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**ISLAM THE RELIGION OF  
PEACE, COMPASSION  
AND JUSTICE**

**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

Indian School of Excellence Trust  
(INDSET)  
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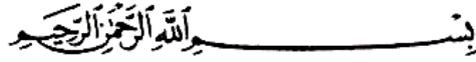
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## FOREWORD

It is a distressing fact that most of the Muslims lack proper understanding about the universal relevance of the Qur'anic Message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) for the guidance of all mankind. There is considerable misapprehension too about Islam and the message of the Qur'an in the minds of Non-Muslims. The **Indian School of Excellence Trust (INDSET)** is making an humble endeavour through a series of monographs on Islam and Qur'an to project the image of Islam in its proper perspective and to explain the significance of the Qur'anic Message in a scientific and systematic way.

There are serious misgivings and misconceptions about the fundamental of Islam, particularly in the West. Islam is misconstrued as a fanatical religion which is intolerant of other religious and political thoughts and therefore encourages terrorism. This is a fallacious assumption contrary to realities, mainly for two reasons. Firstly Muslim societies are being mixed up with Islamic societies. This is misleading. Most of the Muslim societies are the outgrowth of their own history and regional culture and have deviated markedly from the prescribed Islamic values and norms by both, internal distortions and external influences. Secondly the criticism against Islam betrays the ignorance of the critics about the basics of Islam itself. In this monograph entitled **ISLAM THE RELIGION OF PEACE, COMPASSION AND JUSTICE** the critics have been urged to examine objectively and dispassionately the fundamentals of Islam. They will discover that Islam stands unambiguously for truth, justice, compassion, peace and

harmony. Islam is strongly opposed to the culture of bullets and bombs and does not precipitate any **Clash of Civilization**.

Islam, however, refuses to alienate religion from its socio-political thought process and, therefore, does not accept secularism in its present form. The materialistic values of the so-called value-less secular West encourage denial of divinity, arrogance, exploitation of the weak, social anarchy, greed and selfishness which run counter to the fundamental principles of Islam which inculcate fear of Allah (SWT), and stand for human equality, humility, self-sacrifice, social, political and economic justice and respect for family values. Despite these differences Islam and the West can coexist to ensure global peace and stability. This monograph therefore urges that there is need to explore more the channels of cooperation and to lay greater stress on commonalities which unite cultures instead of emphasising areas of conflict and discord that aggravate divisive tendencies and tend to prove disastrous.

We conclude with a prayer to Allah (SWT) to graciously bless our efforts with success. (*Aameen*)

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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# **ISLAM THE RELIGION OF PEACE, COMPASSION AND JUSTICE**

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Foreword : Chairman</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CLASH OF CIVILIZATION THEORY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ISLAM AND DETERMINISM</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WHY ISLAM REJECTS SECULARISATION?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>DEMOCRACY IS NOT ALIEN TO ISLAM</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF PEACE IN ISLAM</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>INTOLERANCE IS ALIEN TO ISLAM AND TOLERANCE CONSTITUTES THE CORE OF ITS SPIRIT</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>ISLAM AGAINST MATERIALISM</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>ADL (IMPARTIAL JUSTICE) AND RAHM (COMPASSION) AS VEHICLES OF PEACE</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>ISLAM AGAINST SPREADING MISCHIEF AND BRUTALITY</b>	<b>41</b>

<b>CONCLUSION</b>	45
<b>REFERENCES</b>	50

**ISLAM THE RELIGION OF PEACE,  
COMPASSION AND JUSTICE**

## **ISLAM : THE RELIGION OF PEACE, COMPASSION AND JUSTICE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Islam, the last of the divinely revealed religions, literally and spiritually means the religion of peace and submission to the will of Allah (SWT). It is a divinely ordained dynamic Deen (religion) which has spread more by the vitality of its spiritualism and sublimity of its values than by the force of sword and military might of Muslim rulers. It has ushered in a value system which stands firmly for human equality, mutual love and compassion, fair play and impartial justice, honesty and integrity. By virtue of the nobility and inherent strength of its value system it has attracted the rich and the poor, the king and the beggar alike. The most spectacular example is the conversion to Islam of Kazan the great grand-son of Chengiz Khan the barbaric Tartar who destroyed the Muslim kingdom of Baghdad in 650 A.H. (1252 A.D.) While Chengiz Khan slaughtered the Muslims and tried to destroy Islam, his great grandson Kazan impressed by its spiritualism and sublimity of its values embraced Islam on ascending the throne in 694 A.H. Ibn Kathir writes as follows about this glorious event in the history of Islam "In this year 694 A.H. (1295 A.D.), Kazan the great grandson of Chengiz Khan, sat on the throne and embraced Islam publicly at the hand of Amir Tauzin - with him nearly all the Tartars became Muslims. Gold, Silver and pearls were given away in charity on the day of the Sultan's conversion - confiscated properties were restored in Baghdad and

other places to their rightful owners and justice was dispensed. People saw rosaries in the hands of the Tartars and extolled the bountifulness and the Glory of God." (1) Thus, the conquerors of Muslims became the captives of Islam and subsequently became its greatest votaries and torchbearers. Despite such a glorious record in promoting human values unceasingly, it is the most maligned and misunderstood religion in the world. Its teachings are being deliberately distorted, misinterpreted and misrepresented in order to mislead people and denigrate Islam. The Western media is venomously hostile to Islam. It describes the followers of Islam as "ugly, intolerant and violent religious fanatics". Therefore the Western media treats Islam as a "monstrosity to be reviled and beaten". **Edward Said** is sharply critical of this blind and bigoted attitude of the West towards the Arabs and Islam. He avers: "the West's almost obsessive emphasis on terrorism and fanaticism in the Arab world is a form of exorcism. They see it in Islam so they won't have to recognise that the same elements exist in their own societies and in alarming levels." (2) In view of this prejudiced and misguided criticism against Islam, it is crucially important that an accurate image be projected so that the prejudices that have been developed are dispelled and misconceptions eliminated. It is our submission that Islam epitomizes peace and harmony if it is examined objectively and dispassionately. However, before presenting the Qur'anic version of Islam as a promoter and preserver of peace, it is important to review the criticism made against it in order to highlight the challenges Islam will have to face in the 21st century.

The main charge levelled against Islam and Muslim countries is that they “define their identity in ethnic and religious terms.” (3) They promote “Kin country syndrome” and hence their geopolitical relation will be determined on “us” versus “them” factors. The critics of Islam are bitter that Islam cannot be secularised and refuses to segregate religion from the worldly affairs. In view of this anti-secular approach of Islam, they postulate that Muslim countries are “democratic deficit.” (4) Continuing their argument, they point out that the lack of democracy and absence of secularism has bred militancy and terrorism among Muslim countries. However, the most virulent complaint against Islam is that philosophically it is based on transcendental certainty and hence is totally deterministic. Since Islam is averse to secularism, democracy and modernism there is no meeting ground between the democratically developed secular and modern societies of the West and the religiously oriented Muslim societies. Consequently, a clash of civilization is inevitable. This view has also been endorsed by **the Economist (London)** which in its **Survey of Islam (August 4, 1994 A.D.)** warned that “the Muslim World is heading for a fight with other parts of the world that do not share its religio-political opinions - On current evidence this is by no means impossible.”

#### **CLASH OF CIVILIZATION THEORY:**

The clash of civilization theory propounded by **Huntington** (op. cit) seems to be reviving the legacy of the Crusades of the medieval ages when during 11th - 13th century the politically expanding Islamic realm clashed

with Christian Europe. Islam was then a political and military force to be reckoned with, as testified by the annexation of Spain in the 8th century and the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 A.D. It is important to observe that even at the height of their political power in Europe, Muslim rulers seldom displayed religious fanaticism and intolerance or discriminated on religious grounds.

The situation has now radically altered. The areas of conflict develop where economic and territorial interests clash. Even during the Crusades the economic factor, besides religion, was quite significant. Apart from local inter-state border adjustment, problems the Islamic countries presently do not exhibit any territorial ambitions, which will motivate them to wage a war against the West. Moreover, economically they are totally dependent on the West, which provides stable and highly profitable markets for their exportable surpluses in petroleum, and other mineral, agricultural, and horticultural products. The Muslim countries import most of the consumer goods from Western Europe, UK, USA, Italy, Canada and Japan. The economic dominance of the West over the Islamic World in general and West Asia in particular is so overwhelming that the possibility of conflict in the foreseeable future can be ruled out. Hence there is no geopolitical ground, none whatsoever, which should even remotely justify the formulation of the **Theory of Clash of Civilization**.

The **Economist**, also in the aforesaid Survey, has not produced any evidence that will establish aggressive

designs on the part of the Islamic World. It has assumed that the Islamic world is a monolithic organisation, which will unite to launch an offensive against the West. This assumption is fallacious and does not stand scrutiny from whatever angle it is examined. The Iran - Iraq war in the eighties and the Iraq - Kuwait war in 1990 A.D. exploded the myth of Islamic unity. In fact in the Kuwait-Iraq war, barring a few, the entire world of Islam was aligned with the West and ranged against Iraq.

Militarily, the Muslim countries are among the weakest in the world. They are dependent on the West for all their military weapons. With the termination of the Cold War, the dismemberment of the USSR, the collapse of the Russian economy and in view of its total dependence on the West for economic reconstruction, Russia will refrain from acting independent of USA in the supply of strategic weapons to Muslim countries. Further, the development of an effective and powerful military arsenal by the Muslim countries will be a most hazardous and expensive exercise involving colossal expenditure. Even if they undertake such a misadventure, it will take ages for the Muslim countries to match the technological sophistication of the West in weapons development. In the process, the economies of these countries will be in total ruin. Finally, the United States of America as the sole economic and military super power will nip such an ambition in the bud, which is testified by the crushing blow dealt with to Iraq in the Gulf War of 1990 A.D. Economically too, as observed above, the Muslim countries are strongly dependent on the West. Their economy would be completely crippled in the event of a

war. In these circumstances, no Muslim country will even pretend to exhibit military ambitions. Thus, the idea of Muslim countries risking a war is ridiculous. On the contrary, the West would not hesitate to intervene militarily if its economic interests are hurt in any of the Muslim countries, from Indonesia in the east to Morocco in the West. They did it in the fifties when Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal and in the Nineties when Iraq invaded Kuwait. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait threatened the supply of petroleum to the West from the Gulf region, which is their main source of supply. Thus the notion of Islamic countries initiating a war in the foreseeable future is unsustainable intellectually, and geo-politically. Therefore, the hypothesis developed by **Huntington** and supported by the **Survey of Islam** conducted by the **Economist (London)** should be rejected outright.

The only weapon that Islam owns and the Muslims cherish, adore, and revere is the divine book, the Qur'an. The Muslims would certainly like to reach out to the people of the world even in the remotest corners with the message of the Qur'an, which guides mankind from darkness to light and promotes values of piety, righteousness, global peace, love, and harmony among the peoples of the world. These Qur'anic values, if adhered to, will prevent mankind from falling into the abyss of violence and arrogance, pride and prejudice, sensuality and immorality. It seems that the West is frightfully scared of this divine weapon since they genuinely fear that the Qur'an may unite the Muslims of the world and stimulate the rise of a coherent, powerful and effective Pan Islamic Movement. They also suspect that the Qur'anic

values might eventually prove more potent and efficacious in transforming the hearts and minds of people than even the most deadly nuclear weapons they have amassed to terrorise the world into submission. Taking cognizance of the divine power of the Qur'an, the then British Prime Minister Gladstone, warned as far back as the late 19th Century: "as long as this Book (The Qur'an) remains, Europe would never be able to control the East. On the contrary Europeans should never feel secure in their own homeland." (5). Realising the efficacy of the Qur'anic message, the West also suspects that the Qur'anic values may seriously threaten the materialistic values of the secular West, and may eventually overwhelm the global civilization. Hence, the clash of civilization theory has been developed as a pre-emptive strike against the Foundation of Islam (the Qur'an). If the Foundation is destroyed, Islam will lose its *raison d'être*, resilience and will be completely destabilised. Consequently the followers of Islam will be demoralised and will eventually capitulate. The West is not prepared to take the risk vis. a vis. Islam because of the inherent strength and magnetism of the message of the Qur'an which may forcefully and inexorably attract people to the eternal truth which Islam represents.

#### **ISLAM AND DETERMINISM:**

Those who charge Islam with "Certainty" or deterministic attitude to life are betraying their ignorance of the true message of the Qur'an. That Islam does not subscribe to determinism is clearly borne out by the Qur'anic injunctions and Traditions of Prophet

Muhammad (SAWS) which clearly distinguish between vice and virtue. They direct man to follow the path of piety and refrain from sinful acts. It is left to the individuals to accept or reject them. The concept of accountability in Islam fairly and squarely places the responsibility on individuals. They will be deemed to be answerable for their deeds on the Day of Reckoning. The Qur'an categorically asserts that everyone will be rewarded or punished on the Day of Reckoning according to the nature of the deeds performed during the course of his/her life on earth:

*“Whoever shall come before Him with a good deed will gain (further) good there from, and they will be secure from the terror of the Day. But they who shall come with evil deeds, (their faces) will be thrust into the fire, (and they will be asked) Is this aught but a just requital for what you were doing in life.”* (An-Naml; 27: 89-90).

The same warning has been repeated in numerous other Qur'anic verses such as: 10:52; 36:54; 37:29; 45:28; 52:16; 66:7. The Qur'an further clarifies that the responsibilities for earthly deeds cannot be shared or transferred. Whatever a person executes he/she alone will be held responsible. Hence, it is categorically pointed out:

*“Whoever chooses to follow the right path follows it but for his own good: and whoever goes astray, goes but astray to his own hurt; and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden.”* (Al-Isra; 17:15)

This point has been re-emphasised in other Qur'anic verses as well (6:164; 35:18; 39:7; and 53:38). It is therefore incorrect to state that individual initiative is killed in Islam. On the contrary, individuals are encouraged to undertake scientific research, and explore the bounties Allah (SWT) has created for the benefit of mankind. Incentives of glorious rewards in the Hereafter are offered if a person concentrates in executing righteous deeds. The role of all the Prophets was to convey the divine message and warn the people of the terrible consequences if they defied the divine command, and communicates to them the glad tidings if they obeyed the divine injunctions. The Prophets were deemed to have performed the task assigned to them if they succeeded in communicating the commands of Allah (SWT) clearly, candidly, unambiguously and fearlessly. The Qur'anic injunctions are clear:

*“(And as for thee) O Prophet, behold we have sent thee as a witness (to the truth) and as a herald of glad tidings and a Warner, and as one who summons (all men) to God by His leave, and as a light giving beacon. And (so) convey to the believers the glad tidings that a great bounty from God awaits them: and defer not to (the likes and dislikes of) the deniers of the truth and the hypocrites and disregard their hurtful talk and place thy trust in God: for none is as worthy of trust as God.”* (Al-Ahzab; 33:45-48).

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was thus advised by Allah (SWT) to ignore the bitter attacks and blasphemous acts of the non-believers and hypocrites and carry on his mission with firm faith in the truth of the divine message.

Further the Prophets were not expected to oversee or supervise:

*“Say (O Prophet) ‘O mankind! The truth from your Sustainer has now come to you: whoever therefore chooses to follow the right path follows it, but for his own good; and whoever chooses to go astray goes but astray to his own hurt. And I am not responsible for your conduct.”* (Yunus; 10:108).

The Qur’an stresses that the ultimate destiny of mankind is in the Hereafter where each and every individual will have to account for his or her earthly deeds. In order to guide them on the path of righteousness, Prophets with divinely revealed books were commissioned among all the peoples of the world right from the dawn of civilization. The role of these Prophets and the divinely revealed books was to guide people to the path of righteousness. This has been concisely expressed:

*“Verily We have shown him the way; (and it rests with him to prove himself) either grateful or ungrateful”* (Ad-Dahr; 76:3).

This Qur’anic injunction has been re-stressed:

*“Consider the human self and how it is formed in accordance with what is meant to be and how it is imbued with moral failings as well as with consciousness of God. To a happy state shall indeed attain he who causes this self to grow in purity, and truly lost is he who buries it (in darkness).”* (As-Shams; 91:7-10).

The verses quoted above highlight the fact that Allah (SWT) does not restrain free will or choice of the individual. Individuals are being furnished with alternatives and have to choose between the two. Hence, to charge Islam with determinism is libellous. It is strongly contradicted by Qur'anic injunctions.

Even Iblis or *Shaitan* (Devil) who was raised in status equal to that of the angels was not restrained from disobeying when he chose to refuse the command of Allah to prostrate before Adam:

*"...I am better than he: Thou hast created me out of fire, whereas him Thou hast created out of clay."* (Sad; 38:76).

It was the inflated ego of Iblis not the will of Allah that led him to protest and disregard His command. The Qur'an however asserts that the path of piety and virtue is rather difficult to pursue; therefore, generally human beings are prone to committing sinful acts disregarding the divine guidance completely.

It is thus crystal clear that there is no trace of determinism in Islam. The individual has to be totally responsible for his/her behaviour and conduct. He/she will be accountable for his/her earthly deeds on the Day of Reckoning. However it must be admitted that Allah (SWT) alone has the knowledge of the ultimate destiny of every object, animate or inanimate. Napoleon could never have imagined that he would be humiliated in the battle of

Waterloo and would eventually die as a prisoner in St. Helena. Similarly the late President Richard Nixon could have never visualised that he would be scandalised in the Watergate scandal and would have to resign his Presidency and seek Presidential pardon. The luxury liner Titanic was built to perfection as an unsinkable ship in the early twentieth century A.D. (1912) but it sank on its maiden voyage after colliding with a massive iceberg in the North Atlantic. The builders of the ship could not have foreseen this disastrous end to their dream of perfection. This is what the Muslims call the will of Allah (SWT). This is what is implied whenever the Qur'an speaks of Allah (SWT) exercising supreme control over the destiny of mankind:

*“Verily with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come; and He (it is who) sends down rain; and He (alone) knows what is in the wombs: whereas no one knows what he will reap tomorrow, and no one knows in what land he will die. Verily God (alone) is all-knowing, all-aware.”*  
(Luqmaan; 31:34).

### **WHY ISLAM REJECTS SECULARISATION?**

One of the most virulent criticisms against Islam is that it resists secularisation and refuses to alienate religion from its thought process and segregate the political and social aspects of life from the realm of religion. The Western scholars treat secularisation as a "liberating development" and "deliverance of man", first from religions and then from metaphysical control over his

reason and his language. A Harvard Theologian Harvey Cox defines secularisation as "the loosing of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed world views, the breaking of all super natural myths and sacred symbols - the 'defatalisation of history' the discovery by man that he has been left with the world on his hands, that he can no longer blame fortune or the furies for what he does with it." (6) The Western scholars also think that secularisation represents a historical process of evolution of the consciousness from the "infantile" stage of total dependence on religion and metaphysics to the "mature" stage of total independence of "responsibility and adult accountability." (7) "The integral components in the dimensions of secularization are the "disenchantment" of nature, the "de-sacralising" of politics and the "de-consecration" of values. (8) Some of the Christian Theologians are of the view that the concept of secularization has stemmed out of the biblical faith and is an outgrowth of the Gospel itself. (9) Islam has firmly rejected this process of transformation which Christianity has undergone since the commencement of Reformation under the impact of Western scholarship. Islam refused to be overawed by the weight of Western scholarship and its phenomenal achievements in the fields of science and technology. As a divinely ordained religion, it has not been influenced by the historical process of evolution since "the values embodied in it are absolute; and this means that Islam has its absolute vision of God, of the Universe, of Reality, and of Man; its own ontological, cosmological, psychological interpretation of reality, its own world view and vision of the Hereafter having a final significance for

mankind." (10) Islam initiated the processes of "de-consecration" and "de-sacralisation", by demolishing all myths and superstition and making man fully "responsible and accountable" to Allah (SWT) the Supreme Being. The Islamic value system is detailed in the Qur'an and was translated into reality by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), whose thoughts and actions, precepts and practices were in perfect harmony. This divinely gifted ideology which is of universal relevance constitutes the core of Islam and transcends all limitations of time and space. Islamic values, unlike human civilizations, are not subject to mutations through historical process. In view of this rejection of secularization Islam is perceived to be intolerant of other religions and political ideologies, and therefore according to Western scholars, resorts to terrorism to achieve its ends. This is a totally misleading assumption and is not borne out by facts.

The development of secularism in the West has a historical background. The religious bigotry of the Catholic Church and its brutal suppression of scientific research through the inhuman process of Inquisition led to the separation of religion from the day to day life of individuals. The Catholic religion had shackled the initiative of the individuals. They had become slaves to religious rituals. The priests completely dominated their spiritual and worldly lives. The Reformation Movement was ushered into Europe with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. This Movement eventually led to the separation of religion from the social, educational, economic and political aspects of society. Secularism implied total segregation of human

endeavours, to attain distinction and excellence in different walks of life, from spiritualism and moral obligations, which are significant components of religion. The consequence of this alienation of religion from political, social and economic aspects of life has led to the rise of Machiavellianism in politics, disintegration of the social fabric and economic domination and exploitation of the weak by the strong. Secularization has, no doubt, liberated individuals from the suffocating impact of catholic clergies and motivated them to achieve phenomenal progress in science and technology. If secularism stands for human rights and dignity, integrity and self respect, efficiency and excellence, justice and fair play, and scientific and technological progress, it is most acceptable to Islam. In fact, Islam is committed to inculcating and promoting these values. Unfortunately secularism has also encouraged materialism, so much so that values such as the acquisition of wealth, luxurious living and permissiveness, have become the focus of all human endeavour in the West. The driving force of secularism is individualism guided by an insatiable desire to possess worldly wealth and status without any consideration of the means to achieve the ends. Morality has no place in a secular society and family values are not respected. In fact there is no concept of family as such which from nuclearisation is now reduced to atomization. Thus, under secularism individual achievements are lauded whereas family values have been totally denigrated. Marriage and sex have lost their sanctity. Sex outside wedlock is approved and living together of couples without marriage is socially and legally accepted. Hence, under secularisation the materialistic desires of sex,

wealth, power and position are so overwhelmingly dominant that they completely subordinate the religious and moral values of life.

Secularism has no place for faith in its agenda for life and no scope for morality in its value system. Faith and morality are treated as impediments to modernization and progress of civilization. This perversion of social values is not acceptable to Islam. The materialistic outlook of life is strongly condemned in the Qur'an:

*“You are obsessed by the greed for more and more until you go down to your graves. Nay, in time you will come to understand! And once again, Nay in time you will come to understand! Nay, if you could but understand it with an understanding (born of certainty) you would most certainly behold the blazing fire (of hell).”* (At-Takathur; 102: 1-6)

#### **DEMOCRACY IS NOT ALIEN TO ISLAM:**

The West is also critical of the lack of democratic values in Islam. Of the 39 countries included by the Economist in its Survey of Islam “Only seven can in one degree or another even hesitatingly be called democracy”. The Economist therefore concluded that “Islam has democratic deficit (which) remains embarrassingly large”. It may however be observed that the political system prevailing in a country has nothing to do with Islam. Neither the Qur’an nor the Traditions of the Prophet (SAWS) lay down any guidelines for the evolution of a political system. However they do provide a broad frame-

work for the system of government which should be just, honest and fair. There should be no discrimination against anyone and everyone should be treated equal before law. The basic right of the people to lead a secure life with dignity and honour should be ensured. There should be no oppression and brutality and no exploitation of the weak by the strong, and of the poor by the rich. In fact, the rich are encouraged to be charitable and are offered incentives of divine rewards in the Hereafter which is lasting as against the transient nature of life in this world. They are also taxed to pay for the basic needs of the poor. The political system should be tuned to operate within this broad parameter. The charge of democratic deficit is also based on ignorance of Islamic history. It would be interesting to note that the first pious *Khalifah* of Islam Abu Bakr (R.A.) was democratically elected by the people of Madinah in a conclave where most of the participants were Madinites while the *Khalifah* elected was a Quraysh from Makkah. *Shura* (consultation), *Ijma'* (consensus) rationality and *Ijtihad* (innovation) are the key elements in the decision making process in Islam, practised during the life time of the Prophet (SAWS) and the four pious Caliphs. The process of consultation has been recommended in the Qur'an:

*“And who respond to (the call of) their Sustainer and are constant in prayer; and who rule (in all matters of common concern) in consultation among themselves...”*  
(Ash-Shura; 42:38).

It is significant that the Prophet (SAWS) was himself asked to consult his companions on important matters:

*“And it was God’s grace that thou (O Prophet) did deal gently with thy followers: for if thou had been harsh and hard of heart they would indeed have broken away from thee. Pardon them then and pray that they be forgiven. And take counsel with them in all matters of public concern: then when thou hast decided upon a course of action, place thy trust in Allah (SWT), for verily Allah (SWT) loves those who place their trust in Him.” (Al-e Imran; 3:159).*

The Prophet (SAWS) implemented the Qur'anic teachings meticulously. The decision to release the prisoners captured during the Battle of Badr (2nd Hijrah) was taken by the Prophet after due consultation with his companions. We have already observed that the appointment of the first *Khalifah* (Caliph) of Islam after the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was through consensus (*Ijma*). The appointment of The Second *Khalifah* Omar (RA) who was nominated by the First *Khalifah* was not treated valid till approved by the congregation in the mosque. The Third and the fourth *Khalifahs* were also appointed through consensus. It may be noted that during the *Khilafat* (Caliphate) of the *Khulafa-ar-Rashideen* (**The Four Pious Khalifahs**) whenever a new law was to be enacted and enforced it used to be done after careful deliberation and extensive consultation among the knowledgeable companions of the Prophet (SAWS). (11) The decision used to be taken democratically through consensus and within the framework of the basic principles outlined in the Qur'an. Hence, the principle of democracy was internalised by Islam right from the inception. Democracy, as it is perceived presently, has not

taken roots in most of the Muslim countries due to historical reasons. However if democratic movements, are taking root and gaining impetus in Muslim countries, they are not being supported by the West due to political exigencies and because of their vested interests and erroneous perceptions. The West lent total support to the despotic rule of Shah of Iran. The USA and allies tried their best to sabotage the popular uprising in Iran led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The West initially adopted a belligerently hostile attitude towards the Khomeini regime. The democratic process in Iran is now well entrenched. The European countries and even American entrepreneurs are finding business with Iran smooth, and profitable. In 1993 the American oil giants "Exxon, Texaco and Mobil together bought \$ 3.5 billion worth of Iranian crude - 24% of Iranian crude exports." (12) Both Coca Cola and Pepsi have opened licensed bottling plants in Iran despite protests by radicals. This led a former Prime Minister of Japan Tomicehi Murayama to remark that it was "necessary to support the moderates in Iran." (13) Because of their imaginary scare of Islamic fundamentalism the West has lent full support to the oppressive military regime of Algeria to suppress the rise of democratic forces there. If the democratic movement of the Islamic Salvation Front which has the support of an overwhelming majority of the people in Algeria is helped the way America is helping the movement launched by the National League for Democracy in Myanmar (Burma) against the military regime there, it would have provided a significant impetus to the growth of democracies in the Muslim countries. The West erroneously perceives that democratic movements in Muslim countries are

fundamentalistic in nature and if allowed to flourish and seize political power, they will harm their political and economic interests. Hence they are inclined to support feudal and dynastic rulers. This fallacious assumption is the prime cause for “democratic deficit” in the Muslim countries and not Islam. If the West adopts a neutral position, ceases to support the suppression of democratic Islamic movements and psychologically prepares itself to accept and amicably deal with them, it will contribute immensely to the promotion of democratic values in Muslim countries and the preservation of international peace, and amity. There is nothing wrong with Islamic fundamentalism for the fundamentals of Islam stand for peace, harmony, patience, compassion and unity of mankind. Moreover no fundamentalist regime, however fanatic it may be, will harm its own economic interests. It will deal with the West amicably and will not impose Islamic values on the West.

The persistent refusal of the Islamic polity to accept the moral values of the secular West clearly demonstrates its resilience and its firm faith in its own value system which is divinely ordained. This is precisely why the Muslims want to go back to their Foundation i.e. the Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet, which instruct Muslims to dedicate themselves to the cause of peace, exercise self control, and treat the poor and the needy with genuine love and compassion as against the violence of greed and arrogance of power and wealth promoted by secularism. Even the non-Muslims admit that “the essence of Islam is *Zabt* (patience), *Khairaat* (almsgiving) and *Rahm* (compassion). *Zabt* is not merely self restraint, but

not to judge others, for all human judgements are limited and fallible. *Khairaat* is not simply giving alms but giving one's self to the other. And *Rahm* is not merely superficial kindness, but true compassion." (14)

Islam presents a dynamic vision of global peace, through compassion, truth, total justice and human brotherhood as ordained by Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an. The spirit of secularism is inherent to Islam but it totally rejects its materialistic values. It advocates a perfect balance between *Deen* and *Duniya*. In the words of Akbar Ahmad "The Qur'anic concepts of *Adl* and *Ehsaan* (balance and compassion), of *Ilm* (knowledge) and *Sabr* (patience)" are crucial to Islam and Muslims will never agree to replace these concepts with bullets and bombs". He therefore very correctly points out that Islam is essentially "the religion of equilibrium and tolerance, suggesting and encouraging breadth of vision, global position and the fulfilment of human destiny in the universe", and also rightly asserts that, "the universal nature of the humanity is the main topics in the Qur'an." (15)

The universality of Islam is evident from the fact that the Muslims worship Allah (SWT) Who is the sole Sustainer of the universe (*Rabb-ul-Alameen*). They follow a divinely revealed Book, the Qur'an, which besides being of universal relevance has been revealed for the guidance of all mankind (*Hudan-lin-Naas*) and contains nothing but the truth. Muslims repose total trust in Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), the last in the line of Prophets or the seal of the Prophets, who was divinely designated as mercy unto all mankind (*Rahmat-ul-lil 'Alameen*). Islam

has a distinct philosophy which is dynamic and of enduring relevance for all mankind. It categorically states that man has been created as Vicegerent of Allah on earth with a purpose and a mission and is accountable to Him for all his earthly deeds - good and bad.

The West considers the Islamic society decadent and wrongly blames the Qur'an for this decadence. According to the **London Times**: "Every Muslim is sick, and his only remedy is in the Koran. Unfortunately, the sickness gets worse the more the remedy is taken" (16). The Muslims presently are passing through an acute phase of decadence but this sickness of the Muslim society is not for reasons as diagnosed by the **London Times**. This is a most atrocious assumption. The sickness of the Muslims is because of their distancing themselves from the Qur'an, which is dynamic in its approach and lays down the ground rules for the development of a healthy and just, social and political system. The Muslims, by and large, are not aware of the message of the Qur'an. It is because of their ignorance of the Qur'anic message that the religious scholars have hijacked the *Shura* (consultation) and *Ijma'* (consensus) and resist *Ijtihad*. Consequently, the Muslim societies have grossly degenerated.

One cannot deny the fact that there are fanatics in Islam who are intolerant of other viewpoints and resort to violence if opposed. Their interpretation of the Qur'anic injunctions is extremely narrow and mostly erroneous. Such extremist Muslim factions in Algeria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Afghanistan etc. are aberrations and cannot survive for long. Their violent behaviour, suicide

bombing and merciless killing of the innocent even among Muslims reflect their ignorance of the fundamentals of Islam and total lack of understanding of the basic values which are pivotal to Islam. It is to prevent these atrocities on the innocent and the weak and to remove rigidity and harshness in the interpretation of the *Shari'ah* that Muslims must understand the Qur'an. These fanatical factions in Islam little realise that by perpetrating these brutalities they are acting contrary to the spirit of Islam and are distorting its image. They have to be treated as aberrations like the serial killers (such as Theodore J Kaczynski the Una Bomber case (17) and Timothy McVeigh who had bombed the Federal office in Oklahoma, USA. (18) These represent neither Christianity nor the West in general. Similarly these fanatics in Islam are exceptions to the rule and do not constitute the Muslim stereotypes. Islam stands for peace, compassion, harmony, equilibrium, nobility, justice, equality, and a balanced and honest approach to life. Because of this balanced approach to life Muslims have been called the "community of the middle way" in the Qur'an:

*"And thus We have willed you to be a community of the middle way, so that (with your lives) you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind and that the apostle might witness before you..."* (Al-Baqarah; 2:143)

The "community of the middle way" implies that it rejects the path of extremes. It is practical and pragmatic. It neither renounces the world nor gets totally lost in it. It strikes a perfect balance between *Deen* (Religion) and

*Duniya* (World). It is involved fully in the affairs of the world but employs it as the means to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT):

*"...O our Sustainer! Grant us good in this world and good in the life to come, and keep us safe from through the fire."* (Al-Baqarah; 2:201).

### PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF PEACE IN ISLAM

The development of a transparent socio-economic and political system which is just, fair, honest, equitable and accountable is absolutely essential to ensure global peace and maintenance of harmonious relations among the nations, regions and communities. These values have been thoroughly internalised by Islam through Qur'anic injunctions which are immutable.

The fear of Allah (SWT), the element of final accountability to Him on the Day of Reckoning, forceful insistence on tolerance, impartial justice (*Adl*), compassion (*Rahm*), patience (*Sabr*) are the principal moral instruments the Qur'an has consistently employed to promote and preserve harmonious and peaceful relations among the regions and communities of the world. The Qur'an ordains that firm adherence to these ethical values and fear of accountability to Allah (SWT) on the Day of Reckoning would eventually lead to the emergence of a fair, honest, just and impartial political and administrative system which can be the surest guarantee for peace on earth. The slightest dilution in these values

and deviations from these norms can immeasurably disturb the equilibrium and corrupt the society to such an extent as to cause chaos and anarchy.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

The **Concept of Accountability** has assumed great significance in the context of modern management. No organ of administration can function efficiently without a system of accountability. Accountability instils a deep sense of responsibility and inspires efficient performance. The heads of the various departments in different sectors of employment are responsible for the performance and efficiency of their respective departments. They will have to face the consequences if they fail to deliver the goods. It is the level of performance of employees that leads to hiring and firing, promotion and demotion, and reward and punishment. The Qur'an holds man totally accountable on the Day of Reckoning. The **Concept of Accountability** in the Qur'an, besides demolishing the theory of determinism, which the Western scholars, thinkers and media associate with Islam, also serves as a powerful instrument for the promotion of peace. We have observed earlier that Allah (SWT) gives full freedom to individuals to use their discretion to choose their line of action for which they will be held fully responsible. According to Qur'an man has been created on earth as the Vice-Gerent of Allah (SWT) with a purpose and design. Allah (SWT) has therefore imbued man with creativity, intelligence and understanding. The basic mission of man on earth, as ordained in the Qur'an, is to live peacefully and meaningfully, utilising scientifically and frugally the

vast resources of the universe which Allah (SWT) has placed at the command of man. Man should also be ever grateful to Allah (SWT) for making these bounties available for his sustenance. While utilising these resources mankind has been warned against their misuse and has been exhorted to maintain cordial relations among tribes and ethnic groups so that peace on earth is not disturbed. The Qur'an points out that there will be a natural inequality in the distribution of available resources among nations, and tribes, but sternly warns that the powerful among them should not oppress and exploit the poor and the weak. Mankind has been cautioned that the ever watchful eye of Allah (SWT) keeps constant watch, records every movement, and every action despite all the secrecy maintained to conceal them. Nothing can be hidden from Allah (SWT) for:

*"...they shall not (be able to) conceal from Allah (SWT) anything that has happened."*(An-Nisa; 4:42)

He knows what is hidden even in the hearts of each and every individual:

*"...He knows well all the secrets of the heart."*(Al-e Imran; 3:119).

The Qur'an is clear and categorical that man will have to render account whether he has been able to implement or not the divine command. The Qur'an asks man rhetorically if he thought he was created without any purpose and will not have to account for his deeds:

*“Did you then think that We created you in mere idle play or (in vain) and that you would not have to return to us?!” (Al-Mu’minoan; 23:115)*

All mankind will be brought back to life on the Day of Reckoning and each and every individual will have to account for his/her deeds:

*“...He will gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection (the coming of which is beyond any doubt: yet those who have squandered their own selves, it is they who refuse to believe in Him.” (Al-An’am; 6:12)*

Not only will all the dead be resurrected but they will be presented with their record of deeds as well:

*“And (on that Day) thou will see all people kneeling down (in humility); all people will be called upon to face their record: Today you will be requited for all that you ever did! This Our record speaks of you in all truth: for verily, We have caused to be recorded all that you ever did.” (Al-Jathiyah; 45:28 - 29)*

This record of deeds will have been prepared so meticulously and truthfully that even the minutest good or bad deeds will be observed:

*“And so, he who shall have done an atom’s weight of good, shall behold it; and he who shall have done an atom’s weight of bad, shall behold it.” (Al-Zalzala; 99 :7-8)*

All these deeds shall be measured in the divine balance of justice and those with an abundance of righteous deeds will be favoured with divine blessings but those with a predominance of evil deeds will be condemned to Hell:

*“And then, he whose weight (of good deeds) is heavy in the balance shall find himself in a happy state of life; whereas he whose weight is light in the balance shall be engulfed by an abyss and what could make them conceive what that (abyss) will be? A fire hotly burning.”* (Al-Qariah; 101: 6 - 11)

Finally the Qur’an assures that everyone will be dealt with justly and will find no cause for complaint since the reward or punishment will be based on accurately recorded deeds of one's life:

*“...and none shall be wronged by as much as a hair's breadth.”* (An-Nisa; 4:49)

Since Allah (SWT) is the final arbiter of the destiny of mankind therefore there can be no superior Authority than Him to assess the deeds of man and decide his final destiny:

*“Allah is the creator of all things and He alone has the power to determine the fate of all things. His are the keys (to the mysteries) of the heavens and the earth and they who are bent on denying the truth of Allah's messages it is they who are the losers.”* (Az-Zumar; 39:62-63)

Thus the fear of Allah (SWT) and of accountability on the Day of Reckoning acts as the greatest deterrents to mischief and war mongering. They haunt the minds and hearts of devout Muslims so powerfully that they dare not flout the Qur'anic directives and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). If the Muslims do so it will be at their own peril. They are therefore not expected to deviate from the path of piety and peace as ordained in the Qur'an. Hence, the **Concept of Accountability** acts as an effective instrument to maintain peace and harmony. Deviation from the Qur'anic injunctions can subject them to the eternal torture of the blazing fire of hell. Whereas adherence to the commands of Allah (SWT) as given in the Qur'an can lead them to the bliss of heaven after death which every Muslim dearly cherishes. The Muslims will therefore, naturally opt for virtuous deeds which will lead them to peace, progress and prosperity and will secure their place in heaven. They will also ensure a life of honour, self-respect and dignity for all in this world.

#### **INTOLERANCE IS ALIEN TO ISLAM AND TOLERANCE CONSTITUTES THE CORE OF ITS SPIRIT**

Islam stands unequivocally for tolerance and is totally opposed to terrorism. This is borne out by numerous Qur'anic injunctions, the Traditions of the Prophet and the attitudes of Muslims towards non-Muslims in the Muslim kingdoms. The Qur'an clearly spells out:

*"there is no compulsion in religion..."* (Al-Baqarah; 2:256)

The role of the Prophet (SAWS) was to explain the message of Allah (SWT) the acceptance of which would lead to the path of piety in this world and deliverance on the Day of Reckoning. The tolerance of other religions is distinctly built in within the Islamic code and is borne out by the Qur'anic advice:

*“Unto you, your moral law (Deen) and unto me, mine.”*  
(Al-Kafiroon; 109:6)

The Qur’anic injunctions are clear that religion ought not to be subjected to protracted argument: “Say (to the Jews and Christians):

*“Do you argue with us about God? But He is our Sustainer as well as your Sustainer - and unto us shall be accounted our deeds, and unto you your deeds; and it is unto Him alone that we devote ourselves.”*(Al-Baqarah; 2:139)

This reflects the genuine spirit of tolerance in Islam. The argument is cut short by pointing out that those who do not have faith in Allah (SWT) will be answerable to Him, therefore why should we argue about it? We shall nonetheless continue to pay our obeisance to Allah (SWT) with all sincerity.

The level of tolerance displayed towards adversaries is really tested during war and particularly after conquests. History bears testimony to the fact that Muslim conquerors had displayed unparalleled tolerance and generosity as conquerors. The model for supreme

tolerance in Islam was set by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) himself on the conquest of Makkah in the 8th year of the Hijrah. There was no bloodshed, no vengeance, no malice, no victor or vanquished and no discrimination against non-Muslims. Despite the humiliation and torture that the Prophet (SAWS) and his companions suffered during the period of his prophetic Mission in Makkah he announced general amnesty and unequivocally declared "I speak to you in the same words as Joseph spoke to his brothers: This day there is no reproof against you, go your way, for you are freed ones." (19) This amnesty is without parallel in the annals of history. Another magnificent example of Islamic tolerance is eloquently testified by the Church of Sepulchre which even today stands in its original glory. After the conquest of Jerusalem the Second *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) visited the Church of Sepulchre. During the course of his visit it was time for the evening prayer (*Salaat-al 'Asr*). He was invited by the Christian priests to offer his prayers inside the Church. He politely refused on the ground that if he agreed to do so the Muslims would one day convert it to a Mosque which he never wanted to happen.

Ode of Deuil, a monk of St. Denis and Chaplain to King Louis VII of France, who accompanied the monarch on the Second Crusade (1148 A.D.), gives a vivid account of the treachery and cruelty of the leaders of the Crusade towards their fellow crusaders. The Crusade leaders took to the sea against the fierce Muslim attack leaving behind the poor, wounded and exhausted crusaders. Ode of Deuil writes as follows: "Avoiding their co-religionists who have been so cruel to them they went in safety among infidels

who had compassion upon them, and, as we heard, more than three thousand joined themselves to the Turks when they retired. Oh, kindness more cruel than all treachery! They gave them bread but robbed them of their faith, though it is certain that contented with the services they performed, they compelled no one among them to renounce his religion." (20)

Islam does not support terrorism, in which mostly innocent people are killed. There is a clear Qur'anic injunction against the shedding of the blood of the innocent:

*"We did ordain unto the children of Israel that if any one slays a human being - unless it be (in punishment) for murder or for spreading corruption on earth - it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas, if any one saves a life it shall be as though he saved the lives of all mankind. And indeed there came unto them our apostles with all evidence of the truth yet, behold, notwithstanding all this, many of them go on committing all manner of excesses on earth." (Al-Ma'edah; 5:32)*

In the light of this outright condemnation of shedding the blood of the innocent, Islam cannot and does not support acts of terrorism in any form. Similarly, there is no Qur'anic support for suicide bombings. Suicide as such is prohibited in Islam and whoever commits suicide will be denied a place in heaven. Therefore acts of terrorism performed by Muslims will have to be viewed in the historical and political contexts, and not as if licensed by Islam.

The acts of terrorism by some of the Palestinian factions and particularly the Hamas group cannot be seen in isolation from sustained terrorism perpetrated by the Jewish terrorists even before the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Jewish State in May 1948 and after. The slaughter of the innocent Muslims in Hebron (*Al-Khalil*) while offering the morning (*Fajr*) prayers in the Ibrahim Mosque (25 Feb, 1994) and the brutal artillery assault on 18 April, 1996 by the Israeli forces on the United Nations maintained refugee camp of Qana in South Lebanon poignantly speak of the State terrorism which Israel has been inflicting. These acts of State terrorism provoke militant and terroristic responses. It was Israel and not PLO that dragged its feet on handing over Hebron (*Al-Khalil*) to Palestinian Authority, which provoked violence against Israel. 'Usman Bakr has therefore rightly pointed out that these militant activities are "peripheral to Islamic civilization. They have occurred mainly as hasty and uninformed responses to the evils and injustices of the contemporary world; out of sheer ignorance and sense of frustration". (21). This is however not to suggest that Islam condones terrorism. Any aggressive act which leads to the killing of the innocent, irrespective of religion, community and colour is strictly forbidden in Islam and is deemed a heinous sin.

### **ISLAM AGAINST MATERIALISM**

The West considers the separation of religion from the worldly affairs as its greatest achievement. This, they feel has liberated their intellectual capabilities from the

suffocating effects of religious dogma and has led to phenomenal progress in science and technology and consequently of human civilization. However they completely overlook the fact that this alienation has unleashed unbridled materialism. The greatest damage that secularism has caused to mankind is to remove the fear of Allah (SWT) and give finality to this life on earth, as the ultimate abode of man. The concepts of the **Hereafter** and **Accountability** to Allah (SWT) carry no meaning with them. This has given tremendous impetus to materialistic values such as acquisition of wealth, position and power. This constitutes the major divide between Islam and the secular West. The followers of Islam strongly feel that in the absence of accountability and fear of Allah (SWT) no system can escape corruption, as is evident from the widespread deterioration and degeneration of the three dominant socio-economic systems developed by intellectuals viz. capitalism, socialism and communism. The evolution of a just and fair society free from the greed of wealth and arrogance of power is a sine qua non for the promotion of peace and preservation of harmony among the nations of the world. The desire to acquire more wealth or resources and political territory and power is the root cause for disturbing global peace. Hence in order to curb the human instinct to acquire excessive material wealth the Qur'an strikes against materialism. It treats materialistic world as of transient nature and therefore gives precedence to life in the Hereafter which is the ultimate destiny of mankind:

*“And nothing in the life of this world but a play and passing delight’ and the life in the Hereafter is by far the*

*better for all who are conscious of God. Will ye not then use your reason?"* (Al-An'am; 6:32)

The basic idea of this verse is that man should not be greedy to acquire excessive wealth which corrupts moral values and leads to selfishness, arrogance, pride and chauvinism. It should be borne in mind that whatever wealth is accumulated will stay behind after a person's death. It may adversely affect his status and position in the Hereafter because of his pride and arrogance, as illustrated in the case of Qaroon (Korah in the Bible). The Qur'an designates this life as an enjoyment of self delusion or fleeting vanity:

*"Know (O men) that the life of this world is but a play and passing delight, and the cause (of your) greed for more and riches and children."* (Al-Hadeed; 57:20)  
whereas:

*"...which is with God is far better and more enduring."*  
(As-Shura; 42:36)

The Qur'an therefore stresses on the elimination of greed for wealth and lust for power which basically account for the factors which corrupt morals and disturb peace at all levels, from the family to the international levels. It commands individuals, families, tribes and nations to imbibe values such as mutual love, compassion, impartial justice, humility and self restraint which will ensure universal peace. The Qur'an in verse after verse exhorts Muslims to meticulously adhere to these values. They have to be cultivated right from the family level to produce wholesome impact across all the spectra of the

society. It is little realised that the corruption of the family values shatters the entire social fabric. This is where modernization and secularism have done the most damage. Family values have lost all meaning and validity, and are torn to pieces in a modernized secular society. The Qur'an instructs the Muslims to look after their parents in their old age the same way they took care of them in their childhood and be helpful and compassionate to poor relatives and neighbours. These values have been totally discarded in the West where the parents are either packed off to old age homes or left to fend for themselves. It is the destruction of the family structure that has made the West a sick society where "out-sexing, out-buying and out-eating the Joneses next door" (22) reign supreme. This breeds unhealthy competition, corruption and violence. In order to prevent such gross mutilation of social values and to maintain social equilibrium, the Qur'an has warned against materialistic values.

**"ADL" (IMPARTIAL JUSTICE) AND RAHM (COMPASSION)  
AS VEHICLES OF PEACE**

A society where justice is not even-handedly dispensed with, where the rich go scot-free and the poor are severely punished for the same crime, where the court of justice discriminates between black and white, noble and layman is a rusted society. This acute imbalance in the social, legal and political system breeds dissatisfaction disturbs equilibrium and disrupts peaceful coexistence. The discriminatory elements with-in the system provoke violent reaction as in South Africa when the Whites ruled there with brutal force over the blacks. In

contradistinction the Qur'an offers the concept of total justice. It enjoins upon the believers to execute justice without fear and favour and without any discrimination irrespective of the position one occupies in this world. We have it on the authority of the Qur'an that even the father of Prophet Abraham, son of Prophet Nuh, and wife of Prophet Lut were severely punished for their blasphemous acts. No mercy was shown to them despite their being the closest of the kin of the respective Prophets. Further, the Qur'an demands that justice should be absolutely unbiased and unprejudiced. This is clearly borne out by the following Qur'anic verse:

*"O you who have attained to faith! be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily God is aware of all that you do." (Al-Ma'edah; 5:8)*

In the above verse the Qur'an warns that personal prejudices should not detract from the path of justice. In the following verse it cautions that even if your closest kin are involved such as parents and other near relations, the path of justice should not be forsaken:

*"O you who have attained to faith! be ever steadfast in upholding equity, bear witness to the truth for the sake of God, even though it is against your own selves, or your parents and kinsfolk. Whether the person concerned be rich or poor, God's claim takes precedence over (the claims of) either of them." (An-Nisa; 4:135)*

The concept of balance is very well stressed in this verse as pointed out by Asad "do not allow the fact that a man is rich to prejudice you in his favour or against him, and do not, out of misplaced compassion favour the poor man at the expense of the truth", nor let him suffer because of his poverty. (23) Impartial and non discriminatory justice (*Adl*) can be realised in a society where the concept of equality and unity of mankind are fully accepted. Its acceptance strengthens considerably the bonds of mutual love and compassion and thereby prevents confrontation.

A society which is committed to the Qur'anic principles of impartial Justice or *Adl* cannot subscribe to 'Kin Country Syndrome' and develop relationship with individuals, groups or countries on "us" or "them" factors as alleged by Huntington (op.cit.). In the event of Muslims adopting the "Kin Country Syndrome" the principle of unbiased justice as prescribed in the Qur'an gets compromised which is definitely forbidden in the Qur'an. Its transgression will be a sinful act.

The unity of mankind is repeatedly stressed in the Qur'an. The opening verse of *Surah An-Nisa* (The Women) emphasises the unity of mankind:

*"O mankind be conscious of your Sustainer, Who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two a broad multitude of men and women. And remain conscious of God, in Whose name you demand (your rights) from one*

*another and of these ties of kinship. Verily God is ever watchful over you.” (An-Nisa; 4:1)*

In another verse while stressing the unity of mankind the Qur’an demolishes completely racial discrimination and asserts that piety and noble deeds alone raise the status of persons in the eyes of Allah (SWT). They alone are treated with honour and dignity. Allah (SWT) does not give any weight-age to wealth, worldly position and status if they are not accompanied by virtuous deeds:

*“O men: Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him: Behold God is all-knowing and all-aware.” (Al-Hujurat; 49:13)*

Compassion, generosity, mutual help, and love towards each other are fundamental to Islam and constitute pillars of peace in any Muslim society. The object of all the religious practices in Islam is to lead mankind to a higher degree of Consciousness of Allah (SWT). This can be attained through acts of generosity, compassion and avoidance of sinful acts such as adultery, breach of promises and contracts, oppression etc.

*“And worship God (alone), and do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to ought beside Him. And do good unto your parents, and near of kin, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the neighbour from your own people, and the neighbour who is a stranger, and*

*the friend by your side, and the way farer, and those whom you rightfully possess.”* (An-Nisa; 4:36)

Mechanical performance of religious practices unaccompanied by pious deeds is meaningless and not acceptable to Allah (SWT). The basic object of all the Islamic religious acts, as prescribed in the Qur'an is to remind man of his obligations to Allah in order to seek His pleasure. Fear of Allah (SWT) and compassionate attitude towards fellow human beings please Allah (SWT) the most. The Qur'an declares: "True piety does not consist in turning your faces towards the East or the West - but truly pious is he who believes in God and the Last Day, and the angels and revelation and the prophets; and spends his substance - however much he himself may cherish it - upon his near kin, and the orphans, and the needy and the way farer, and the beggars, and for freeing human beings from bondage, and is constant in prayer and renders the purifying dues; and truly pious are those:

*“...who keep their promises whenever they promise, and are patient in misfortune and hardship and in time of peril: it is they that have proved themselves true, and it is they who are conscious of God.”* (Al-Baqarah; 2:177)

Adherence to these Qur'anic values generates the spirit of love, compassion, and mutual adjustment, promotes peaceful co-existence of individuals and societies, and guarantees permanent peace for mankind. Such a situation is beyond the realm of any materialistic society sustained by secularism.

## ISLAM AGAINST SPREADING MISCHIEF AND BRUTALITY

Carrying tales, making false accusations, breaking promises, going back on commitments, acting with brutal force and wasteful utilization of resources are among the important factors that lead to breach of peace. The Qur'an sternly warns those who indulge in such malicious acts: and firmly asks them not to:

*"Spread not corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered. And call unto Him with fear and longing, verily, God's grace is ever near unto the doers of good."* (Al-A'raaf; 7:56)

Prophet Moses also advised his people to enjoy the fruits of their labour, live comfortably and make the best use of the resources endowed upon them by Allah (SWT), but warned them against spreading mischief and disturbing the peace of mankind.

*"And (remember) when Moses prayed for water for his people and We replied "Strike the Rock with thy staff" - whereupon twelve springs gushed forth from it, so that all the people knew whence to drink. And Moses said: eat and drink of the sustenance provided by God, and do not act wickedly on earth by spreading corruption."* (Al-Baqarah; 2:60)

Sometimes corrupt people are able to conceal their true character through their polished behaviour and skilful argument but eventually they are exposed as totally corrupt, arrogant and filled with false pride. These perversities lead them to cause death, destruction and

untold misery to the meek and the weak. Such people will be condemned to hell to suffer in eternity:

*"Now there is a kind of man whose views on the life of this world will please thee greatly, and [the more so as] he cites God as a witness to what is in his heart, and is moreover exceedingly skilful in his argument. But whenever he prevails he goes about the earth spreading corruption, and destroying [man's], tilth and progeny, and God does not love corruption, and whenever he is told to be conscious of God, his false pride drives him into sin, wherefore hell will be his allotted portion - and how vile a resting place." (Al-Baqarah; 2:204-206)*

The Qur'an which sets high and noble standards for the conduct of life in this world condemns vehemently those who inflict oppression and perpetrate brutality. This is reflected in the stern warning given to the people of **Aad** for their brutalities against their neighbours:

*"And you will always, whenever you lay hands on others, lay hand cruelly without any restraint. Be then conscious of God and pay heed unto me." (Ash-Shu'ara; 26:130-131)*

Whereas Allah (SWT) asks the believers not to act aggressively even against extreme provocation:

*"And never let your hatred of people (who would) bar you from the Inviolable House of Worship lead you into the sin of aggression: but rather help one another in furthering virtue and God - consciousness, and do not help one another in furthering evil and enmity; and*

*remain conscious of God: for behold, God is severe in retribution."* (Al-Ma'edah; 5:2)

It is in the true spirit of the Qur'an that the believers are advised to accept any offer which enkindles hopes for peace and tranquillity:

*"But if they incline to peace, incline thou to it as well, and place thy trust in God: Verily He alone "is all hearing, all knowing! And should they seek but to deceive thee (by their show of peace) - behold God is enough for thee."* (Al-Anfaal; 8:61-62)

The finest example of compliance to this divine command of upholding peace was furnished by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) himself who accepted the apparently unfavourable terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah (6th Hijrah) in order to avoid bloodshed. The treaty called for a cessation of warfare between Makkah and Madinah for the next ten years. It also stipulated that the Prophet and his followers should return to Madinah without performing Hajj, but they would be free to return the following year to perform the pilgrimage. However, apparently the most damaging clause of the Treaty was that "If a Makkan minor or any other person under guardianship should go over to the Muslims without the permission of his guardian, he would be returned to the latter, but should any follower of the Prophet - whether minor or adult - goes over to the Quraysh of his own free will, he or she would not be returned." (24) This apparently disadvantageous treaty eventually proved to be the greatest boon. It opened the way for closer interaction between the people of Madinah and Makkah and

eventually led to the conquest of Makkah without any bloodshed. Hence this treaty was acclaimed in the Qur'an as a great victory:

*"Verily We have granted Thee a manifest Victory."* (Al-Fath; 48:1)

It is through such supremely important ethical norms that the Qur'an provides mankind with perfect guidance to lead a balanced life of piety, humility, virtue and compassion. It leads mankind from darkness to **enlightenment:**

*"Allah is the protector of those who have faith. From the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light."* (Al-Baqarah; 2:257)

In order to keep man away from the depths of darkness the Qur'an insists on noble deeds:

*"Behold, God bids you to deliver all that you have been entrusted with unto those who are entitled thereto, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice. Verily most excellent is what God exhorts you to do: Verily God is all seeing, all hearing."* (An-Nisa; 4:58)

The fragrance of nobility distinctly stems out of these Qur'anic norms. They provide the *raison d'être* for the creation of man on earth.

## CONCLUSION

The "Clash of Civilization" theory stands thoroughly discredited. It has to be admitted nonetheless that there is a basic clash of values in certain spheres of social and moral life between the West and Islam. Islam stands for faith; the West has completely discarded it. Islam stands for harmonious blending of spiritual and material aspects of life, the West swears by unrestricted materialism. Islam stands for strengthening the family values; the West has destroyed them and stands for undiluted individualism. Islam stands for the preservation of moral values and ethical norms, the West stands for their perversion. The West stands for democracy and freedom of speech, Islam is not against them. Hence it is more a clash of values than of civilization. Islam will not compromise on basic principles. It accepts the spirit of secularism but rejects its materialistic values. It accepts democracy but rejects hegemonyistic control of ideas and resources of one country over the other. Islam stands for the promotion and preservation of peace but totally rejects the instruments of terror and methods of coercion used by the West. Islam insists on the promotion of human rights and on its universal application. It rejects the selective application of the principles of human rights governed by political exigencies as is practised by the West. Islam stands for the coexistence and preservation of harmonious relations among cultures and civilizations. There is no shred of evidence to establish that Muslim dominated societies in the modern times have been the cause for the disturbance of global peace.

Unfortunately Islam is being mixed up with Muslim societies in different Muslim countries. These Muslim societies are the outgrowth of their own historical and political background and may not be exactly representative of the Qur'anic value system. Islam has to be assessed on the principles enunciated and values promoted in the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet (SAWS). The Qur'an instils among Muslims the fear of Allah (SWT) and reminds them constantly of their accountability to Him on the Day of Reckoning. This fear of Allah (SWT) disciplines Muslims to lead a life of piety, compassion, self restraint, patience and perseverance, motivates them to pursue the path of peace and tranquillity, and inspires them to evolve a balanced society marked for its justice and fair play, honesty and integrity, equality and fraternity, love and compassion, and modesty and humility. Are these the elements of a sick society? Let the media and scholars in the West assess dispassionately and without any prejudice, whether the adoption of these dynamic and noble principles enunciated in the Qur'an would disturb the peace of mankind, or instead would lead to its salvation.

The Qur'an does not bar any innovative thinking but it has to be within the parameters of the high ethical norms laid down in the Qur'an. The Prophet (SAWS) did realise that new problems will arise which will require new solutions and the answer to which may not be found in the Qur'an or in the Traditions. This will call for man's initiative, ingenuity and innovative approach though within the parameters of the Qur'anic Values. This is

obvious from the following conversation between Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and Mua'dh bin Jabal, being posted to Yemen as Governor. (25)

Prophet: How will you decide a problem?

Mua'dh: According to the Qur'an

Prophet: If it is not in it?

Mua'dh: According to the *Sunnah* (Islamic custom)

Prophet: If it is not in that either?

Mua'dh: Then I will use my own reasoning.

This quotation clearly highlights rationality and flexibility in Islam. New situations may demand new solutions. Islam therefore does not subscribe to rigidity of thought and action and therefore naturally stands against dogmatism and fanaticism. It lends full scope for individual initiative, ingenuity and innovation, independent judgement (*Ijtihad*). Thus Islam is not against progress and modernization. Islam is not against scientific thinking and scientific achievements. In fact, it encourages and promotes them. If the West stands for peace, progress and dynamism, Islam supports them with equal vehemence. Thus there is no clash of civilization. It is a mere figment of the imagination.

The Qur'an recognises the dynamics of change in human society and therefore predicts that civilization will be subject to change with the passage of time:

*"If you have received a blow, the (disbelieving) people have received a blow the like thereof. These are only*

*the vicissitudes which we cause to follow one another for mankind."* (Al-e Imran; 3:140)

The real weapon which the Muslims possess is the Qur'an, which contains a divinely gifted ideology and like the proverbial pen being mightier than the sword, may be more effective than all the deadly biological and nuclear weapons designed by the West to terrorise the world into submission. The West is scared of the efficacy of the Qur'an. The Westerners suspect that if the Muslims of the World unite under the dynamic influence of the Qur'anic ideology they would emerge as an irresistible force. According to Lawrence Brown "If Muslims unite under one hegemony they would be real curse to the World" (26). It is this unique Book of Islam that the West is keen to destroy, but they cannot for Allah (SWT) has guaranteed to protect and preserve the Qur'an which contains the eternal truth (17:105), and keep it free from corruption till eternity (15:9). In the words of Nietzsche "God is dead for the Western World and they feel emancipated with no 'god' and no 'religion'." (27). As for the Muslims the world loses its relevance and ceases to exist without the existence of Allah (SWT), the Creator and the Sustainer of the Universe, Who,

*"He is the first and the last, the visible and the unseen. He has knowledge of All things."* (Al-Hadeed; 57:3)

In its irrational, misguided and blind prejudice against Islam the West overlooks the fact that the Qur'an is the most powerful divine instrument to ensure and

stabilize global peace and is totally opposed to the culture of bullets and bombs. It firmly stands for full freedom for diverse ideas to interact. It stands for equilibrium in life and against extremes. In the light of these irrefutable facts we should explore more the possibilities of the confluence of cultures and convergence of value systems, rather than a clash of civilization. History bears testimony to the fact that Islam always stood for coexistence and tolerance and will continue to do so inspired by the Qur'anic vision of universal peace which Muslims cherish so dearly. Islam stands for the supremacy of Allah (SWT), for the perpetuation of peace, harmony and stability. It stands firmly against the secular materialistic values of the West which promote greed, arrogance, social instability and chaos. Islam stands for a healthy fusion of materialistic and spiritual aspects of life, which should lead to the fulfilment of the mission of life of man on earth as ordained by Allah (SWT). It is this ideal which constitutes the ethos of Islam, governs its spirit, and makes it a vibrant, dynamic source for the salvation of mankind.

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