nafse Ammarah*, which means the self that incites to evil, as it says:

The mind of man is ever ready to incite to evil (12:54).

This means that it is characteristic of the human self that it incites man to evil and is

opposed to his attainment of perfection and to his moral state, and urges him towards undesirable and evil ways. Thus the propensity towards the evil and intemperance is a human state which predominates over the mind of a person before he enters upon the moral state. This is man's natural state, so long as he is not guided by reason and understanding but follows his natural bent in eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, anger and provocation, like the animals. When a person is guided by reason and understanding and brings his natural state under control and regulates it in a proper manner, that state ceases to be his natural state and is called his moral state.

Second Source: The Reproving Self

The source of the moral state of man is designated by the Holy Quran *Nafse Lawwama*, as is said:

I call to witness the reproving self (75:3); that is to say, I call to witness the self that reproves itself for every vice and intemperance. This reproving self is the second source of human state from which the moral state is generated. At this stage man ceases to resemble the animals. Calling it to witness is for the purpose of doing it honour, as if by advancing from the state of the self that is prone to evil and arriving at the state of the reproving self, it has become worthy of honour in divine estimation. It is so called as it reproves man on vice and is not reconciled to man's submitting to his natural desires and leading an unbridled existence like the animals. It desires that man should be in a good state and should practise good morals, and no kind of intemperance should be manifested in any aspect of human life, and natural emotions and desires should be regulated by reason. As it reproves every vicious movement, it is called the reproving self. Though it reproves itself in respect of vices, yet it is not fully effective in practising virtue and occasionally it is dominated by natural emotions, when it stumbles and falls. It is like a weak child who does not wish to stumble and fall but does so out of weakness, and is then remorseful over his infirmity. In short, this is the moral state of human self when it seeks to comprehend within itself high moral qualities and is disgusted with disobedience, but cannot achieve complete success.

The Third Source: The Soul at Rest

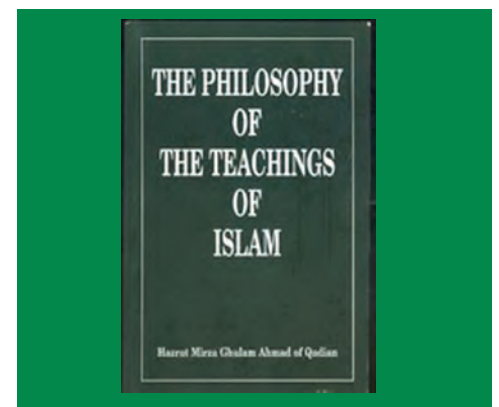
The third source which should be described as the beginning of the spiritual state of man is called by the Holy Quran *Nafse Mutmainnah*, that is to say, the soul at rest, as is said:

O soul at rest that has found comfort in God return to thy Lord, thou well pleased with Him and He well pleased with thee. Now join My chosen servants and enter into My garden (89:28-31).

This is the stage when the soul of a person being delivered from all weaknesses is filled with spiritual powers and establishes a relationship with God Almighty without Whose support it cannot exist. As water flowing down from a height, on account of its volume and the absence of any obstruction, rushes with great force, in the same way the soul at rest flows towards God. That is indicated by the divine direction to the soul that has found comfort in God to return to its Lord. It undergoes a great transformation in this very life and is bestowed a paradise while still in this world. As this verse indicates in its direction to such a soul to return to its Lord, it is nourished by its Lord and its love of God becomes its nurture, and it drinks at this fountain of life and is thus delivered from death. This is indicated at another place in the Holy Quran where it is said:

He who purifies his soul of earthly passions shall be saved and shall not suffer ruin, but he who is overcome by his earthly passions should despair of life (91:10-11).

For further discussion on these topics go to Alislam.org. Search under libraries for the book, "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam."



Death Penalty in Qur'an and Bible

By Ayesha N. Rashid

Reverend Youcef Nadarkhani awaits execution for his crime of apostasy. Reverend Nadarkhani, originally a Muslim, renounced Islam for Christianity. Though Iranian law does not consider apostasy a crime, the decision to execute him found credence in Ayatullah Khomeini's fatwa to kill apostates. Asia Bibi currently suffers through the same ordeal in Pakistan for allegedly passing blasphemous remarks against Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. Two of her would-be-saviors were murdered for their assistance, and their deaths have been celebrated.¹

The Muslim world frenzy to kill for blasphemy and apostasy has led Non-Muslims—as well as ignorant Muslims—to grossly misunderstand the role of the death penalty in Islam. Likewise, few understand the history of the death penalty in the Abrahamic faiths—Judaism and Christianity, respectively. The following analysis of the death penalty in the Abrahamic faiths will elaborate upon, and differentiate the elements of extremism from the elements of compassion and moderation in all three Abrahamic religions.



Religious practices:

Throughout history, punishments for violating religious laws included killing, torturing and stoning the offender. According to the Old Testament, sacrifices to gods other than Jehovah is a capital crime, deserving of death.² Similarly, a person involved in sacrificing children to gods is supposed to be stoned to death.³ Additionally, those who state false prophecies and secretly entice believers to believe in other gods, should be killed and stoned to death.⁴ Necromancy is also considered a capital crime in Judaism.⁵

Blasphemy is one of the most frequently cited justifications to employ the death penalty in Judaic law. Leviticus speaks of a boy who was stoned to death because he blasphemed against the Lord. At this juncture the Lord commands Moses^{as}, “He who blasphemes the name of Yahweh, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him: the foreigner as well as the native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.”⁶ Moreover, prohibition of blasphemy is listed 5th in the Noahide laws i.e. the seven laws of Noah^{as}. Jesus^{as} is undeniably the most prominent figure to have been given the death penalty due to alleged blasphemy under the Judaic law.

Blasphemy is also considered a severe crime in Christianity. The New Testament says,

“And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”⁷ The New Testament adds, “He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die.”⁸ As time passed, the meaning of blasphemy changed to the dishonor of Jesus^{as} and the holy scriptures. Still, blasphemy is considered an unforgivable sin in Christianity.⁹ For instance, the Visigoths punished blasphemers with the shearing of their heads, a hundred lashes and perpetual imprisonment. In the medieval era, blasphemers, according to their status, were given various punishments such as heavy fines, public degradation, flogging, tongue piercing, bodily punishments, imprisonment and sentencing to galleys under the Canon Law.

In comparison to Judaic law, Christianity places relatively little emphasis on capital punishment. Jesus said that his mission, however, was not to abolish, but to fulfill the law.¹⁰ Therefore, it is incorrect to conclude that Christianity abolished the death penalty altogether.

In Islam, the Qur'an offers no excuse to kill a human being on religious grounds. Similarly, spirits and magicians are not to be killed. When faced with blasphemy, alleged or otherwise, the Qur'an commands its followers to “refrain from reviling whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance.”¹¹ Another verse adds, “We will [i.e. God], surely, suffice thee against those who mock.”¹² The Holy Qur'an also speaks about a magician at the time of Prophet Moses^{as} who produced a calf for worshipping. Even in that case, the Holy Qur'an informs that Prophet Moses^{as} punished Samiri with rigorous social boycott instead of execution.¹³

Apostasy from Islam, too, is matter left to God. The Qur'an teaches universal freedom of religion,¹⁴ and hence does not prescribe any punishment for those who leave Islam. The Qur'an directly addresses those who revert from Islam for fear of death,¹⁵ and yet does not prescribe any penalty for them. Another verse mentions those who turn away after guidance has been manifested upon them,¹⁶ and again prescribes no worldly punishment. The Holy Qur'an also addresses those en-

gaged in the habitual trend of apostasy, “Those who believe, then disbelieve, then again believe, then disbelieve and thereafter go on increasing in disbelief, Allah will never forgive them, nor guide them to any way of deliverance.”¹⁷ Yet again, no punishment is prescribed. None of these or various other verses prescribe any punishment, let alone death punishment for apostasy. On the contrary, Muslims are forbidden from punishing any person for blasphemy or apostasy.¹⁸

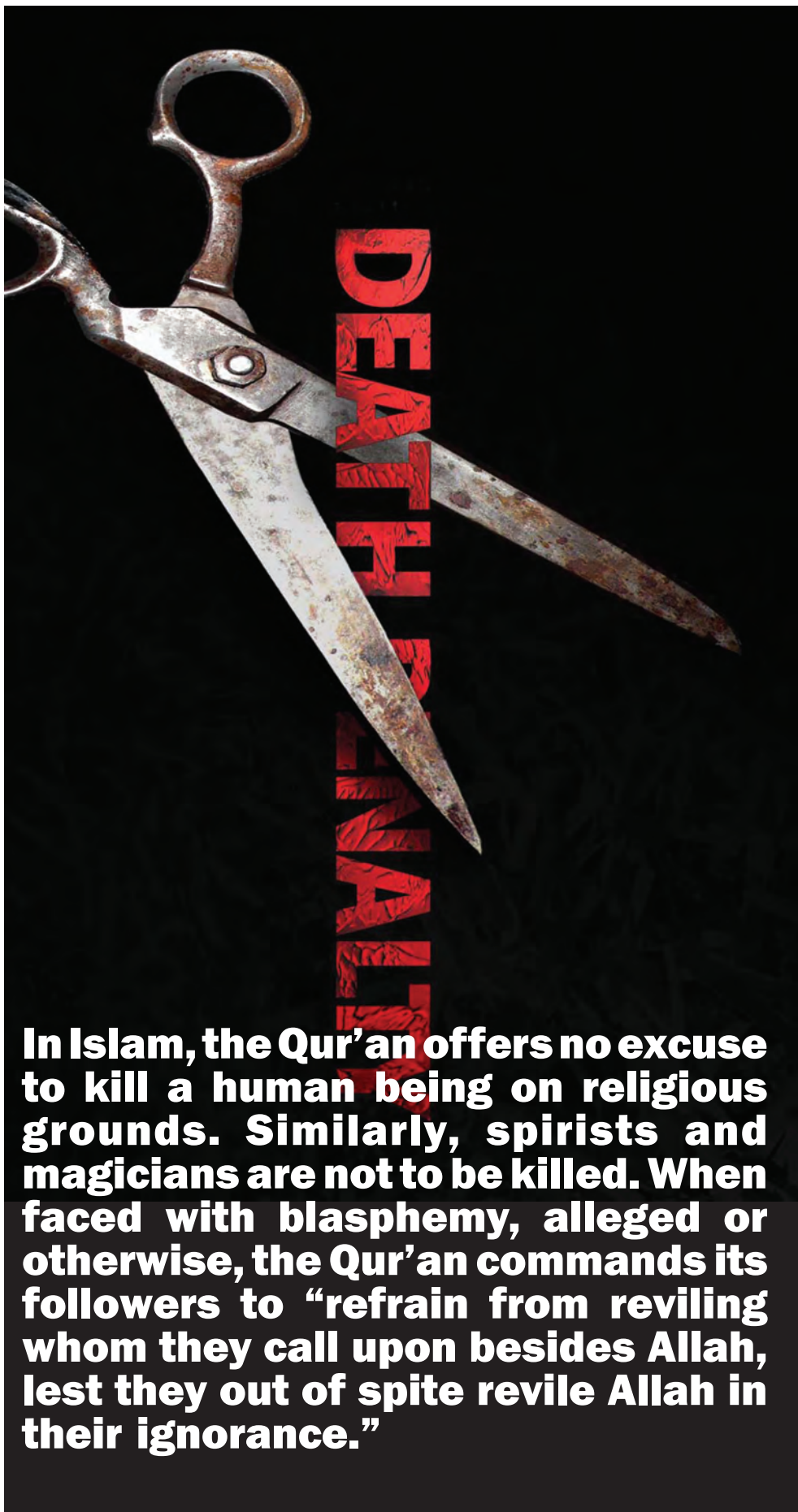
Islam’s death penalty advocates disingenuously quote, “The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter.”¹⁹ Such individuals conveniently ignore, however, the fact that this verse is actually prescribing the punishment for those inciting rebellions and treason against a sovereign government. Even in modern day US law, the punishment for treason is none other than death.

Sexual Crimes

In Judaic law, all sexual crimes, including rape, incest, bestiality, and adultery, warrant the death penalty—generally via burning or stoning. The Old Testament says, “If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.”²⁰ Likewise, “If a man sleeps with his father’s wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.” The Old Testament also prescribes death as a punishment for homosexuals.²¹

Both Christianity and Islam consider extramarital sexual practices to be immoral and sinful, however they do not deserve death. It is said in the New Testament that, “Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”²² At no point, however, does the New Testament explicitly refer death for the aforementioned crimes.²³

Islam criminalizes²⁴ all sexual crimes. Unlike the Bible, however, Islam does not prescribe the death penalty for the offenders. Muslim countries that employ the death penalty for adultery do not find their justification in Islamic history, nor in the Holy Qur’an. Such



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Muslims are either fulfilling their draconian tribal customs or, ironically, are still following the Old Testament.

Capital Punishments in Bible

Various verses of the Old Testament prescribe capital punishment for the crime of murder. The Old Testament says, “He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.”²⁵ In addition to this, Judaic law defines numerous other practices as capital crimes. For instance, smiting a parent,²⁶ cursing a parent,²⁷ kidnapping,²⁸ contempt of court²⁹ and false witness³⁰ each are deserving of capital punishment in the Old Testament.

Though the New Testament is more inclined towards forgiveness, there exists a school of thought that recognizes capital punishment as a part of Christianity. St Augustine’s view on the death penalty is worth noting here. He says

The same divine law which forbids the killing of a human being allows certain exceptions, as when God authorizes killing by a general law or when He gives an explicit commission to an individual for a limited time. Since the agent of authority is but a sword in the hand, and is not responsible for the killing, it is in no way contrary to the commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill’ to wage war at God’s bidding, or for the representatives of the State’s authority to put criminals to death, according to law or the rule of rational justice.”³¹

Moreover, the New Testament says, “whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.”³²

Some Christians apply the commandment of “thou shalt not kill” as one without exception, and thus wholly reject any justification for capital punishment. As discussed earlier, however, the New Testament serves as an extension to the Old Testament.³³ Christianity’s history is replete with examples when capital punishment was enacted based on Biblical justification. For instance, Thomas Aikenhead of Britain was executed for the crime of Blasphemy in 1697 and Giordano Bruno, a philosopher and scientist was executed in 1600 for heresy. Therefore, it is somewhat ambiguous whether “thou shalt not kill” actually forbids capital punishment.

Capital Punishment in Islam

Islam, the last of the Abrahamic religions, considers only two crimes worthy of Capital Punishment—intentional murder and treason. The Holy Qur’an strictly forbids killing and

equates the murder of one person with the murder of all mankind.³⁴ The Qur’an further says, “Take not life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law. Thus does He command you, so that you may learn wisdom.”³⁵ Scholars hold varying opinions about the meaning of “creating disorder in the land.” Some include, rape, adultery, piracy etc. Two crimes the Qur’an clearly terms, however, as deserving of capital punishment are intentional murder and treason. The story of a Jewish chief, Ka’b Bin Ashraf, is worth noting here.

Ashraf, the chief of Banu Nadir, became a constant source of danger to the handful of Muslims living in Medina and the life of Prophet Muhammad^{sa}—despite having previously willingly agreed to the Charter of Medina. Together, with the Meccans and the pagans around Medina, Ashraf incited a war against the Muslims to drive the Muslims out of Medina. Ashraf’s animosity and defiance against Prophet Muhammad^{sa} culminated in Ashraf’s plan to kill the Prophet^{sa}. On account of Ashraf’s treason, Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, in his capacity as ruler of Medina, ordered Ashraf and his followers to leave Medina. When Ashraf refused to leave, and instead increased in his incitement to war and violence, Prophet Muhammad^{sa} ordered Ashraf’s execution. This decision — employed as a last resort — was successful in preventing future uprisings and needless wars, ultimately preventing future deaths of innocent Jews and Muslims.

In the case of unintentional murder, the family of the deceased reserves the right to accept blood money from the murderer in place of the death penalty.³⁶ As the Holy Qur’an says, “but whoso forgives and *his act* brings about reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers.”³⁷ The decision, however, is entirely in the hands of the family of the deceased. The State has no say. This Qur’anic injunction sets a high standard of justice and compassion in society. It improves broken relationships and fosters reconciliation. Critics often repudiate this concept, ignoring its important contribution to the development of civil law.

It may be clear now that Islam is the only religion that follows the middle path when applying capital punishment. Neither is Islam overly aggressive like Judaism, nor oddly forbearing like Christianity. This middle path eventually transformed the entire Arab society of early Islam into a tolerant, compassionate and just society. While Islamic laws are based on extreme justice, the entire society is

built on the values of forgiveness and compassion. Prophet Muhammad’s life is a living example of compassion in the face of retaliation. On the day Prophet Muhammad^{sa} returned as the de facto ruler of Mecca, he forgave thousands of his vehement opponents on the single condition that they accept universal freedom of religion. This, despite the fact that countless were guilty of murder, and all were guilty of persecution and treason—demonstrating that even Islam’s two permissions to apply the death penalty are by no means restrictive and ridged.

We hope and pray that Rev. Nadarkhani and Asia Bibi benefit from this true Islamic teaching, as this is the example of Islam Prophet Muhammad^{sa} put forth.

Endnotes

- ¹ Salman Taseer, former Punjab Governor, and Shabazz Bhatti, former Minorities Minister, were both assassinated because of their outspoken desire to repeal Pakistan’s blasphemy laws.
- ² The Torah declares, “Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed.” Exodus 22:20
- ³ Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him.” (Leviticus 20:1-5)
- ⁴ Deuteronomy 13:1-10
- ⁵ A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.(Leviticus 20:27)
- ⁶ Leviticus 24:16
- ⁷ Matthew 12:31-32
- ⁸ Matthew 15:4
- ⁹ Mark 3:29
- ¹⁰ Matthew 5:17-20
- ¹¹ The Holy Qur’an 6:108
- ¹² The Holy Qur’an 15:96
- ¹³ The Holy Qur’an 20:88-98
- ¹⁴ The Holy Qur’an 2:257
- ¹⁵ The Holy Qur’an 2:218
- ¹⁶ The Holy Qur’an 47:26
- ¹⁷ The Holy Qur’an 4:138
- ¹⁸ And if Allah had *enforced* His will, they would not have set up gods *with Him*. And We have not made thee a keeper over them nor art thou over them a guardian. The Holy Qur’an (6:108)
- ¹⁹ The Holy Qur’an 5:34
- ²⁰ Leviticus 20:10
- ²¹ Leviticus 20:13
- ²² 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
- ²³ Exception being that Jesus came to fulfill the law of the Old Testament. (Matthew 5:17)
- ²⁴ The Holy Qur’an 24:3
- ²⁵ Exodus 21:12-14
- ²⁶ Exodus 21:15
- ²⁷ Exodus 21:17
- ²⁸ Exodus 21:17
- ²⁹ Deuteronomy 17:8-13
- ³⁰ Deuteronomy 19:15-21
- ³¹ Augustine, The City of God
- ³² Genesis 9:6
- ³³ Matthew 5:17
- ³⁴ The Holy Qur’an 5:33
- ³⁵ Holy Qur’an 6:152
- ³⁶ The Holy Quran 2:179
- ³⁷ The Holy Qur’an 41:42

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It is the Holy Word of the Gracious Lord

Every word in it is living
And everlasting spring;
No orchard has such a quality,
Nor is there a garden like it.

The Word of the Gracious God
Has no equal;
Be it a pearl from Umman,
OR a ruby from Badakhshan.

How can the word of man
Equal the word of God?
There is divine power; here is
helplessness;
The difference is so obvious!

In knowledge and eloquence,
How can man equal Him?
Before Whom even the angels
Confess ignorance.

Even the tiny leg of an insect,
Man can never create;
How is possible for him
To create the Light of God?

O people, have some regard
For the grandeur of the Great Lord;
Hold your tongues now
If you have even a hint of faith.

To consider someone equal to God
Is an act of great infidelity?
Have some fear of God, dears!
What a lie and calumny this is!

If you accept the unity of God,
Why are your hearts full of
polytheism?

What veils of ignorance
Have enveloped your hearts?
You are indeed guilty of an error;
Desist! If you have fear of God.

I bear no ill will to you, brothers,
This is only a humble advice;
My heart and life are an offering
For anyone who has a pure heart.

(Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in Vol.1, pp.
198-204)

In the Spirit of St. Francis & the Sultan

By Atif Munawar Mir

Since 9/11, the discussion as to what inspires terrorism has become less meaningful and more sensational. After every act of terrorism, some blame the religion of the perpetrator. Others rush to blame Islam. In this blame game, efforts to rebuild the Christian-Muslim relationship, damaged by acts of terrorism, are rare. Arguably, the level of trust between Muslims and Christians today has not been so low since the Crusades.

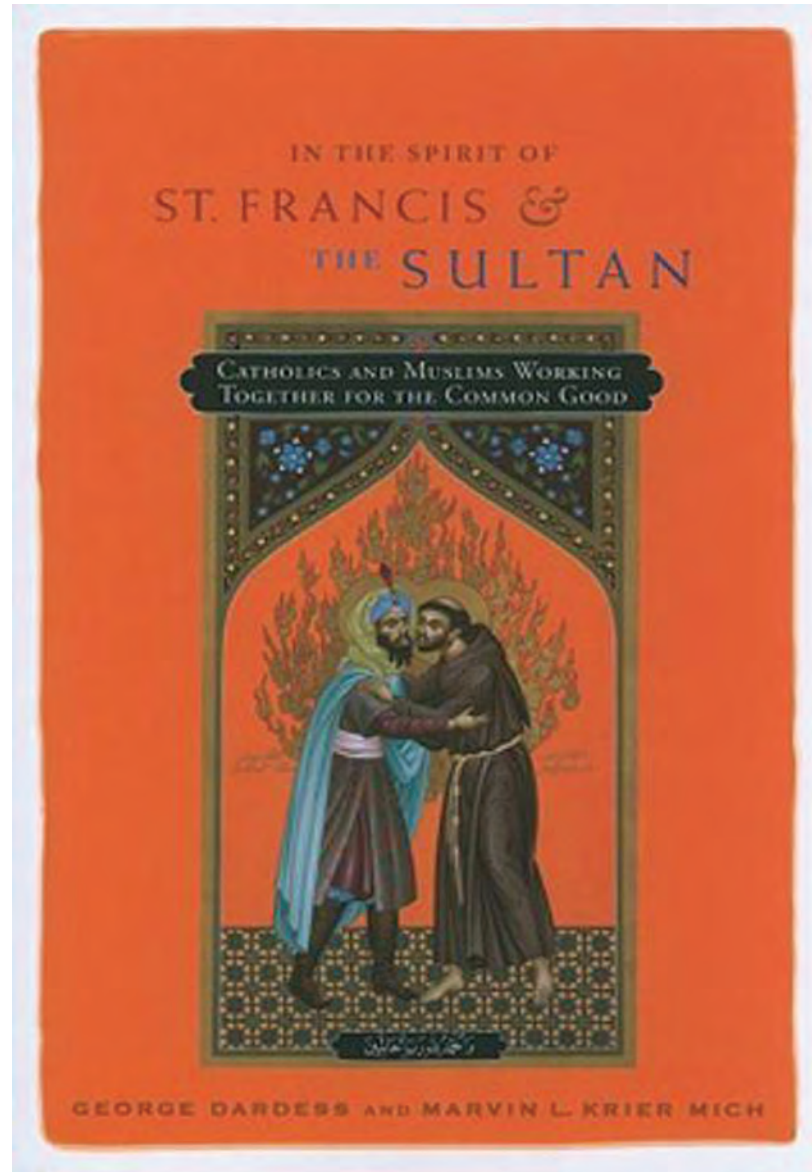
It is painful to see leaders of nations victimized by terrorism, rush to take positions and utter sound bites that suit their immediate personal objectives, rather than striving to create conditions within their borders that foster security and peace.

In such a socio-political backdrop, the book, *In the Spirit of St. Francis & the Sultan* is a breath of fresh air. The authors have written this book to build bridges between Muslims and Christians who see each other as fanatical and violent¹. Dardess and Mich, the authors of the book, use the meeting between St. Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik al-Kamil during the fifth crusade as the basis for their ideal of Muslim-Christian relations. According to historical records, St. Francis covertly entered the tent of the Sultan, in an attempt to reconcile their warring peoples by converting the Sultan to Christianity. Francis did not succeed in this endeavor, but their meeting enabled both to respect each other and eventually befriend each other, as both were struck by the many similarities between their separate faiths.

Unfortunately, this new found friendship did not alter the course of history. The Crusades did not come to an end, nor was the suffering that came with it put to an end. But as per the authors, the very fact of their peaceful meeting and the ensuing friendship offers a refreshing possibility for current and future Christian-Muslim re-

lations. The authors imagine the conversation between St. Francis and the Sultan during this encounter and attempt to identify those elements that made their relationship a cordial one despite the preva-

lent enmity of the time. Based on this, they present four steps that the Muslims and Christians of today, from all levels of society, must undertake to build mutual trust and create peace.



A guide for Catholics and Muslims on how to reach greater understanding of the other's tradition in order to work together to end social injustice. This book takes on a specific challenge: "We all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, have a choice. Either we allow our fears to bear us along towards what could eventually become a war of apocalyptic dimensions. Or we can rouse ourselves from our fearful obsessions and search for ways not only to reverse this negative trend but also, and most importantly, to focus the world's energies on achieving peace and human flourishing" (from the Preface).

The steps outlined are: 1) Building Confidence 2) Focusing on each faith's message of social justice and peace, 3) Confronting historical differences and conflicts and 4) Working collaboratively on social justice projects.² These steps are intended to build mutual trust, discover commonalities, and strengthen collaboration in the causes of social justice for the sake of interreligious peace and social justice.

Building Confidence

Like Francis and the Sultan did, the authors argue that contemporary Muslims and Christians too should focus on their commonalities. Francis, the author imagines must have been impressed by the Sultan's greetings, *As-salaam aleikum*.³ Perhaps, Francis' dress of a monk might have appealed to the Sultan as the Qur'an holds monks in high esteem.⁴ Such symbolic exchanges enabled the two men to take the first step, that of building mutual trust, so that eventually the task of bringing peace to their war-torn world could go forward.⁵ Muslims and Christians today seem to have forgotten what Francis and the Sultan had learned about each other's religions few centuries ago. The media and prejudice on both sides ignores commonalities between Christian and Muslim civilizations and instead focus on news that feeds mutual suspicions. The authors argue that it is the responsibility of Muslims and Christians on elite as well as grass root levels to identify commonalities between their faiths and build mutual trust.

Focusing on each faith's message of social justice and peace

Mutual trust creates the conditions necessary for establishing peace but does not generate peace in and of itself. What deepened the foundations of mutual trust between the Sultan and St. Francis, the authors reckon, was their understanding that the true spirit of their respective faiths is peace and social justice.⁶ St. Francis found his bearings in Jesus' explicit commands to "love your enemy" and care for the poor. And it was with this understanding of himself and of his religion that he approached the Sultan's tent.⁷ The Sultan was also thoroughly conversant with and attentive to his religion's teachings and values, and knew that peacemaking is at the heart of the Qur'an's revelations. From the belief in God's oneness flows an ethical disposi-

tion towards solidarity with God's creation.⁸

Contemporary Muslims and Christians, the book argues, must not only emphasize commonalities between themselves but should reflect on the social justice and peaceful teachings of their respective faiths.

Confronting historical differences and conflicts

Muslims and Christians of today must also embrace opportunities for cross-cultural knowledge sharing. The inspiration for knowledge sharing, as per the book, can be found in the Abbasid's Caliphate in Baghdad from 8th through 10th centuries where Christian pastors and theologians became major players in the preservation of Greek learning.⁹ Another such example of openness is to be found in Cordoba, Spain, the seat of the Umayyad Caliphate of Al-Andalus from 756 to 1031, where Christians and Jews served in key positions in the Caliphate and all of them spoke Arabic.¹⁰ The lessons of Baghdad and Cordoba show that religious differences "worked as a stimulant, not as a stumbling block."¹¹

The past negative encounters should not hinder this cross-cultural cooperation. The authors argue that we have not only to tolerate but even to embrace the brokenness and moral ambiguity inherent in human affairs. For example, we can easily point to the church's sins in fomenting the Crusades, and to its specific sin in suppressing the efforts of Francis to embody a very different response to the Muslim enemy, we have to acknowledge that this same Francis loved the church, sinful as it was, and spent his life in service to it. His love was not a blind devotion to an ideological idol, however, but a response born of gratitude to that same church for preserving the memory of Christ's mandate to love the enemy and for sacramentally enabling its members to embody that memory in their own lives and conducts.¹²

Working collaboratively on social justice projects

Finally, the authors propose to take the Muslim-Christian relationship to a higher plane by emphasizing the necessity and importance of turning their separate social justice teachings into joint concrete actions.¹³ Such collaborative efforts, the authors argue, will promote interfaith cooperation and remove any misunderstandings between the religions. Being engaged in the struggle for justice is a way of discovering the truth of the

way social systems really work. The struggle for justice shapes our theoretical frameworks and our understanding of truth.¹⁴ For example, we understand the meaning of our respective scriptures in new ways

Muslims and/or Christians may disagree with some of the suggestions offered by the authors to strengthen Muslim-Christian relations but even critics will recognize the intention and efforts of the authors as not just laudable but also largely practical.

On occasions, the book seems to be stating the obvious but stating the obvious is pertinent in times when the obvious is buried beneath piles of prejudice and propaganda.

Muslims and Christians should read this book as it offers effective ideas for improving Muslim-Christian relations. It provides insight into the numerous commonalities between the two separate religions and thus gives the Muslim/Christian reader an opportunity to begin to understand and respect the other. It strives to build mutual trust between the two parties and to initiate a friendship between the two faiths, just like Francis and the Sultan did, who despite their many differences "had found in each other the confidence and the inspiration that led them...not only to lessen the tensions between them but also to build new communities of trust."¹⁵

As a member of the Ahmadiyya community, I enjoyed the book because it echoed the 100-year old message of peace as expounded by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}. He, as a subordinate prophet to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, inspired Muslims to return to the values of peace and compassion. These values represent the true spirit of the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Endnotes

¹ Mich, Marvin L. Krier & Dardess, George, *Introduction*, In the Spirit of St. Francis & the Sultan, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 10545, p. 2

² Ibid, p. 15-16

³ Ibid, *Finding Common Symbols*, p. 24-25

⁴ Ibid, p. 25

⁵ Ibid, p. 26-27

⁶ Ibid, *The Fundamentals of Islamic Social Justice*, p. 94

⁷ Ibid, *The Fundamentals of Christian Social Justice*, p. 71

⁸ Ibid, *The Fundamentals of Islamic Social Justice*, p. 94-95

⁹ Ibid, *The blessings of our Religious and Cultural Sharing*, p. 128

¹⁰ Ibid, 129

¹¹ Ibid, p. 131

¹² Ibid, *Confronting our Demons*, Sin as Exclusion

¹³ Ibid, *Common Ground, Common Action*, p. 162

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 168

¹⁵ Ibid, *Leaving the Tent*, p. 182

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The Situation

Over 11.5 million people affected by the growing drought situation in East Africa. With More than 40% of children now face chronic malnutrition; Hundreds of Children and Elderly are dying every day in the refugee camps.

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There are various ways to donate, including credit or debit card payments, PayPal, setting up online bank payments, mailing a check to Humanity First at the following address:

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What Hajj (Pilgrimage) is and upon whom it is incumbent

Hajj is one of the important pillars of Islam. It is incumbent upon all those who are physically and financially able to undertake the journey for it.

Hajj fosters the feeling of unity among Muslims, who are provided with an opportunity to think and ponder over their own needs and those of the rest of the world. It also provides an opportunity to see one another's good points and excellences and an inspiration to imbibe them. It promotes mutual love and the feeling of brotherhood.

In my opinion, the greatest virtuous deed for the rich today, is to perform Pilgrimage, because in spite of having wealth they do not perform it. Most of those who perform Pilgrimage are poor people upon whom it is not incumbent. When I had been to Mecca on Pilgrimage, a pilgrim came to me, and ask some monetary help. My maternal grandfather who was with me asked him why he had come to perform pilgrimage when he had no money. He said that he had much money, but all that he had, had been exhausted. My grandfather then asked him how much money he had. He said he had 35 rupees. Now, to him thirty five rupees was a big sum. But among Muslims there are many who have thirty five thousand rupees, nay, thirty five hundred thousand rupees, still they do not perform pilgrimage. There are many poor people who perform pilgrimage. They go on saving little by little throughout their lives, and when it amounts to some hundreds, they start for pilgrimage.

So, for the rich, to perform pilgrimage is a great virtue, since most of them neglect it. There are many officials, who think of going to pilgrimage after retirement, but they do not take into consideration the possibility of their not having the necessary health and vigor after

retirement to go on Pilgrimage. Most of the officials, after retirement, become too ill to perform Pilgrimage.

Again, there are some businessmen who, due to business, defer Pilgrimage to every following year. They should know that the business of this world never comes to an end. So, whenever they have the capacity, they should perform it as early as possible.

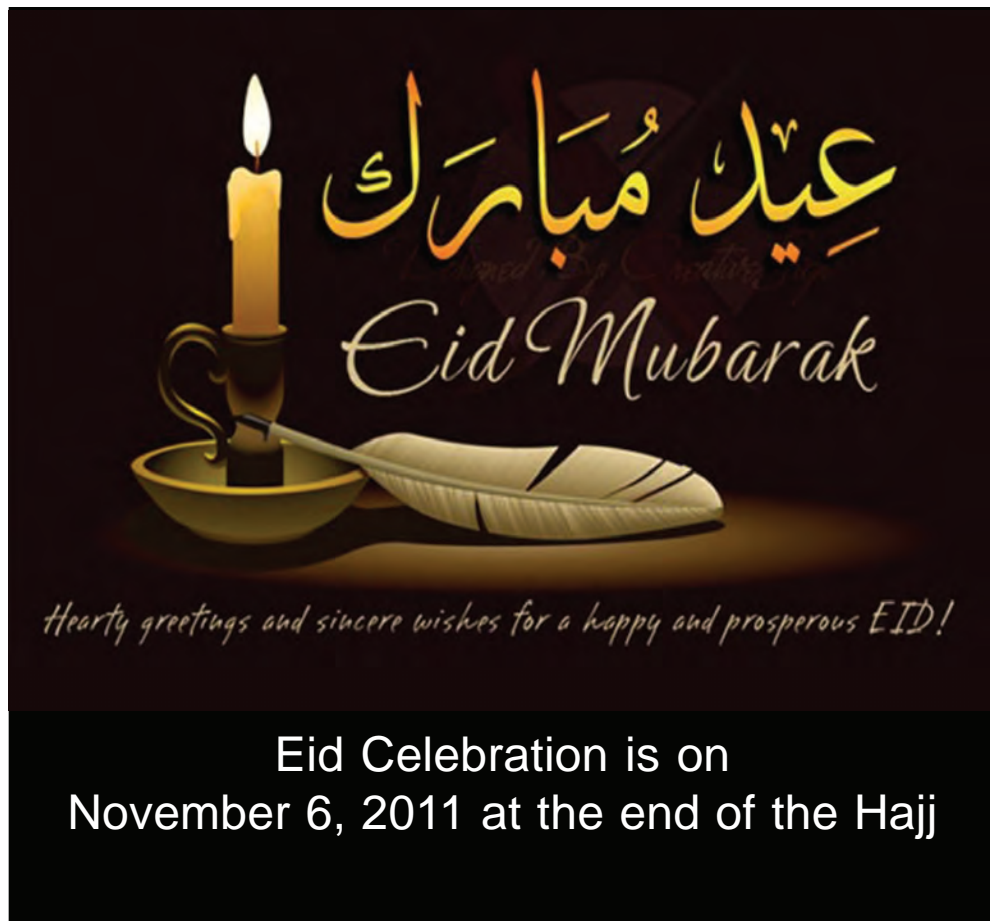
Without a pious and righteous motive, Pilgrimage, too, is no meritorious deed. While at Mecca, on Pilgrimage, I saw a young man reciting a very indecent love poem, instead of glorifying God. On our way back home, he happened to be on the same ship in which I was journeying, I asked him why he had gone on Pilgrimage, as he was not glorifying God when performing rites of pilgrimage. He said, "In my country most people buy things from the shop of pilgrims. In front of my shop there is a shop, the owner of which has recently performed Pilgrimage, and has a sign board fixed at his shop, telling that this is a Pilgrim's shop. The result is that he has attracted all customers, and all those who used to buy

things from my shop, now go to his shop. So my father advised me to perform pilgrimage, and then to have similar signboard affixed to my shop. This is why I went on a Pilgrimage." Now, can such a pilgrimage be a virtuous deed? Not to speak of being a virtuous deed, it will be an act of sin.

So, even when doing a religious work, one should have a pious motive, otherwise it will bring no reward, rather, incur the displeasure of God. If one performs Pilgrimage to be honored by people, or as a customary practice, or to be called by people "Al-Haajj", one will even lose the faith one already had.

In short, Hajj or Pilgrimage can be beneficial to one, only when one performs it out of love and fear of God. If one goes there with a sincere heart, one will return with a treasure of faith. On the contrary, if one goes there without a sincere heart, one will lose the faith one already had.

(Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II, Second Successor of the Promised Messiah)



Rick Badie: Local Muslims offer love and life

By Rick Badie

The way Hazeem Pudhiapura sees it, Islamic terrorists did more than hijack planes and kill thousands on Sept. 11, 2001. They stole something else, too.

“They also hijacked Islam from mainstream Muslims,” said Pudhiapura, president of the Georgia chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the nation’s oldest Muslim organization. “We want to take that back from these terrorists and return it to those who are promoting sanctity, peace and loyalty.”

This Muslim community has a motto: “Love for all, hatred for none.” In that vein, Pudhiapura encourages moderate Muslims and those of other faiths to donate blood to honor the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.

You’d be partaking in a national campaign that moderate Muslims, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, bills “Muslims for Life.” Several blood drives are being held across metro Atlanta to promote the effort.

The inaugural drive takes place from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. today during the Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s Decatur Book Festival. (Visit www.muslimsforlife.org for details on other venues.)

If you can’t donate on specific dates, arrange to donate at any of metro Atlanta’s American Red Cross blood banks. Explain that you’re a donor for the Muslims for Life campaign.

This month, blood drives will be hosted at Ahmadiyya mosques and prayer centers across the United States. Organizers hope to collect 10,000 units of blood which, Pudhiapura said, could potentially save 30,000 lives.

Last year, the Ahmadiyya community conducted a “Muslims for Peace” campaign in the United States and the United Kingdom. Its purpose: To show that Muslims stand for peace. Believers distributed fliers door to door and approached people in public spaces to spread their message. That’s pretty gutsy, given some of the blatant anti-Muslim rheto-



ric that surfaces when mosques are opposed in some communities.

“People have accepted us, most of the time,” Pudhiapura said. “Most supported us, but there are people — because of lack of knowledge and the knowledge they get from extremists — who don’t. We are trying to do small stuff, good stuff, to promote peace, but they don’t hear about that.”

Chapter 5 of the Quran includes a verse that’s antithetical to views expressed by Muslim extremists. It states: “Whoever unjustly kills a single person it is as if he had killed all of mankind; and whoever saves the life of one person, it is as if he has saved the life of all of humanity.”

Said Pudhiapura: “The message is very simple. We want to take Islam back from these terrorists and return it to those who are promoting sanctity, peace and loyalty. We have to fight the ideology of extremism within Islam, and we are doing it.”

Pudhiapura admitted that it has been a few years since he’s given blood. This go ’round, he hopes you join him.

“We need fellow Georgians, not just moderate Muslims, to join us,” he said. “Go to any Red Cross Center and use the Muslims for Life campaign. It will help us defeat the extremists.”

Rick Badie, an Opinion columnist, is based in Gwinnett.

Muslim Group Holds Blood Drive to Honor 9-11 Victims

By Paul Richter

A local San Diego chapter of the [Ahmadiyya Muslim Community](#) has announced a blood drive around the 10th anniversary of the tragic September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The blood drive, part of a nationwide campaign launched under the title, *Muslims for Life*, will run during the month of September and will feature blood drives at all

United States mosques and prayer centers, in remembrance of those who lost their lives on 9/11. Their goal is to collect 10,000 units of blood, enough to save up to 30,000 lives, according to the official press release.

The national group Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1921 as the first American-Muslim organization, proclaiming a motto of “Love for All, Hatred for None.” The notion that some non-Muslims have about the Islamic culture being predicated on violent religious extremism is something that Ahmadi Muslims have been working to correct. Religious leaders are spearheading projects like Muslims for Life with community organizers around America to make the distinction of being a peaceful, benevolent religious group, no different than Christians, Catholics or Mormons. Unfortunately, this message hasn’t been received by everyone, as hate crimes against Muslims have skyrocketed following the terrorist attacks almost a decade ago.

“We think that on Sept. 11 not only did the terrorists hijack the airplanes but they also hijacked the essential message of Islam, which is to value life,” said Waseem Sayed, a spokesman for the community. In a previously released report titled “[Unequal Protection: The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States](#),” performed by the Council on American Islamic Relations, almost 80 percent of anti-Muslim crime was committed in just 10 states; 20% in California, followed by 10% in New York, 9% in Arizona, 7% in Virginia, Florida and Texas, and 5% in Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, and New Jersey.

“Whoever supported 9/11 is not a true Islam,” Idrees Munir, a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, [told Mercury News](#). “There’s no religion in this world where you’re allowed to kill anyone, let alone Islam. No religion can afford to even put a finger on someone.”

Dr. Tahir Ijaz, a medical doctor who is board certified in radiology and part of the Scripps Health group, is a member of the local San Diego Ahmadiyya Muslim Community chapter and will be organizing the local drive. National partners of the Muslims for Life campaign include [American Red Cross](#), [Puget Sound Blood Center](#), [Carter BloodCare](#), [America’s Blood Centers](#), [American Islamic Congress](#), [Bowl for Life](#), and Blood Centers of the Pacific.

Ahmadiyya Community at the White House Iftar

Leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA speaks with President Obama about 9/11 commemoration.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA's National Vice President, Mr. Naseem Mahdi, attended the annual White House Iftar Dinner last night, along with other American Muslim leaders.

President Obama highlighted the many contributions and services of American Muslims. He also paid tribute to the brave men and women, including several American Muslims, who perished on 9/11: "We must be the America they lived for, and the America they died for."

To commemorate the ten year anniversary of 9/11, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA has launched a nationwide "Muslims for Life" campaign across its 71 chapters to collect 10,000 bags of blood and save 30,000 lives.

"Our Community was honored to be invited to this year's Iftar dinner at the White House," said Mr. Mahdi. "We support the President's call to honor the memories of our fellow Americans who perished on 9/11, and I had the distinct privilege to speak with him



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Founders of the "Muslims for Peace" and "Muslims for Loyalty" campaigns, the

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA invites Americans of all backgrounds to join the "Muslims for Life" campaign by giving blood and saving lives. ♦

Young Muslim children seek privilege of participating in Ramadan

By Matthew Malysa

The Hackensack Record | Posted: Sunday, August 14, 2011 8:00 pm

HACKENSACK, N.J. — Fatin Habehh calls her children to the living room of their Teaneck, N.J., home as the sun begins to set. Hurry, her youngest child, Ibraheem, 8, urges his brothers and sisters. "It's already 8:09."

At exactly 8:11 p.m., sunset, they each bite into a date, the traditional food for breaking the Ramadan fast, and each family member is visibly delighted to have completed the day's fasting and to enjoy this

sweet, satisfying reward.

Families repeat this ritual throughout Ramadan, the holiest month of the Islamic calendar, which began on Aug. 1. For Muslims of all sects and backgrounds, it's a month of appreciation for what they have and a reminder to reach out to those in need.

"I love it because of how it brings us all together," said 13-year-old Fatima Habehh, one of Habehh's six children, who range in age from 8 to 14. "Every night we go for a special prayer - it's nice to see all your friends and family," said Fatima, who said she started fasting little by little at the age of 5.

Children are exempt from the fast until they reach puberty, but many younger children are eager to imitate their parents and older siblings by taking part in the tradition. Fatin Habehh, who said she began the fast at age 7, likes that her children want to be part of the tradition, but she's careful to be sure they stay hydrated and get all of their daily nutrients, a task made easier

because they're home for the summer where she can monitor them during the daily fast.

"I remember I started when I was 6 years old - it made me feel like one of the older guys," said Mohammed Habehh, 14, her oldest child, who leads the family in prayer each evening.

The fast may seem daunting to an outsider, but for many Muslims it's a privilege, not a burden. But while fasting is a major part of Ramadan, Habehh said Ramadan also is a time of moral healing and rebuilding one's spiritual strength.

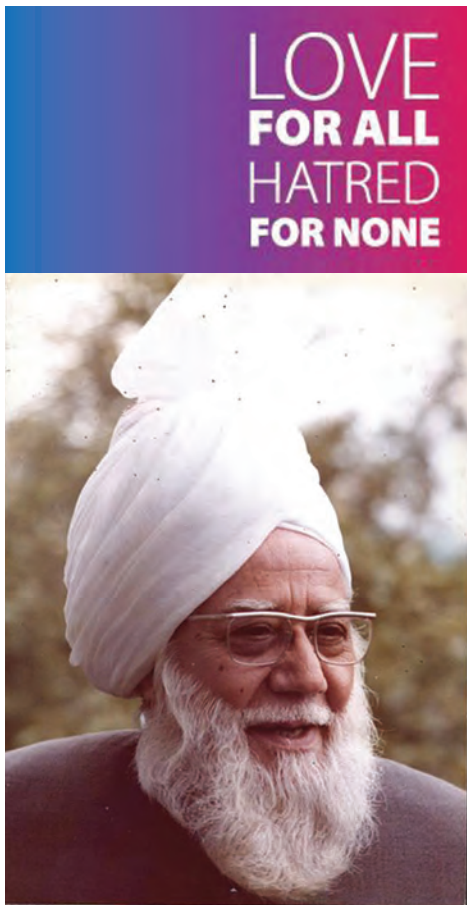
"Ramadan is all about training your self-discipline in order to be a better person," said Habehh, who has made it her Ramadan mission this year to focus on educating families about the importance of foster care in the Muslim community.

Ramadan is a time of good deeds and for Chaudhry, that incentive makes organizing people to do charitable works a simpler task. He said the community benefits most during Ramadan.

About 'Love for All, Hatred for None'

There is a divide between the lay person's perception of Islam and its true teachings. Many may harbour concerns about Islam, perhaps through ignorance or through the portrayal of events in the media. It may surprise some but the portrayal of Islam in the media is of greatest concern to Muslims than anyone else, particularly when it leads to the association of deeds and values that we know are at complete odds with the Islamic faith.

Such concerns are not new and it was in responding to questions about Islam that the third successor the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community underlined that according to Islam human beings are all equal before God. He added that:



*Hazrat Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad -
Khalifatul Masih III. (1909 - 1982)*

“Islam teaches us to live with mutual love and affection and with humility. It teaches us no distinction between a Muslim or a non-Muslim. My message to everyone is that you must have ‘Love for all, Hatred for none!’

This has since become the unique motto of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in its work to promote the true and peaceful teachings of Islam.

It reflects the community's long held views on the rejection of violence and terrorism, the separation of mosque and state and the promotion of Human Rights including complete freedom of religion for all.

Ahmadi Muslims strive to live up to the simple but profound message of Islam that can be summed up in ‘Love for all, Hatred for None’.

The values of *Loyalty, Freedom, Equality, Respect and Peace* are key to the foundation that underpins this motto and reflect the true Islam that so often gets lost in the mist of world events.

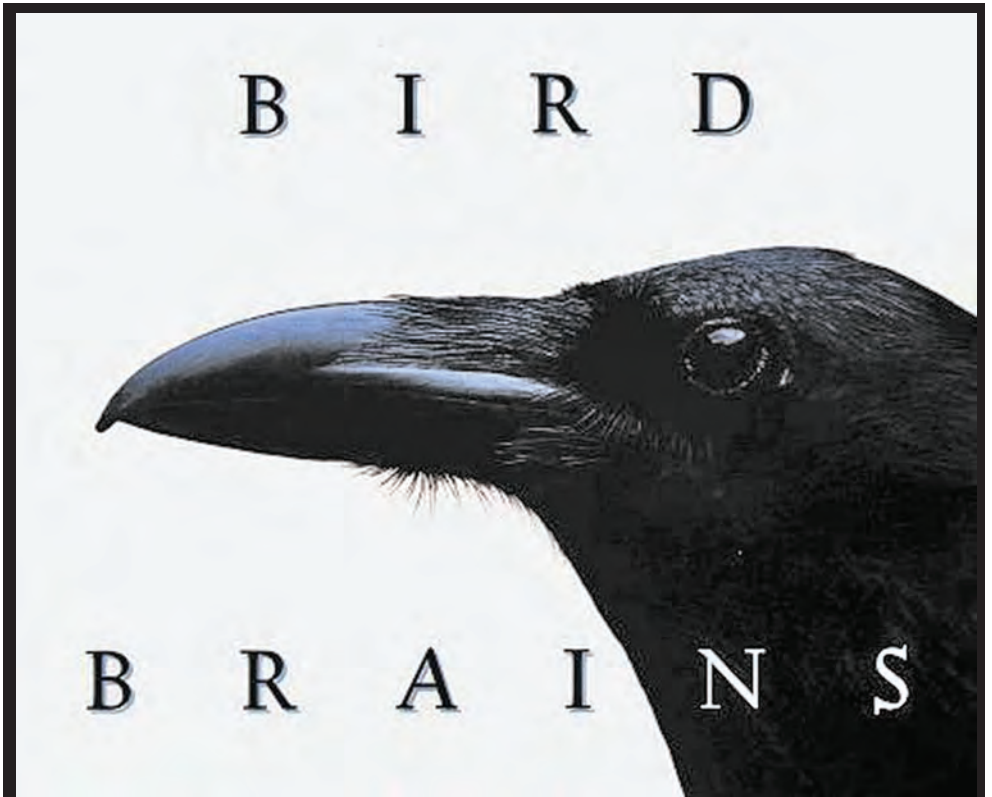
Iwalked in the backyard across to the end of the yard to put some more food in the birdfeeder. As I got closer, birds flew out of the trees and the grass in a wonderful formation. I knew that they would all come back as soon as I walked back into my home. The food is always a good thing to gather around.

Now I'm not much of a bird watcher, and I can't tell you the difference between a yellow belly sapsucker and a red-naped sapsucker. But, bird brains have fascinated me for three reasons: They fly in formations that enable individual space, don't hoard any food and migrate when the food shortage and climate demands it.

Human beings like to hoard things. Without getting too sophisticated, I look in my closet and find that I have so many shirts and sweaters. If I did not buy a single more shirt or sweater, I could manage the rest of my life with what I have in the closet. So why do we keep on buying the shirts? Because we like to hoard things. I have not mentioned what is in the garage or what people hoard in public storage places which sometimes get auctioned off because they just leave it there. The ultimate holders in the history of mankind, were, of course, the Pharaohs of Egypt. They hoarded their wealth even when they were dead. It took us over four thousand years to figure out what they were up to.

We like to amass and hoard wealth as well. The system of interest and gambling with the stock markets, especially in stock options and borrowing money on speculative ventures, are components of the process of trying to hoard wealth. Never mind that the wealth accumulated will have no utility for the person amassing it but will be passed down to someone else or the State in case he did not bother to write a will. What happens to that wealth and how it gets used is not in the control of the hoarder because he would be dead by then. He certainly is not going to let anyone touch it while he is alive. It is against the hoarder's code of life. It applies not just to individuals but to nations as well.

The thinking process of people gets affected by this phenomenon. Once you start on this track, the lust for hoarding grows even faster and a lifetime is consumed in it. Many people get hurt in the process, but that is of no consequence to the hoarder. His eyes are focused on one thing only. The birds don't hoard any food. Somehow, they know that their food will be provided. The



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only time they die of starvation is when we spill oil on the beach and they cannot fly anymore. They also don't fight over food but share. I have seen them stepping up to the birdfeeder one at a time and get their share.

I started thinking about the birds because the Holy Qur'an has mentioned (6:39) that they are also communities like us. So I figured it only needed a mention so we can possibly learn from them. It also says that God provides food for them. That is probably why they don't hoard any food. There is also another thing that is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an for people who have hard times in their land. It says (4:98) why don't they move around on this earth and see the bountiful land God has created. Birds definitely do it every winter when it gets too cold and the food is scarce.

People used to migrate when it was harsh weather and the food was scarce. It all changed when the colonial powers decided to take over the world. Before that time, anyone who wanted to move from one kingdom to another was welcome to do so. As long as they did not get involved in theft, murder or any other criminal activity, nobody bothered them. Since the colonial powers took over, we had passports, visas and customs agents to bribe.

Every year people from the mountains would start their journey in the fall to the lower lands looking for work and making a living while their land was getting ready to be under the snow. In the spring time, they would start their journey back to homeland where they were fine for the summer time. They provided services to the people and made a living and they were expected in the mainland areas every year. Communities, just like them, the birds spend their time in the warmer lands for the winter.

Even when the birds are in our area, they really don't need my food. It is not something that they depend on. When I forget to restock that birdfeeder, it does not matter because they still get fed. They know that I am not their provider. It is God who provides them their food. I am only an occasional carrier in a very minuscule way. We, on the other hand, have a hard time believing that there is a Provider for us.

The Holy Qur'an has stated it this way:

“And how many an animal there is that carries not its own sustenance! Allah provides for it and for you. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-knowing.” (29:61)

My grandfather once told me that the human beings want to become Gods. He used the word *Rub* meaning the Sustainer. I said to him that I did not know anyone who claims to be God and I know some real weird birds. He said that people want to accumulate and leave behind so much wealth so their children would not need



their Sustainer God. They don't understand that God who provided for them would provide their children too. It made sense because the prophets of God do not leave anything behind as far as the worldly wealth is concerned.

The hoarders, of course, have a different mindset. The wealthiest person that I worked for in my financial management career believed only in cash. He did not buy any buildings, stocks or precious metals. He kept everything in cash and a whole lot of it. One day he asked me to see him because he needed my advice about something. His daughter was married to a Rabbi and had four children.

They could not afford to have a big house on a Rabbi's salary. He wanted to discuss if he should give his daughter a down payment for a bigger house since the house they have is not enough for the four children. I suggested that he should give the money so they can be comfortable and especially since the money is going to be shared by her after he was gone. It is only advancing money from something that she is going to end up with anyway. I did not say it to him but I knew that the down payment involved would not make a dent in his monthly interest income.

A few weeks went by and I just stopped by his office and asked if his daughter got a new house. I was shocked when he said that he decided not to give her the money. I had to ask why. He said that another one of his advisors, an attorney whom I know to be a hoarder as well, said something that changed his mind. I said pray tell me what that profound statement was. He said, “Why do you want to take the pleasure away from them for not allowing them to make it on their own?”

It appealed to him so much that he decided to let his daughter chase around the four kids in a small house while her husband was trying to get his thoughts together for the Friday night sermon. I did not know what to say. All I could do was slap my forehead and say, “Oy vey!”

This thinking is so strange but it satisfies a hoarder because he gets to amass and hoard for a longer time especially considering that he was in his late seventies at the time. I wondered why he paid for the college tuition of his three sons and took the pleasure away from them for not allowing them to make it on their own?

Here is another interesting point to note. Islam promotes charity and helping the poor, needy, the orphans and the widows. It all depends on one's income and capacity and there is no fixed amount prescribed. The only required charity with a fixed rate is *Zakat* and it does not have anything to do with the income of an individual. It only applies to the wealth not in use for a year. This is how Islam discourages hoarding of wealth and tries to reduce it over a period of time.

We could definitely learn something from the birds. They do not hoard their food and yet do not starve. They migrate when they find conditions unbearable and collect the bounties of God on this widely spread out earth. They sing and enjoy the time on this earth and give each other their space without harming one another.

I don't know who coined the term *birdbrain*, but we could certainly use more of them in the human race. Unfortunately, the context we typically use the term doesn't give credit to how intelligent those little creatures are. I continue feeding them so I can watch their flight formations in my backyard. It's a small price to pay for the enlightening scenery that follows.

(Falahud Din Shams)



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