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ON
ISLAM AND QUR'AN**

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ISLAMIC VALUES:

**ETERNALLY RELEVANT AND
UNIVERSALLY APPLICABLE**
(Norms for Code of Conduct of Human Life
And Management of Human Affairs)

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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. We hope that these Monographs will excite and stimulate the interest of both the Muslim and Non-Muslim intellectuals, to read the Qur'an and appreciate its true meaning and significance.

This Monograph entitled *Islamic Values: Eternally Relevant, Universally Applicable* explains the ideological foundations, philosophical outlook and basic concepts of Islam relating to human rights and equality, modesty and dignity of women, adherence to commitments, justice and equity, human welfare and Islam, Jihad in Islam etc. In order to remove apprehensions and misconceptions about Jihad, it has been explained in its true Qur'anic

perspective and as implemented by the Prophet (SAWS). It may be noted that Jihad has strong spiritual and intellectual components. Its military manifestation should be in self-defence and to fight tyranny and aggression. The relevance of Islamic values in the modern context and their universality have been outline rationally, concisely and coherently in this Monograph. I hope the readers will appreciate the logic of our arguments and will find them acceptable.

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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**ISLAMIC VALUES:
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PREAMBLE

Islam is the last of the great revealed religions, claiming nearly a billion followers spread all over the globe. It is the only religion which does not compromise on monotheism. Islam insists on the indivisibility of Prophethood from the time of Adam to the last Prophet Muhammad (SAWS)¹, in whom the messages of all “the earlier Prophets were consummated” (Encyclopedia Britannica on-line, July 1999). The true faith of Islam can thus be defined as the belief in the inviolable Unity of Allah (SWT)², belief in all the Prophets divinely commissioned, singularity and equality of mankind and total submission to the Divine Will. Islam denies divinity to Prophets who were all humans though enjoying a most hallowed status. Islam asserts the infallibility of the Qur’an as the true and verbatim record of the words of Allah (SWT) and declares that it will remain uncorrupted till eternity (al-Hijr; 15:9). The Qur’anic text is the transcript of the original from the heavenly Mother Book (*Umm-ul Katia*) (al-Zukhruf; 43:4), inscribed in the Preserved Tablet (*Lawh-e-Mahfooz*) (al-Buruj;

1. “SAWS” stands for *Sallallahu Alaihi Wo Sallam* meaning ‘peace and security be upon him’.

2. 'SWT' stands for *Sub 'hanahu Wo Ta'la* meaning ‘Pure and Exalted’

85:21-22). The message of the Qur'an will remain eternally relevant for all times and will be universally applicable for all people.

The Qur'an points out the limitations of human power and intelligence (al-Isra; 17:85). Allah (SWT) alone has limitless power and encompasses within His knowledge everything even the minutest particle between the earth and the sky, and beyond. He alone is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient (al-Baqarah; 2:255).

Islam rejects the concept of Original Sin. All sins according to the Qur'an are pardonable, excepting *Shirk* [Joining other gods or forces of nature with Allah (SWT)] (al-Zumr; 58:39), provided repentance is offered sincerely and the sinful acts are never repeated (ash-Shura; 42:25). The Qur'an comes down heavily against pride for it was the pride of Iblis (*Satan*) which led him to disobey the command of Allah (SWT). He was thus condemned to eternal shame and ignominy (al-Hijr; 5:34).

Islam also rejects the concept of rebirth and hence no one is "twice born". There is only one life, followed by death and finally culminating into Resurrection on the final Day of Judgment when human beings will have to account for all their earthly deeds (Al-e-Imran; 3:185). The fear of the unseen Allah (SWT), the Resurrection of all mankind on the final Day of Judgment and their Accountability to Allah (SWT) are again concepts unique to Islam. It is implicit in these concepts that actions of human beings are being very closely watched by the Almighty

and even recorded in the minutest detail by His angels. Nothing can be concealed from Him. He is aware of even our thoughts within the innermost recesses of our hearts: *“He knows what is in the heavens and on earth, and he knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And Allah is the All-knower of what is in the breasts (of men).”* (at-Taghabun; 64:4)

Of all the creations of Allah (SWT), human beings alone have the discretion to obey or disobey. The scientific and technological accomplishments of man have attained such heights that they have deluded him to believe that he can alter the course of nature and thus is endowed with divine power and authority, denying thereby the Supreme Authority of Allah (SWT). It was this false sense of pride which was the bane of many despotic rulers, dictators, proud and wealthy persons in the annals of history such as Nimrod, Pharaoh, Qaroon (Biblical Korah), Napoleon, Hitler and others. Human beings have therefore been categorically warned: *“And walk not on earth with conceit and arrogance verily, you can neither rend nor penetrate the earth, nor can you attain a stature like the mountains in height. All the bad aspects of these (the above mentioned things) are hateful in the sight of your Lord.”* (al-Isra; 17:37, 38)

The finest and most unique achievement of Islam has been the integration of the religious with the social functions. Practicing religious duties without active welfare service to the needy has been declared fake (al-Ma’oon; 107). The role and the mission of the Islamic community are to “enjoin good and forbid evil”. Thus

helping the poor and the needy has been incorporated as obligatory religious duty. Exploitation of the poor, hoarding of wealth and usury are condemned as unsocial and irreligious acts and treated as major sins because they disturb the peace of family and society and create imbalance in its structure. Islam stresses the unity and equality of all human beings. Superiority and nobility are assigned to the righteousness of deeds and not to ethnicity, power, wealth, status: *"....Verily the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is that who has At-Taqwa i.e., pious and righteous persons who fear Allah much ..."* (al-Hujuraat; 49:13)

Another revolutionary change ushered in by Islam in the socio-religious structure of the world of religion was to abolish the system of priesthood which until today is a feature of all other religions. A Muslim does not need a priest to perform religious rites at the time of birth, marriage and death. There is no place for ordained priests in Islam to lead prayers (*Salaat*). Any pious and clean Muslim, who is conversant with the correct procedure, as prescribed by the Shari'ah, can perform anyone of the aforesaid tasks.

Islam discarded disdainfully all myths and superstition which was exemplified by the Prophet (SAWS) himself. It is borne out by the following story: "It is related that on the day, Ibrahim, the son of Muhammad (SAWS), died the sun went into an eclipse. People immediately surmised that the sun's eclipse was due to nature's grief for the boy's death. But Muhammad (SAWS)

rejected this explanation at once by stating emphatically that the sun is a heavenly sphere governed by God and would never go into eclipse to mourn anybody." (Sayed Qutb, p: 18)

Islam has evolved a unified ideology of life and hence does not separate the spiritual from secular. In view of its comprehensive and unified outlook Islam visualises humanity as one big family and part of a universal fraternity. It is therefore keenly concerned about universal welfare and promises all humans complete equality and total justice in its widest sense-socially, legally, economically and internationally regardless of race, sex and creed. Consequently Islam is more interested in and inclined to create power bases to control societies in order to implement the divinely ordained humanistic values of universal peace, justice, equality and unity of mankind. Conversion to Islam can be a by-product of the process, never a basic object. In fact Islam does not approve of forcible conversion (al-Baqarah; 2:255). Conversion to Islam was therefore mostly carried out by those pious people who were the very embodiment of Islamic ethos, not by political authorities. This is abundantly testified by history.

Before proceeding further a word of caution seems in order. It must be borne in mind that as a religion Islam is the guardian of humanity and is thoroughly compatible with human nature. Consequently it is incompatible with dogmatism and bigotry. The Prophet (SAWS) also warned his companions against making religion complicated and

strict through exaggerated interpretation. He said: "do not be too strict with yourselves in practising Islam lest you will be strictly treated". He also said "This religion is solid and you have to go through it gently." He compares the bigot to a traveler "who will neither reach his destination nor keep his mount alive." (Sayed Qutb: Islam and Universal Peace, p: 23)

Islam rejects totally the materialistic values of We while it supports strongly the material progress of mankind. In fact it encourages scientific research and advancement in technology so that man can optimize the utilization of natural resources for his convenience and comfort They have been placed totally under his control and authority: *"Allah it is He Who has subjected to you the sea, that the ships may sail through it by His command, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be thankful; And has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and on the earth; in that are signs for those who reflect."* (al-Jathiyah; 45:12, 13)

Islam is against the crass, lewd, ostentatious materialistic values of life where men and women indulge in vulgar display of wealth and voluptuousness, immodesty and immorality. The Qur'an unequivocally condemns this gross vulgarity of materialistic values and is uncompromising in its opposition to materialism. For the materialists, life in this world is all that matters, whereas Islam treats it as a transit camp for a brief halt which should be used as an opportunity to prepare to move on to the ultimate destination i.e. the Hereafter:

“And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement. But far better is the house in the Hereafter for those who are Al-Muttaqoon (i.e. righteous persons who fear Allah much, [abstain from sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden] and perform all kinds of good deeds ordained by Him).....” (al-An' am; 6:32)

This spells out the fundamental difference between the materialistic and Islamic outlook towards life. Islam is therefore naturally uncompromising in its attitude towards materialism, which follows the devil's path. It nonetheless supports the idea of human progress and development

AL-QUR'AN IN PERSPECTIVE

The Qur'an is an invaluable gift from Allah (SWT) through Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) to the entire mankind and particularly to the Muslims who have inherited this divine legacy among all the peoples of the world. It is through the Qur'an that we have understood the meaning and significance of Islam, the unity, majesty, supremacy and the unique attributes of Allah (SWT). The Qur'an provides us with a complete and comprehensive value system which should govern equally the conduct of individuals and the affairs of the state. It enjoins upon Muslims to inculcate high ethical norms, be distinguished as the most noble of the peoples of the world. The adherence to the Qur'anic values can ensure a life with honour, dignity, self-respect, and integrity to Muslims across the globe. The Qur'an repeatedly stresses that every individual has a mission to perform in life. It reminds us consistently and forcefully of our accountability to Allah (SWT) and warns us of infernal consequences on the Day of Resurrection if our deeds were reprehensible during the course of life on the earth. It encourages acquisition of knowledge, provides us with rare insight into some of the significant scientific truths discovered only in the 19th - 20th centuries. The Qur'an is thus a continuous source of enlightenment, inspiration and guidance for our emancipation both in this world and the Hereafter. It is indeed a rare and unique heritage for the Muslims. Unfortunately the Muslims, the world over, have distanced themselves from the Qur'anic teachings, which

accounts for their moral degradation, scientific and educational backwardness, and global humiliation.

The Qur'an contains the verbatim record or the uncreated words of Allah (SWT) revealed directly to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) through Archangel *Jibriel* (Gabriel). It is the final and ultimate book of guidance for mankind, which will retain its originality and relevance till the Day of Judgment.³ There will be no more revelations after Muhammad (SAWS), who was the last of the Prophets commissioned by Allah (SWT) to guide mankind to the path of piety and righteousness as unfolded in the Qur'an. Allah (SWT) reveals the true object of gifting this divine book to mankind when in *Surah Fatiha* (Opening Surah) man requests Allah (SWT) to "*Show us the straightway, the way of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not the way of those who earned Your anger, not of those who went astray.*" (al-Fatiha; 1:6-7)

In response to this fervent appeal from mankind, Allah (SWT) revealed this unique and inimitable book of guidance - the *Qur'an-ul Hakeem*: "*This is the Book (the Qur'an) whereof there is no doubt and guidance to those who are al-Muttaqoon.*" (al-Baqarah; 2:2)

Al-Muttaqoon means pious and righteous persons who fear Allah (SWT) (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden), and love Allah (SWT) (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained).

3. For a detailed discussion on this refer to Monograph 7: Compilation Al-Qur'an: the Verbatim Record of the Words of Allah (SWT) or the Uncreated Words of Allah (SWT).

This book of guidance is for all people and for all time. Thus the message of the Qur'an has both universality and eternity. Its validity is not limited by time and space and transcends nations, states and regions. Its relevance covers all times past, present and future and pervades every sphere of human activity social, economic, religious, political and military.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AL-QUR'AN FOR MANKIND

Since Islamic values have stemmed out of the Qur'anic injunctions it is therefore important that we should appreciate adequately the spirit of the Qur'an and the nature and type of guidance it provides to mankind. It has been essentially revealed by Allah (SWT) to take human beings out of darkness and ignorance to enlightenment. The Qur'an has come down to mankind as the final and ultimate book of guidance to fulfill Allah's (SWT) promise that Messengers of Allah (SWT) will be commissioned from among the human beings to guide them to the right path: *"O you children of Adam! Whenever there come to you messengers from among you, rehearsing My Signs to you - those who are righteous and mind (their lives) - on them there shall be no fear nor shall they grieve."* (al-A'raaf; 7:35)

The significance of the Qur'an has been described in glorious terms by Allah (SWT). It has been called the "manifest light" (*Noor-um Mubeen*) (an-Nisa; 4:174), which enlightens the mind and inspires the spirit, "a Blessed Book" (*Kitaabun Mubaarakun*) (al-An'am; 6:92) since Allah (SWT) is the direct source of its inspired message, a "plain Book" (*Kitaabun Mubeen*) (al-Qasas; 28:2), where guidance for mankind is outlined with absolute clarity; a "Wise Book" (*Qur'an-al Hakeem*) (Luqmaan; 31:2), a sublime Book of wisdom which provides rare insight and clear understanding of the issues and problems which confront mankind in this world and in the Hereafter. It enables man to face and resolve his problems honestly, peacefully and in a statesmanlike manner always using the right

means and adhering to the path of righteousness. This Book of wisdom which Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon mankind and whoever is gifted with this wisdom is gifted with a unique divine wealth: *“Granting wisdom, to whom He wills, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted wealth abundant.....”* (al-Baqarah; 2:269)

This is decidedly a Book of *Furqaan* which clearly and unequivocally distinguishes right from wrong, good from bad and warns people to adhere to the path of truth and virtue: *“Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong i.e. this Qur’an) to His slave (Muhammad) that he may be warner to the worlds.”* (al-Furqaan; 25:1)

It is a unique Book of guidance which covers all aspects of human life. It is so comprehensive in its scope that it covers all facets of life and cannot be matched. Allah (SWT) points out in the Qur’an: *“.....We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur’an) as an exposition of everything, guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims).”* (an-Nahl; 16:89)

The Qur’an provides sound advice direct from Allah (SWT) and if one abides by it he/she can be cured of all evil thoughts and ideas. It can effectively cure even a diseased heart and is therefore a book of supreme blessing for the believers: *“O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Qur’an ordering all that is good and forbidding all that is evil), and a healing for that (disease of ignorance, doubt, hypocrisy, and*

differences etc.) in your breasts - a guidance and a mercy (explaining lawful and unlawful things etc.) for the believers." (Yunus; 10:57)

The Qur'anic injunctions cover all mankind and transcend the limitations of space and time. That is why it has been called a book of reminder and warning to all mankind: *"But it is nothing else than a reminder to all the worlds."* (al-Qalam; 68:52)

It may thus be summarised that the scope of Qur'anic guidance is wide-ranging and all embracing. It helps one understand the Unity and Supremacy of Allah (SWT), the purpose and object of the Prophetic missions, and of the revealed books, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was the last divinely ordained Prophet. The teachings of all the preceding Prophets consummated in him. Similarly the Qur'an, which is the last of all the divinely inspired words of Allah (SWT) and the only Book remaining uncorrupted, incorporated the fundamentals of all the preceding revelations and religions. It also provides a new dynamic divine vision, in harmony with the evolution of societies and civilizations, of the singularity and equality of mankind, of the supremacy of love over hatred, of friendship over enmity, of humility over pride and arrogance, of kindness over cruelty, of generosity over miserliness, of truth over falsehood, of patience over anger, of forgiveness over vengeance and of peace over war.

Unlike the other revealed books, which were oriented to specific communities, the message of the Qur'an was for all communities and for all times. As for instance the Book of Noah was meant for the people of Noah, the Torah and the Gospel were addressed to the people of Bani-Israel. In contradistinction, the Qur'an was sent down as a Book of warning and guidance for all mankind. This universality of the message of the Qur'an is its most distinguishing characteristic vis a vis the other divine scriptures. Consequently the canvas of Qur'anic guidance on diverse aspects of human life is immensely vast in order to include the key elements from all patterns of human behaviour and activities. In short Al- Qur'an is a unique divine constitution which cannot be matched in its sublimity, efficacy and comprehensiveness.

AL-QUR'AN PROCLAIMS THE UNITY AND SUPREMACY OF ALLAH (SWT)

The most fundamental of Islamic belief is its uncompromising monotheism. The Qur'an asserts that Allah (SWT) as the sole Creator and Sustainer of the universe commands total sovereignty over the Universe. He is in absolute control and does not share His power and authority with any other god. His Authority remains supreme and unchallenged. He alone can run the system of the universe without any breakdown because He has *"full knowledge of everything"* (al-Baqarah; 2:29) is *"All Mighty and All Wise"* (at-Taghabun; 64:18). Although everything is a reflection of Allah (SWT) but there is nothing in heaven and on earth that can even remotely be likened to him. There is none like Him (al-Iqlaas; 112:4). He is incomparable. He alone can dispense perfect justice because He is *"well acquainted with what you do"* (al-Baqarah; 2:234) *"is witness to each and every deed or action"* (al-Mujadilah; 58:6) including that which human beings attempt to hide from Him (al-Maida; 5:61) *"and has even the knowledge of the secrets of your breasts"* (at-Taghabun; 64:4).

Thus man cannot escape the instant, constant and comprehensive monitoring of his deeds and actions open or hidden; He will have to account for them on the Day of Judgment.

These revelations lead us irresistibly to visualise Allah (SWT) as Self-Subsistent, and the Creator of all while no one has created Him as is stressed in the following: *"Say He is Allah, the one and only Allah, the Eternal,*

Absolute. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like Him." (al-Ikhlaas; 112:1-4)

It is time and again reiterated in the Qur'an that Allah (SWT) has no need of partner to manage the affairs of the universe for He has only to command "Be" (*Kun*), and it is done in a flash (*Fayakun*).

The Qur'an produces unassailable arguments regarding the Unity and Oneness of Allah (SWT). The very fact that the system of universe has been functioning smoothly and efficiently for billions of years testifies to the existence of a single authority to manage, direct and control the whole system. Multiplicity of authorities will indeed cause confusion and will obstruct the smooth operation of the system. We cannot have multiple Prime Ministers or Presidents to administer a country. Similarly we cannot have multiple gods to run the universe smoothly. In the words of Allah (SWT) ***"If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both. But glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne (High is He) above what they attribute to Him."*** (al-Anbiya; 21:22)

The fact of the universe being under single unified command is admirably testified by the NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) control of the space flights. The entire set of space flights initiated by NASA are planned and controlled by a most complicated single central computer command system. Similarly the command for the Nuclear Arsenal of the United States of

America is with the American President Imagine the fate of the NASA space flights and American nuclear arsenal if they are placed under multiple commands. The result will be simply catastrophic. The same will apply to the system of the universe if there are more gods than one to manage and control its operation.

It is only through the medium of Qur'an that we are able to get a glimpse of the uniqueness, majesty and supreme creative power of Allah (SWT). The Qur'anic verses, in this regard, are candid, categorical and without any ambiguity. Allah (SWT) has no form, no shape, and no figure. He is according to Qur'an: "*..... The light of the heavens and earth.....*" (an-Noor; 24:35)

There is nothing in this universe that does not owe its origin to Allah (SWT) for He has been eternally there to initiate all creations. His creative powers have been described in the Qur'an in superlative terms as the Master Creator Who creates things to perfection and as He deems proper: "*For verily it is your Lord Who is the Master Creator, knowing all things.*" (al-Hijr; 15:86)

Allah (SWT) alone has the power to create out of nothing and this has been repeatedly stressed in the Qur'an: "*To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. When He decreeth a matter He saith to it 'Be' and it is.*" (al-Baqarah; 2:117)

Man's creative power is secondary in nature. He can create new things out of things that already exist He has no power to create out of nothing which Allah (SWT)

alone can do. This unique creative power of Allah (SWT) unquestionably establishes His supremacy over man, and has been stressed in a number of Qur'anic verses. As for instance *Surah Faatir* reveals that Allah (SWT) can create anything at will: *"Praise be to Allah, Who created (out of nothing) the heavens and the earth, who made the angels, messengers with wings two or three, or four (pairs). He adds to creation as He pleases, for Allah has power over all things."* (Faatir; 35:1)

He has not only the power to create, but to create in any form or shape and can impart any quality or characteristic to His creations for He is a most skillful creator with all the elements of the universe under his total command and control. This total control on creation of objects in the universe is forcefully expressed as follows: *"Allah is the creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs. To Him belong the Keys of the heavens and the earth. And those who reject the signs of Allah, it is they who will be in loss."* (az-Zumar; 39:62-63)

The machinery of the universe is constantly in motion in a most precise and systemic way. It thus needs a flawless continuous vigilance system without any break to keep the system functioning in perfect order. Any laxity and break down in vigilance can be disastrous. Such a flawless and continuous vigilance can be managed by Allah (SWT) alone for He needs no rest, never falls asleep, and is never tired. This has been beautifully and forcefully expressed in the following verses: *"Allah there is no god but He - the living, the self-subsisting, Eternal. Neither*

slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permits? He knows what (happens to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass anything of His knowledge except as He wills. His throne does extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the most High, the Supreme (in glory)." (al-Baqarah; 2:255)

The daily rhythm of human life is totally dependent on the alternation of day and night. Man's movement, his production system, his physical adjustment are finely linked with the daily alternation of days and nights. Hence the perpetuation of either days or nights will be catastrophic for human life. Man cannot rectify it if such a calamity befalls the mankind. It is only Allah (SWT) Who can set it right for He alone has set it in motion. Similarly the Qur'an asks us to look at the birds who have been miraculously provided by Allah (SWT) with an internal mechanism which enables them to fly and hold smoothly, in space without any support: *"Do they not look at the birds, held poised in midst of (the air and) the sky? Nothing holds them up but (the power of) Allah. Verily in this are signs for those who believe."* (an-Nah1; 16:79)

The man is also being reminded that his faculties of intelligence, power of speech and articulation, capacity to hear and his delicate senses of feelings and emotions are the gift of Allah (SWT). If He decides to withdraw anyone of these faculties man cannot restore them despite

all the progress registered in the field of medical sciences. Man is thus so utterly helpless. In the light of this truth the meaning and significance of this Qur'anic verse will be obvious: *"Say, think you, if Allah took away your hearing and your sight, and sealed up your hearts who - a god other than Allah - could restore them to you? See how We explain the signs by various (symbols); yet they turn aside."* (al-An'am; 6:46)

SHIRK OR ASSOCIATION OF ANOTHER GOD WITH ALLAH (SWT) - A BLASPHEMY

In the light of these sound, scientific and irrefutable Qur'anic arguments about both the existence and Unity of Allah (SWT) it is only logical that no one should be associated as partner to Allah (SWT). This has been outright condemned in Islam and has been designated as a blasphemy. As for instance in *Surah Luqmaan* (31), while advising his son to stay on the path of piety and righteousness Luqmaan asks him specifically not to *"....join in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrongdoing."* (Luqmaan; 31:13)

Allah's disapproval of *Shirk* i.e. joining others as partners with Allah (SWT) is unequivocal. While other sins may be pardoned on the Day of Judgment not the guilt of *Shirk*: *"Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed."* (an-Nisa; 4:48)

The act of *Shirk* (Polytheism) casts a doubt on the capacity of Allah (SWT) to create and sustain this universe, and His all other creations some of which are known to us and some not. And no one is a true Muslim if he or she has even the slightest doubt and reservation in this regard. Our faith in the unseen Allah (SWT), in His unique attributes and in His role as the Supreme Creator and Sustainer of the universe has to be implicit and total. It should be our firm belief that His Supreme Authority

stands unchallenged. The unique attributes of Allah (SWT) which have been highlighted so far have been beautifully and majestically summed up in the inimitable Qur'anic language and style in the following verses: *"Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god - Who knows (all things) both secret and open, He is most gracious most merciful. Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god - the Sovereign, the Holy one, the source of peace (and perfection). The guardian of faith, the preserver of security, the Exalted in might, the irresistible, the Supreme. Glory to Allah (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of forms (or colours). To Him belong the most beautiful names. Whatever is in the heavens and on the earth does declare His praises and glory and He is the Exalted in might, the Wise."* (al-Hashr; 59:22-24)

This implicit faith of Muslims in the Unity and Supremacy of Allah (SWT) the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe constitutes the élan vital which generated all the Islamic values and lends them divinity and sanctifies them.

DIVINELY REVEALED VALUE SYSTEMS AND ETHICAL NORMS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN AFFAIRS

Human beings are the most complex and intelligent creation of Allah (SWT) and their affairs constitute a complicated mix of a wide range of social, economic, religious, political and administrative activities. Despite the singleness of mankind they are fragmented into diverse societies and civilizations and are mostly moving into conflicting directions. They tend to develop vested interest in promoting and perpetuating their respective value systems and ethical norms. While doing so they completely ignore the fact that the entire mankind has stemmed out of a common origin, *“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things).”* (al-Hujuraat; 49:13)

The Qur’an thus firmly asserts the equality of mankind and calls upon mankind to abolish all conflicts based on exploitation, oppression and social discrimination. It exhorts them to promote and perpetuate social and economic justice and welfare of the entire mankind as a single unified universal cooperative family. The cardinal principle which should govern the conduct of human life has been clearly, unambiguously and succinctly stated in the Qur’an by the over-riding noble

command from Allah (SWT) that “.....*Help you one another in righteousness and piety but help you not one another in sin and rancour.....*” (al-Ma’edah; 5:2)

It is only by firm adherence, unbiased and objective application of these divinely revealed value systems and ethical norms that the foundation of an ideal Islamic state can be laid where every citizen can live in peace and security because he/she will be treated fairly, equally and justly and where his/her welfare will be adequately taken care of. We have to develop and reinforce this further, in the modern context, following faithfully and meticulously the model of the state established, by the Prophet (SAWS) and further developed and established by the four rightly guided Caliphs (*Khulafa ar-Rashideen*). It is in this background and perspective that we have to perceive and conceptualise the Islamic norms and standards for the management of human affairs, which are highlighted in the following paras.

DEEDS AND ACTIONS APPROVED AND DISAPPROVED BY ALLAH (SWT):

Human beings are marked for their complex and contrasting behavioural patterns. Sometimes they act as paragons of piety and excel even the angels in purity of character, nobility of deeds, thereby symbolizing truly the best of Allah’s (SWT) creations. On the other hand they stoop down to such a shameful and ignominious behaviour that they appear to be worse than Satan in

deceit, treachery, arrogance and mischief mongering. Consequently they invite the wrath of Allah (SWT). In order to help guide mankind to keep on the right path so that they do not trespass the limits prescribed by Allah (SWT) the Qur'an has broadly identified deeds which are blessed with divine favour and those which are abhorring and thoroughly condemned by Allah (SWT). These divinely approved and disapproved deeds seem to be in total conformity with human nature. As for instance there is no respect for those who are arrogant, are habitual liars and backbiters, tend to act fraudulently and are a perpetual menace to peace and tranquility of society. In sharp contrast are those who act generously, help the poor and the needy, stand firmly by their commitment, always fulfill their promise and are always a source of comfort and solace for the people they live with. Consequently they endear themselves to their friends, neighbours and relations and command their full trust and confidence. Thus the habits and practices which are instinctively disliked by man are also wholly condemned by Allah (SWT). Similarly actions and deeds which are appreciated and admired by individuals and societies receive divine approval. This will become all the more clear if we look into the good and bad deeds as identified in the Qur'an.

DEEDS APPROVED BY ALLAH (SWT):

Allah (SWT) loves the virtuous. There can be various forms of acts of virtue, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, nursing the sick, pardoning those who have hurt you, suppressing anger, encouraging peace and

preventing conflicts and confrontation etc. In one of the verses the Qur'an calls those as doers of good deeds *"Who spend (in Allah's cause deeds of charity, alms etc.) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger and who pardon men; verily Allah loves Al-Muhsinoon (the good doers)."* (Al-e-Imraan; 3:134)

Very dear to Allah (SWT) are those who act justly, dispense with justice impartially if they are in authority, without fear and favour. They do not hesitate to act justly even against their own kith and kin, dear and near ones. Allah (SWT) therefore advised the Prophet (SAWS) to judge fairly and properly if the Jews referred any matter to him for adjudication *".....And if you judge, judge with justice between them. Verily Allah loves those who act justly."* (al-Ma'edah; 5:42)

Allah (SWT) has repeatedly stressed that He loves *al-Muttaqoon* i.e. "pious and righteous persons who fear Allah (SWT), (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah (SWT), perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained" (p: 94 Mohd. Taqiuddin Al-Hilali and Mohd. Muhsin Khan - 1993). The Muslims are advised to be good and fair even against enemies if they adhere to the terms of the covenant and do not commit any breach of trust *"..... So long as they are true to you, stand you true to them verily Allah loves Al-Muttaqoon."* (at-Tawbah; 9:7)

One of the most important attributes of Allah (SWT) is that He is most loving and forgiving. He would much prefer to reform people and put them on the path of

righteousness than to punish them if they are sincerely repentant of the sins committed by them. The purity of body is strongly linked in Islam with the purity of mind and soul, therefore the Qur'an emphasises the fact that Allah (SWT) loves those who always keep themselves clean and are sincerely repentant. It declares that "*.....Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance and loves those who keep themselves pure.*" (al-Baqarah; 2:222)

Islam further advises Muslims to be patient in difficult times and under adverse circumstances. Under such trying circumstances the *Salaat* (prayer) and *Sabr* (patience) provide spiritual comfort and attract invariably the support and guidance of Allah (SWT). "*O you who believe seek help in patience and prayer. Truly Allah is with the patient.*" (al-Baqarah; 2:153)

DEEDS DISAPPROVED BY ALLAH (SWT):

Some specific categories of evil doers who act in a disgusting way are deprived of divine guidance and go astray. People with arrogance, who are boastful, exult in riches, make an ostentatious display of wealth, and are proud of the power and position which Allah (SWT) has endowed them with and are ungrateful to Allah (SWT) for the material benefits and status which they enjoy in this world are condemned outright. The Qur'an calls such people *al-Fariheen* (al-Qasas; 28:76). Another category of people who incur the displeasure of Allah (SWT) include the conceited boastful people who feel that Allah (SWT) has no role to play in whatever they have managed to accomplish

in this world. These have been called the *al-Mustakbiroon* (an-Nahl; 16:23) i.e. arrogant. Then there are *Mukhtaalin Fakhoor* (Luqmaan; 31:18), highly conceited people who act in a boastful manner. Further there are persons who behave in such a disgusting way that they are thoroughly disliked by Allah (SWT). Their conduct and behaviour in life are totally disapproved in Islam. These include the *Al-Fasiqeen* (sinners) who attempt to destroy the fabric of Islam, *al-Mufsideen* (mischief mongers) who are mischief makers, tend to destroy the peace of the community and generate wide spread corruption. Even worse are *Khawwaanan Aseeman* (given to perfidy) (An-Nisa; 4:107), those deceitful, treacherous people who intentionally make false promises are prone to commit crime and persist in sinful acts. And finally are those habitual liars and transgressors *Musfiroon Kazzaab* (Ghafir; 40:28) who commit murder without rhyme and reason, tend to commit great sins frequently, oppress other people unjustly, and deliberately transgress the limits prescribed by Allah (SWT). Also included in the category of those disliked by Allah (SWT) are *Musrifeen* (al-An'am; 6:141) who are extravagant, *Zalimeen* (al-Baqarah; 2:258) habitually unjust and wrong doers, *Kafireen* the disbelievers, and the *Mu'tadeen* (al-Maida; 5:87) who exhibit utter disrespect towards virtuous deeds, transgress the prescribed religious limits through their aggressive and oppressive behaviour. Such habitual sinners are totally disliked by Allah (SWT). They are condemned to lead a sinful life and will be severely punished on the Day of Judgment. It is in the background of these fundamental likes and dislikes of Allah (SWT) of human deeds, action and behaviour which

are in complete harmony with human nature that we can appreciate better the ethical norms and moral values as ordained in Islam.

ISLAMIC VALUES - THEIR ETERNITY, UNIVERSALITY AND RELEVANCE IN MODERN CONTEXT

There has been phenomenal advancement of knowledge since the dawn of human civilization. The production system has undergone revolutionary changes from the hoe culture of the primitive man to the automotive system of the modern machine age. The satellite communication system has completely revolutionized our outlook, annihilating distances and reducing the vastly spread out diversified world into a global village. Consequently interaction among different governments economies and peoples has increased phenomenally. Despite these technology oriented mind boggling changes in the modern world the basic needs and patterns of relationships in a society have essentially remained unaltered. Acquisition of political power, distribution of wealth, trade and commerce, differences in resource distribution, gender differences, ethnicity, social and economic inequality have been among the key determinants of human relationships at all levels - family, interpersonal, among different ethnic groups, societies, nations and states. The moral values and ethical norms have been consistently the same from times immemorial as is evident from the teachings of different Prophets, right from the inception of human civilization. Allah (SWT) had assigned the task to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) to set right the corruption of moral values and to put on even keel acute distortions in human relationships. The Prophet (SAWS) reformed the Arab society miraculously lending it

from barbarism to humanism. Tribal rivalries were replaced by fraternal bonds, and differences were resolved mutually in a peaceful manner. The Prophet (SAWS) left the immutable and incorruptible legacy of the Qur'an for the guidance of mankind till the Day of Judgment. Because of the deep rooted and unalterable character of human values and ethical norms the relevance and validity of the Islamic value system in modern times stands firmly and fully established.

The dominance of the materialistic values in the existing secular and technology oriented society has completely turned the ethical norms and moral values topsy-turvy. It is not the quality, conduct and character but the quantum of wealth possessed by an individual that determines his status and stature in society. Indiscriminate consumerism is the order of the day. By virtue of the wealth the rich possess, they make it a point to acquire all the luxuries and comforts of life in order to live a luxurious life. This is irrespective of the fact that because of the wasteful expenditure on inessential comforts of life they are aggravating poverty, depriving the poor of a square meal a day, a shelter on their heads and clothes to cover their seminude bodies. Exploitation of the poor countries by the rich and developed countries, of the poor individuals by the affluent members of the society is widely practiced and prevalent without any qualms of conscience. The greatest degeneration, in the developed secular society, has occurred in the matter of sex. The secrecy and the sacredness of sex have just been tossed off. Living together without marriage is rapidly

increasing among adult men and women and extra marital relationship is far too common. Even the Presidents and Prime Ministers, princes and princesses are no exception. Adultery and fornication seem to have lost their sinful dimensions and adulterous practices are no longer being looked down upon. Human beings are tending to behave like animals in their sexual practices. Homosexuals are also being treated as respectable members of society. The followers of the Old and New Testaments seem to have completely forgotten the divine punishment meted out to the people of Prophet Lot for their despicable homosexual practices. By putting the seal of validity on the practices of the lesbians and the gays, we are only inviting the displeasure and wrath of Allah (SWT) AIDS is just one example of it.

It is in this backdrop of the vulgarly materialistic dominated, obscene and malignant character of the modern society that we should look into the Islamic values which restore human self-respect, treat women with dignity and honour, subordinate materialistic desires to spiritual needs. The entire spectrum is reoriented from its obsessive commercialism, opulent consumerism, disgraceful obscenity and oppressive exploitation of the meek and the weak to the restoration of human values, the equality of man, the fulfillment of basic needs, the elimination of exploitation of individuals and societies and diverting human effort to a cooperative and mutually supportive emancipation and upliftment of society. In this sick and diseased society, the Islamic values, despite being over 1400 years old, look refreshingly new, capable of

healing and eliminating the deep seated malignancy of the present society and restoring it to normal health by minimising the madness of materialism.

SOME KEY COMPONENTS OF ISLAMIC VALUES

One of the greatest achievements of Islam is to make social welfare an inherent part of the Islamic faith, It also strikes hard against superstitions and meaningless rituals, This has been forcefully expressed in *Surah Al-Baqarah* wherein some of the righteous deeds have also been specified: *"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness to believe in God, and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask for ransom of slaves, to be steadfast in prayer and practice regular charity to fulfill the contracts which you have made, and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and through-out all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth and God fearing."* (al-Baqarah; 2:177)

The verse begins rather dramatically to draw serious attention of the readers. It proclaims emphatically that superstitious rituals, like facing a particular direction for particular work or worship cannot be treated as auspicious, and bear no significance in Islam. This statement is very meaningful because, religion has always been identified with, and confined to, performance of

certain rituals based on superstitions and perpetuated by family, tribes or local traditions. More elaborate and complicated the rituals, greater the significance and importance of performers. Moreover, the rituals are kept beyond the comprehension of, and practice by, common people. Thus, a culture of 'priesthood' takes birth, dividing the people into 'qualified' and 'unqualified' categories for performing these rituals. Right of performing worship and rituals on occasions like marriage, births, deaths etc., become the prerogative of a chosen few, mostly on the basis of birth which itself is claimed as the required 'qualification'. These rituals and procedures are so mystified, that common man always remains ignorant and deemed 'unqualified' to perform these social functions.

Islam removes this perception and practices in one stroke by hitting at the root of all this by declaring "**It is not righteousness that you (merely) turn your faces to the East and the West (ritual).**" It does not attach any value to rituals, howsoever elaborate, mystified and impressive they may be. It has liberated people from the clutches of few self-seeking and self-appointed divine and holy middle men. Islam proclaims that, every human being is equal, and has direct relation with the Lord Creator and Sustainer and accountable to Him, directly and personally.

The aforesaid verse states emphatically that adherence to charity, piety; truth and helping the poor and the weak etc. are the real acts of righteousness. The

Muslims have been commanded to adhere to them steadfastly. The Qur'an thus stresses the unity of thought and action, for an evil thought generates satanic action, and a perverse action can make a pious thought foul. It is thus clear that the Qur'an, which contains the commands of Allah (SWT), has clearly linked faith with the right conduct in thought, action, attitude, and behaviour. Both the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) epitomize this harmony of thought and action, faith and righteous deeds. The Prophet (SAWS) never deviated from these norms even under the most trying circumstances.

TOLERANCE, PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE ARE PRIME VIRTUES:

Islam is very tolerant in its outlook. It does not approve of compulsion in religion: (al-Baqarah; 2:257) and does not discriminate in the dispensation of justice on the basis of caste, community and religion. However it is not prepared to treat spiritual and material lives as separate entities since the backing of spiritual values are essential for the development of healthy and honest worldly life. They complement each other, and therefore, cannot be treated as independent of each other. The Qur'an, therefore stresses repeatedly that faith (*Imaan*) should lead to noble deeds and that faith is incomplete if it is not supported by such deeds. The Qur'an is replete with such verses that *"But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness....."* (al-Baqarah; 2:25)

It has been repeatedly stressed in numerous other verses of the Qur'an (See also: al-e-Imran - 3:57; An-Nisa-Women - 4:173; Al-A'raaf - The Heights-7:42; Hud- 11:23; al-Kahf (The Cave); 18:107; TaHa-20:75 and other verses). In another very forceful verse righteous acts are described as follows: *"Those who spend (freely) whether in prosperity or in adversity, who restrain anger and pardon all men - Allah loves those who do good."* (Al-e-Imran; 3:134)

Patience is treated as a prime act of piety and implies self-restraint under extremely adverse and trying conditions. One who patiently perseveres is assured of the support of Allah (SWT): *"O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer (Salaat): for Allah is with those who patiently persevere."* (al-Baqarah; 2:153)

The Qur'an reiterates this advice about patience a number of times. In one of his traditions the Prophet (SAWS) says: "How excellent are the affairs of the *Mo'min* (believer): all is good for him and this is not the case with anyone except the *Mo'min*. If prosperity attends him he is thankful [to Allah (SWT)], and if adversity falls upon him he perseveres patiently: so it is all good (for him)." (Shu'ayb bin Sinan quoted by Muslim). It is the people who persevere patiently who can repel evil and replace it with virtuous deeds. It can miraculously transform sworn enemies into perpetual friends as the Qur'an asserts: *"Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and you was hatred become as it were your friend and intimate: And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-*

restraint-none but the persons of the greatest good fortune.” (Fussilaat; 41:34-35)

The patience and perseverance of a Muslim is tested at almost every step he takes in his/her life. The month of *Ramazaan* or *Saum*, when fasting for a month is obligatory on all adult Muslims, is an annual exercise in self-restraint and patience. However this supreme quality of patience is invariably associated with Prophets. Ibrahim (AS) was calm and unshaken in his faith when thrown into the flames of fire, Ismail (AS) surrendered willingly and patiently to be sacrificed in the cause of Allah (SWT), Yousuf (AS) remained steadfastly patient despite being imprisoned and Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) endured with utmost patience the harassment, torture and ignominy inflicted upon him by the Makkan pagans and his own relations during his 13 years of missionary activity in Makkah. But the trial and tribulations to which Ayyub (Job) (AS) was subjected was most agonising. Satan tried every trick up his sleeve to persuade Ayyub (AS) to express his dissatisfaction and complain to Allah (SWT) for his sufferings but he remained steadfast. His patience and gratitude strengthened and enhanced with every new tragedy that befell him. This limitless patience and gratitude of Ayyub (AS) to Allah (SWT) is graphically described by Ibn Askar: “Job was a man having much wealth of all kinds: beasts, slaves, sheep, vast lands of Haran and many children. All those favours were taken away from him and he was physically afflicted as well. Not a single part of his body was sound except his heart and tongue, with both of which he glorified Allah (SWT),

the Almighty all the time day and night. His disease lasted for a long time until his visitors felt disgusted with him. His friends kept away from him and people abstained from visiting him. No one felt sympathy for him except his wife. She took good care of him; knowing his former charity and piety" (Imaam Ibn Kather [1997] Stories of the Prophet p: 174). He got angry with his wife also when she asked him to pray to Allah (SWT) to remove his sufferings. Thereafter he refused to take food and drink from her hands and vowed to punish her with 100 lashes if and when he got well. Ayyub (AS) fought and conquered evil with the weapons of humility, supreme patience and absolute faith in Allah (SWT). He had attained the pinnacle of the virtue of patience and was eventually rewarded handsomely by Allah (SWT). He regained his normal health, raised a new family, his agony, affliction and tormenting experiences became a matter of the past (al-Anbiya; 21:83 and notes 2739 and 2740 in translation and commentary by Yusuf Ali). The efficacy and the miraculous power of patience as a virtuous deed is epitomised in the lives of all the Prophets.

It may also be stated that none of the Prophets acted revengefully when their sufferings were mitigated. Prophet Yousuf (Joseph) (AS) pardoned all his step brothers and helped them to settle down in Kan'aan with honour and dignity. Prophet Ayyub (Job) (AS) showered back his love and affection on his wife with only a token punishment to fulfill his vow and welcomed back all his friends who had deserted him during his period of adversity and distress. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) granted

general amnesty on the conquest of Makkah to the entire pagan Makkans who had agonized and tortured him during his missionary life in Makkah. Thus not to act revengefully is equally a virtuous act and highly commended in the Qur'an.

EQUALITY OF MAN IN ISLAM AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS:

Islam, true to its creed, has proclaimed, promoted and protected human rights from its inception. It is an article of faith and not a favour shown to anyone under any compulsion or convenience. Freedom of travel, trade, and learning was permitted within and outside the Islamic state, without hitch or hindrance. *Makkah, Madinah, Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo* and, indeed all centres of learning and trade, were visited by scholars, artists, traders, etc., to pursue their respective activities in a most friendly and cordial atmosphere. Fundamental Rights, which now adorn and embellish almost all Constitutions, and are held sacrosanct, from national to international level, were taught to mankind by the Lord Creator & Sustainer Himself from the very beginning. A careful study of the Holy Qur'an and true traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) with a discerning eye will reveal this truth.

The Qur'an emphatically declared the unity and equality of Man by revealing that the entire mankind has multiplied from a single pair of man and woman: *"O mankind! reverence your guardian Allah, Who created you from a single person, created of like nature his mate and*

from these two scattered (like seeds) countless men and women....." (an-Nisa; 4:1)

In another verse the Qur'an not only asserts the unity and equality of mankind but removes all discrimination based on birth, caste, colour, wealth or worldly status. The races, tribes, nations are convenient labels for identification. The most righteous is the most honoured man in the sight of Allah (SWT): *"O Mankind! We created you from a single pair of male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you....."* (al-Hujuraat; 49:13)

It is from this fundamental concept of the equality of man that stem out all the fundamental rights of man - the right to live with honour and dignity, right to own property, freedom of speech etc.

The right to life and to live with honour and dignity is the most important of all the fundamental rights of human beings. Islam has recognized the right to life and ensured security of life of every citizen, without any distinction or discrimination. Islam prescribes capital punishment for anyone violating this right, as deterrence to others, notwithstanding the opinion of modern intellectuals, social scientists and proponents of human rights. The Holy Qur'an states clearly: *"We ordained therein for them: 'Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal.' But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for him. And if any fail to judge by*

what Allah has revealed, they are wrong-doers.” (al-Ma’edah; 5:45)

Note the deterrence and equity built into this divine order and also, the exhortation and persuasion to be merciful. This act of mercy is not to cater to one’s ego, but for atonement of own sins. It may also be noted, that anyone failing to implement and honour this code, himself becomes a wrong doer! However, the aggrieved is persuaded to accept any just compensation, even forgive, depending upon the nature and severity of the case.

The authority to forgive is given to the aggrieved and not to the judge, the king or the president or such other dignitaries. Warning is also given to the aggrieved not to exceed limits in inflicting revengeful punishment *“O you who believe! The law of equality is prescribed to you. In case of murder; the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman; but if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand and compensate him with handsome gratitude. This is a concession and mercy from your Lord. After this whoever exceeds the limits, shall be in grave chastisement. In the Law of Equality there is (saving of) Life to you, O you men of understanding; that you may restrain yourselves.” (al-Baqarah; 2:178-179)*

Emphasising the sanctity of human life, the Holy Prophet (SAWS) warned saying: *“The first thing that will be decided between men on the day of resurrection is blood-shedding.”* (Bukhari & Muslim). A person may escape

punishment in this world by clever stratagem, but there will be no escape on the Day of Judgment

Before the advent of Islam in Arabia the birth of a female child was most unwelcome and some female children were even buried alive. Their birth was considered a disgrace for the family and hence treated with contempt Islam comes down heavily against this brutal practice. The act of killing an innocent person whether infant or adult is considered inhuman, strongly condemned and forbidden in the Qur'an: *".....kill not your children on plea of want, We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to shameful deeds whether open or secret, take not life which Allah has made sacred, except by way of justice and law. Thus does He command you that you may learn wisdom."* (al-An'am; 6:151)

It was in the light of this dictate of the Qur'an that the practice of killing a female child among the Arabs was forbidden by Islam.

The right to hold property and the right to a decent life is inbuilt within the Qur'anic value system. This right is now enshrined in all constitutions and law books. The rule that 'might is right' has been rejected in favour of rule of law that guarantees protection to property of a person. Islam proclaimed this fundamental right of an individual, and protected it effectively long ago. *"And do not eat up property of each other surreptitiously, nor use it as bribe for the judges, with intent that you may eat up a little of (other) people's property unjustly and you know (it)."* (al-Baqarah; 2:188)

People are also being deprived of their property or their hard earned lifelong savings through theft or burglary. Those guilty of these criminal acts deserve to be stringently punished. Hence the Qur'an proclaims: *"As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a retribution for their deed and exemplary punishment from Allah, and Allah is Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom."* (al-Ma'edah; 5:38)

The hand, which is one of the most useful parts of human beings, is gifted to mankind to be used for earning livelihood by honest and fair means, and not to be used for committing crimes and depriving others of their lawful property. Whosoever does this does not deserve its continued use. Cutting off the hand of an offender is certainly better than perpetuating the atrocity on innocent people. As taking the life of a person in return for his crime is justice done to the sufferer, cutting off the hand of a person violating the fundamental right of a person to possess property, is also a demand of justice.

There are instances in the history of Islam, particularly during the Caliphate of Muar ^(RA), when under extraordinary and compassionate circumstances punishment to cut off hands on committing theft was either abrogated temporarily or not implemented after due investigation. During the famine year, known as "the year of *ramadah* in the Islamic domain, 'Muar ^(RA) did not apply this punishment. Nor did he inflict it "when some servants of Hatib Ibn-Raltiaa stole one of their master's

camels. Muar (RA) found that the master was not providing his servants with sufficient food. He not only refused to punish them but he fined the master double the price of the stolen camel. Muar (RA) thought that the servants were forced to steal and hence pardoned" (Sayed Qutb; p: 60).

PROTECTION OF DIGNITY, HONOUR AND RIGHTS OF WOMEN:

Dignity and honour are unique to human beings. Every person has self-respect and sense of élan. It is dearer than life and property. No self-respecting person, man or woman, likes to live a life of indignity and disrespect. Islam protects the honour and dignity of human beings particularly of women jealously. It prescribes stringent punishments to ensure that chaste women are not stigmatised and harassed and that they may live with respect, honour and dignity. *"And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations), flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after, for such men are wicked transgressors; except those who repent thereafter and mend (their conduct) for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* (an-Noor; 24:4-5)

The punishment in public and humiliation of declaring the offender unworthy of testifying in future, for the violators of the fundamental right to honour and dignity of fellow human beings, is fully justified and befitting. Offenses relating to violation of honour are often difficult to prove, but the offenders have no cause for

relief and relaxation. They are warned that they may deceive others but not Allah (SWT), Who knows the truth, and will punish them in the Hereafter. *“Those who love (to see) scandals circulate among the Believers, will have a grievous chastisement in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows and you know not.”* (an-Noor; 24:19)

Reforms introduced by the Prophet (SAWS) with regards to the rights of women based on Qur’anic injunction were quite revolutionary and far ahead of the times. Woman was allowed to inherit property from her parents, her husband and even from her children if they expired during her life time. She was granted the right to stand as witness. She enjoyed the right to take people under her protection on par with man. One of the Prophet’s (SAWS) daughters had granted protection to her husband Abu Al-’Aas Ibn Al Rabi, a pagan Makkan, who had quietly slipped into Madinah. She informed the Prophet (SAWS) publicly of this fact the next morning in the mosque. He was taken by surprise but he conceded her right to grant protection (Karan Armstrong p: 213). While keeping a respectable distance the women offered their *Salaat* (prayer) together with men in the Prophet’s mosque. They could even raise issues of religious significance and actively participated in discussions with the Prophet (SAWS). *Surah* al-Mujadilah the 58th Chapter in the Qur’an is an eloquent testimony to this fact. In this *Surah* a woman argues with the Prophet (SAWS) that her husband by sheer declaration that she was his mother could not change her status from wife to mother! The Qur’anic revelation agreed with her argument and the

husband was penalized for his irresponsible statement. Finally women could also engage themselves in work independently after fulfilling their domestic responsibility and with the permission of their husband/parents and could retain their income. The Qur'an categorically states: *".....to men is allotted what they earn and to women what they earn....."* (an-Nisa; 4:32)

As regards the rights of women in Islam during the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) Karen Armstrong makes the following observation: "In such a primitive world what Muhammad (SAWS) achieved for women was extraordinary. The very idea that the woman could be a witness or could inherit anything at all in her own right was astonishing. We must also recall that in Christian Europe women had to wait until the 19th century before they had anything similar....." (P: 191).

RIGHTS OF MINORITIES:

Although the Qur'an does not specifically speak of the rights of the minorities but they enjoyed full freedom of worship, total security of life and all other benefits and privileges which were enjoyed by the Muslim citizens of the Islamic state of Madinah, established by the Prophet (SAWS). This is eloquently borne out by the covenant of Madinah, a written document which late Dr. Hameedullah has called the 'Constitution of Madinah'. This covenant was prepared in consultation with elders of the city and heads of all the neighbouring tribes including Jews. This is what the document states: "In the name of

the most Merciful Compassionate God, given by Muhammad, the Prophet, to the believers, whether Quraysh or of Yathrib, and to all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, all these shall constitute one nation. The state of peace and war shall have the right of concluding peace or declaring war against the enemies of his coreligionists. The Jews, who attach themselves to our commonwealth, shall be protected from all insults and vexation; they shall have an equal right with our people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of Auf, Najjaar, Harith, Jashu, Thalaba, Aus and all others domiciled in Yathrib (Madinah) shall form with the Muslims one composite nation; they shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims, the clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom; the Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Yathrib (Madinah), shall be a sacred place for all who accept this charter. The clients and allies of Muslims and the Jews shall be inspected as the patrons; and true Muslims shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of crime, injustice or disorder; no one shall uphold the culpable, even though he were his nearest" (Qutubuddin Aziz: *The Prophet and the Islamic state* pp.: 51). It is crystal clear that the minorities enjoyed the same rights as the Muslim majority and their life and property were guaranteed full security together with their clients. There was no restriction on their movement and business activities and they had total religious freedom. Full justice to all the citizens of the Islamic state was ensured. There was no respite to the criminals and the guilty. They had to be punished even if they were the closest relative of any

citizen of Madinah. This covenant thus laid the foundation of a just, honest, and transparent system of administration in the infant Islamic state of Madinah based on Islamic principles of equity and justice.

IMMODESTY AND ADULTERY - CONDEMNED IN ISLAM:

Islam considers immodesty and adultery among the most corrupting elements in a society. They drive away virtue and righteousness and tempt people to commit some of the most shameful acts such as adultery, fornication and sodomy. Free mixing never leads to innocent ends. It tends to encourage illicit relationship and whets the insatiable appetite for sexual relationship. It thoroughly disturbs domestic peace and creates acute imbalance, friction and conflict in the social life of the family and the community. The modern liberal society in the West is most permissive and promiscuous. The modernists live under grave misconception that free mixing of the sexes is a sign of social progress, and symbolizes women's liberation and is not a social evil. Because of the permissive character of modern society sex has lost its sanctity and sex outside wedlock is not considered a sin. Hence the living together of men and women without the bond of marriage is fully approved by a predominant section of the society. Similarly the gays and the lesbians have started acquiring respectability.

The women enjoy a most respectable status in an Islamic society as a wives, sisters, mothers and daughters.

They have full freedom to pursue education and their vocations within the prescribed norms of decency and modesty without neglecting their basic household responsibilities. In contradistinction the women in the modern and secularist society in the West are treated merely as marketable commodities for sale and entertainment full of lust and voluptuousness. A woman's body and figure which should be the exclusive preserve of her husband is now for public display for all to enjoy. Their figures with all their charms and enchanting beauty are fully exploited by the commercial and manufacturing firms to publicise and promote the sales of their products. The greatest tragedy is that even the women love their glamorous roles in advertisements and beauty pageants where there is total exposure of their figure, bordering on nudity. They have themselves now assumed a key role in making a vulgar display of their body and in promoting, supporting, and sustaining, of course in lieu of handsome remuneration, a sensuous and lustful exposure for mass entertainment. This socially stinking and morally depraved culture is repugnant to Islamic principles. It is simply not acceptable as a way of living in the Islamic system. Islam respects the self-respect and dignity of women and treats sex as a private and sacred act between legitimately married husband wife for the procreation and multiplication of mankind. It totally rejects the concept of live-in partners and considers all sexual acts, outside the wedlock, as adulterous, contemptuous and shameful there is a wholesale and forceful condemnation of the shameful act of adultery in the Qur'an: "*Nor come nigh near*

adultery, for it is an indecent deed and evil way.” (al-Isra; 17:32)

Adultery as observed earlier has a disastrous effect on domestic peace which Islam is very keen to protect and preserve. Hence it commands the observance of decency, propriety and chastity in the behaviour of both men and women. It therefore restricts the free mixing of the male and female and totally forbids sex before marriage which is fornication in Islamic parlance, a heinous sin which invites severe punishment. Thus modesty has a tranquillising effect on the human conscience and is conducive to establishing peace in the family and the society (see Sayed Qutb: Chapter. Peace at Home, pp.: 30-44). Modesty protects the pure and pious from all shameful acts, embarrassments and accusations associated with obscenity and indecency. The standards and criteria for modesty, as outlined in the Qur'an, are logical, simple and straightforward: *“Say to believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make greater purity for them. And Allah is well acquainted with what they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers.....and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments...”* (an-Noor; 24:30-31)

This verse puts the concept of modesty most nobly, precisely, and concisely in its spiritual background. Even men have been asked to observe certain codes of modesty such as lowering their eyes in order to avoid casting a lustful look on the charms and beauty of women. This will protect him from evil thought as well Islam insists on both purity of thought and piety of action. That is why the command is to lower the gaze which will eliminate all temptations. As regards women the Qur'anic directions are more elaborate. Besides the lowering of the eyes they have been asked to avoid vulgar display of the jewelry they wear and objects of female physical charm by covering their figure and hair by a veil or hijab. They have been further asked to walk nimbly lest the sound of their feet and ornaments may attract the attention of other men outside the family. The women have been given total freedom to wear their jewelry and move freely within the family. Outside the family circle she has to carry herself with poise, dignity and self-respect for she is not an exhibit for public display to let others cast a lustful look on her. These Islamic standards of modesty guarantee respect and honour to women and shield them from the capricious and seductive looks of the opposite sex. In sharp contrast is the modern value system where women are no more than marketable commodities at a price fixed in the market. Despite the freedom, the status and the position they enjoy in the society they tend to be treated as decorative pieces which destroys the dignity and self-respect of women, completely corrupts the society and demolishes its spiritual base.

All the Prophets who were commissioned by Allah (SWT) for the guidance of mankind to righteousness were epitome of humility and modesty. Prophet Moses was so decent and modest that the people with whom he lived had never seen him naked. When he arrived in Madinah fleeing from Pharaonic fury, a saintly person Shu'ayb sent his daughter to invite him to his house. Prophet Moses asked the girl to walk in front of him to avoid casting even a glance at her charm and beauty.

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) condemned adultery in the strongest term and never hesitated to punish those guilty of this heinous sin. He sternly warned his followers not to indulge in adultery. He was extremely polite, courteous and modest. He exhorted Muslims to be always modest and humble. Some of his sayings regarding adultery and modesty are quoted below:

"There is none more jealous than Allah, for that reason He has forbidden all filthy actions, both open and secret." (Bukhari & Muslim)

"Verily, the worst of men in the sight of Allah, in respect of position on the Day of Resurrection, will be he whom, people abandon for fear of his filthy action." (Bukhari & Muslim)

"We were with the Prophet in a gathering, when he said, 'Do you not pledge with me that you shall not join anything with Allah, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill a being which Allah has forbidden unless by right, nor come a calumny which you have

invented between your hands and your feet, nor disobey me in what shall be reasonable?' They said, 'Yes.' The Prophet said, 'Whoso then among you shall fulfill it, his reward (devolves) upon Allah the Most High.'" (Bukhari & Muslim).

"Verily, modesty is from faith." (Bukhari & Muslim).

"Faith has seventy odd branches, and modesty is a branch of the faith." (Bukhari & Muslim).

"Verily, modesty brings only good." (Bukhari and Muslim).

"Verily, out of (many things) which men have conceived from the sayings of the former Prophets (one) is that when you have no modesty, do what you please." (Bukhari).

Since adultery (*Zina* as it is called in Arabic) is treated as a heinous sin in Islam stringent punishment has been prescribed for those who commit this sin but before these punishments are executed the guilt of adultery should be justly and fully established. Although the Arabic word *Zina* applies to illegal sex between both married and unmarried men and women but the punishment differs. As regards illegal sex between unmarried man and woman which in modern legal parlance is fornication the Qur'an prescribes punishment by flogging: *"The woman and man guilty of fornication, flog each of them with hundred stripes: let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed*

by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last Day; and let a party of believers witness their punishment.” (an-Noor; 24:2)

When the same illegal sex is indulged in by married men and women it is punishable by death according to traditions of the Prophet (SAWS). In the Mosaic Law also death penalty is inflicted for adultery. (On Adultery see: Sayyid Ameenul Hasan Rizvi [2001]: *Three Major Errors*, Human Welfare Trust Publication, New Delhi, and pp.: 23-29).

However Islam jealously guards the chastity, honour and dignity of women. It wants to protect them against false accusations and strict conditions have been laid down before punishment is inflicted. Once the charge is fully and firmly established then no compassion has to be shown to those guilty of adultery. In the event of the slightest doubt the punishment cannot be executed. “Stop inflicting the prescribed penalties when you have doubts”, says the Prophet (SAWS) (Bukhari - Quoted by Sayed Qutb). The Qur’an categorically states: *“If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four (reliable) witnesses from among you against them and if they testify confine them houses until death do claim them ... If two persons among you are guilty of lewdness, punish them both ...”* (an-Nisa; 4:15-16)

This is indeed a very strict condition for it is almost impossible to find four thoroughly reliable eye witnesses. The honour and chastity of women constitute the bedrock of family peace and tranquility. Hence Islam prescribes

equally harsh penalty, as observed earlier, to those who bring in false charges to tarnish the chastity of women. They are not only to be flogged but condemned for life to live in ignominy as they cannot be called to act as a witness in any case. (an-Noor; 24:4-5)

Such a severe condition will prevent mischief mongers from bringing in false allegations to slander and defame the character of chaste women.

In the event of women being raped, they are helpless and cannot protect their chastity or when they are forced by their masters to prostitution then they are not deemed guilty in the sight of Allah (SWT): *".....But force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the goods of this life. But if anyone compels them, yet, after such compulsion, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful (to them)."* (an-Noor; 24:33)

Besides the collapse of the domestic peace, and aberrations in social structure the permissive character of the liberal and secular West has also given rise to the menacing disease of Aids which has wrecked the life, particularly of poor Africans, South of the Sahara and the poorer sections of the population in other developing countries such as India, Thailand, the Philippines etc. Among the developed countries the Gays (male homosexuals) have been most affected. In a recent article in the New York Times it has been reported that more than 50 percent of the Gays in the city of New York are infected with this dreaded disease. Are they also destined

to meet the disastrous fate of the people of Sodom in the historic past as described in the Qur'an and the Bible?

**FIRM ADHERENCE TO COMMITMENTS, TRUST
OBLIGATIONS AND HONESTY IN DEALINGS:**

Importance of mutual trust in social life is self-evident. Without mutual trust, all social and commercial functions will become impossible. Human beings are social in nature and are therefore actually dependent on each other. It is because of this interdependence, that mankind has made progress. Without mutual trust, we cannot imagine peace and harmony in society, Islam aims at creating a progressive and peaceful society stressing on mutual trust and interdependence. Muslims are exhorted to honour their word and never go back on their commitments. Trust is a very delicate and sensitive issue, once betrayed, it can never be restored. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) laid great stress on this attribute: *"Restore the trust to those who trust you, and deal not falsely with him who deals not falsely with you."* (Abu Hurairah quoted by Abu Dawood and Tirmizi).

Commitments like contracts, once made, are to be treated as sacrosanct. They should not be broken even though they have been made with one's enemy. A Muslim should honour his word and keep his promises irrespective of the circumstances in which they were made. There are numerous verses in the Qur'an to guide the conduct of Muslims in this respect. In *Surah As-Saff*, Allah (SWT) chides believers for making promises which

they cannot keep and warns *“Grievously odious is it in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not.”* (as-Saff; 61:3)

A Muslim is encouraged to *“Fulfill the covenant of Allah where you have entered into it, and break not your oaths after you have confirmed them, indeed you have made Allah your surety, for Allah knows all that you do,”* (an-Nahl; 16:91)

Again in *Surah Al Ma'edah* a Muslim is commanded to fulfill all commitments: *“O you who believe fulfill all obligations.....”* (al-Ma'edah; 5:1)

In *Surah Al-Baqarah* Allah (SWT) proclaims that among the pious are those *“.....who fulfill their covenant when they make it.....”* (al-Baqarah 2:177)

Allah (SWT) does not approve of any breach of contract even if it has been entered into with pagans if they have adhered to the agreement: *“But treaties (are) not dissolved with those pagans with whom you have entered into alliance and who have not subsequently failed you in anything nor aided anyone against you. So fulfill your engagements to the end of their term for Allah loveth the righteous.”* (at-Tawbah; 9:4)

A Muslim should not initiate the cancellation of contracts. That will be an unrighteous act and will invite the displeasure of Allah (SWT). There is an authentic Tradition of the Prophet (SAWS) that Abu Jindal, a Muslim in the custody of the Pagan Makkans escaped from their clutches and came to the Prophet (SAWS) seeking protection

after he had signed the Treaty of Hudaibiyah with the Pagan leaders of Makkah. The Prophet (SAWS) refused protection because one of the treaty clauses stipulated that Muslims escaping from the custody of pagans will be returned to them. He could not go back on his commitment (Bukhari).

The Qur'an exhorts the Muslims to be honest and trustworthy because the management of the affairs of the state cannot be handed over to dishonest and untrustworthy people. It condemns without any reservation the betrayal of the trust. It speaks of the trust not only in terms of cash transactions, movable and immovable property but also of confidential talks and shared secrets. If a person asks not to divulge confidential talks to any third party then one is honour bound to respect his/her wishes. It will be a betrayal of trust if we fail to do so. Those who are honest and trustworthy command respect and are treated as honoured members of the society. The most notable example is that of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) himself who by virtue of his impeccable and exemplary honesty and integrity was known among his people as "*Al-Amin*" or "the Trustworthy" long before being commissioned as a Prophet.

Allah (SWT) thus commands "*.....to render back your dues to those to whom they are due.....*" (an-Nisa; 4:58)

A person loses his respect in the society/community if he betrays his trust irrespective of

the wealth, power and position he enjoys. He is thus being repeatedly warned not to betray trust and misappropriate if he holds someone else's property in trust "*O you that believe! Betray not the trust of Allah and His Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you.*" (al-Anfaal; 8:27)

The Qur'an condemns with equal vehemence the breach of trust particularly in regard to an orphan's property. It is categorically ordained that "*....come not nigh to the orphan's property, except to improve it until he attains the age of full strength....*" (al-An'am; 6:152)

This command is repeated also in *Surah Al-Isra* (17:34). The Qur'an warns of severe punishment to all those who "*....unjustly eat up the property of the orphans, eat up a fire into their own bodies, they will soon be enduring a blazing fire.*" (an-Nisa; 4:10)

This "blazing fire" will also be the destiny of those who betray trust, act dishonestly and unjustly.

Trade is a vital and dynamic activity of the interdependent human society. It ensures progress and development of society through exchange of commodities and transfer of technology. The growth of human civilization will be markedly retarded if there is no free flow of trade and technology. An activity of such key importance must be founded on fairness and equity. Deceit and dishonesty will be harmful for prosperity of the society as a whole, though individuals indulging in unfair practices may benefit temporarily. Islam recognizes

the importance of economic activities and exhorts Muslims not only to engage in trade and commerce in order to earn livelihood, but also observe strict honesty and trust. Honesty in business transactions is vitally important for the welfare of the society. A trader is being thus commanded to *“Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight; that is better and fairer in the final determination.”* (al-Isra; 17:35)

This has been emphatically reiterated in the following verse: *“.....give just measure and weight do not withhold from the people the things that are their due and do no mischief on earth after it has been set in order; that will be best for you if you have faith.”* (al-A'raaf; 7:85)

The Holy Prophet (SAWS) also exhorted Muslims to be fair and trustworthy in trade, otherwise, they will stand to lose the blessings of Allah (SWT):

“The seller and the buyer have each the choice (either of selling or buying) so long as they are not separated. But if the seller and buyer speak the truth, and point out (the real worth of their merchandise), they shall be blessed in their merchandise; and if they speak a lie, and hide (the defect or the merit), they may perhaps make a profit, but the blessing (of Allah) is blotted out of the merchandise.” (Bukhari & Muslim).

“A trustworthy and truthful merchant shall be with the Prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs and the righteous.” (Tirmizi).

USURY, DRINKING AND GAMBLING CONDEMNED AND FORBIDDEN:

The practice of such evil acts as usury, gambling etc., is condemned outright and banned for Muslims in the Qur'an. There is a clear directive against usury. *"O you who believe devour not usury, doubled and multiplied but fear God that you may (really) prosper."*(Al-e Imran; 3:130)

Because of the obnoxious nature of usury, the believers have been firmly cautioned: *"O you, who believe, fear Allah and give up what remains of your demand for usury if you are indeed believers. If you do it not, take notice of war from Allah and His apostle but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly."* (al-Baqarah; 2:278-279)

The believers have been advised to write-off the loan completely for that will be a noble act or else grant sufficient time to the debtor if he is in difficulty: *"If the debtor is in difficulty grant him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if you remit by way of charity that is best for you if you only know."* (al-Baqarah; 2:280)

We know the debilitating effect of interest on the economy of the poor countries. All the developing countries of the world are heavily indebted to the developed countries and international banking agencies such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank etc. The economies of the developing countries have not been able to take-off mainly

because of the heavy burden of interest, since most of the income (financial) generated through development goes towards debt servicing including payment of interest. As against this the West European countries, who were completely devastated during the Second World War, received Marshall Aid from USA, immediately after the War, without interest, for reconstruction and development. They registered phenomenal progress within five years and repaid within a decade the entire capital received from the USA. The disastrous effect of loan with interest has been clearly visualised in Islam, hence the declaration of war by Allah (SWT) and his Apostle against this disgusting practice.

Similarly Islam has come down heavily against drinking and gambling. Those who indulge in gambling and drinking inevitably, tend to exceed the limits with disastrous consequences for their health and for their family. When a person is in a drunken state he is not conscious of his acts and deeds. Hence in the early phase of Islam, Muslims in a drunken state were asked *".....not to approach prayers with a mind befogged, until you can understand all that you say....."* (an-Nisa; 4:43)

Man is subsequently cautioned that gambling and drinking *".....is great sin and some profit for men. But the sin is greater than profit....."* (al-Baqarah; 2:219)

And finally, they have been strictly instructed to refrain from drinking and gambling for these are devilish acts: *"O you who believe: Intoxicants and gambling*

(dedication of) stones and (divination by) arrows are an abomination-of Satan's handiwork, eschew such (abomination) that you may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer: Will you not then abstain?" (al-Ma'edah; 5:90-91)

The Prophet (SAWS) has left no doubt in this regard by stressing that: *"All intoxicant liquors are forbidden."* (Bukhari & Muslim)

The most poignant example of the catastrophic effect of gambling is provided in the Indian epic Mahabharata where Prince Yudhishtra in the act of gambling, gambled and lost even his wife Draupadi, who was also humiliated in the royal court of Hastinapur. Most recently a football (soccer) enthusiast in Albania while betting on the World Cup football (soccer) games in USA (1994) gambled away his wife. Thus usury, drinking and gambling lead to immoral acts i.e., treachery, deceit and indecent behaviour in public and at home. As a result persons addicted to such disgusting practices ruin the peace of home and pollute the society. These are thus treated as abhorring acts in Islam and firmly forbidden for Muslims.

HYPOCRITES AND HYPOCRISY HAVE NO PLACE IN ISLAMIC SYSTEM:

Hypocrisy has no place in the Islamic System. The hypocrites are most deceptive and treacherous. While

apparently they wear a friendly look and would always swear by their loyalty to Islam or to any other system of government, which they would like to undermine. They are like "rotten timber" and can never be relied upon. Hypocrites have no conscience; they go back on their commitments and always tell lies. They are perpetually intriguing against authority in collaboration with enemies. Abdullah Yusuf Ali described the hypocrites as follows: "They present a fine exterior; they dress well, they can normally afford fine equipages; they try to win the confidence of everyone, as they have no scruples in telling lies.... Their words are fair spoken, and as the truth does not check their tongues, their flattery and deception know no bounds.... As they have no sincerity, nothing that they do is worth anything" (Note 5467; p: 147). The hypocrites are habitual liars, deception and treachery are their trademarks, and they are most unscrupulous and totally devoid of conscience.

Thus the existence of hypocrites in any society is a menace and extremely dangerous to its very existence. The Qur'an therefore asks the Prophet (SAWS) or the authority concerned to deal with them sternly in order to ensure the safety, security and survival of the state. This is precisely the reason that the Qur'an asks the believers to fight in the cause of Allah (SWT) against the polytheist and the hypocrites: *"O Prophet strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be firm against them, their abode is hell - an evil refuge indeed."* (at-Tawbah; 9:73)

The hypocrites tried every trick and strategy to unsettle the Islamic State right from its inception. They withdrew their people from the Battle of Uhud thereby considerably weakening the defense and the striking power of Muslims. They tried to assassinate the Prophet (SAWS) while he was returning to Medina after the Tabuk expedition. They built a mosque in the vicinity of the Quba mosque, at the instigation of Abu Amir Rahib Khazraji, to use it for intrigue and destruction of the Islamic state. Allah (SWT) frustrated their plans. The Prophet (SAWS) was informed through a revelation about their ulterior motives. This mosque (*Masjid Zirar*) built on the foundation of treachery and deceit was completely demolished (at-Tawbah; 9:108). Thus, the hypocrites are the very embodiment of evil According to the Qur'an: *"The hypocrite men and women (have an understanding) with each other. They enjoin evil and forbid what are just, and are close with their hands. They have forgotten Allah; so He has forgotten them. Verily the hypocrites are rebellious and perverse."* (at-Tawbah; 9:67)

Because of the treacherous character of the hypocrites the Prophet (SAWS) was asked by Allah (SWT) not to seek pardon for their sins: *"It is equal for them whether you pray for their forgiveness or not. Allah will not forgive them..."* (al-Munafiqoon; 63:6)

And finally the Prophet (SAWS) was commanded: *"Nor do you pray for anyone of them that dies nor stand at his grave, for they rejected Allah and His Messenger, and died in state of perverse rebellion."* (at-Tawbah; 9:84)

This command was revealed to the Prophet (SAWS) after he had offered *Salaat* at the funeral of Abdullah bin Ubaie who was a prime hypocrite and enemy of Islam. The Prophet (SAWS) described the hypocrites as double faced and most detestable people: *“You will find the double faced, who come to you with one face and to others with another face, to be the worst of men, in the sight of Allah (SAWS), on the Day of Resurrection”* (Bukhari and Muslim). This has been forcefully confirmed in the Qur’an: *“The hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of fire (of Hell); no helper will you find for them.”* (an-Nisa; 4:145)

**DISAPPROVAL OF MOCKING AT OTHERS,
BACKBITING, ARROGANCE, PRIDE, ETC.**

Sayed Qutb points out that “Islam is compatible with human nature which denounces the insolent, repels the ostentatious and loathes the pretentious and vainglorious.” (P: 48). Islam has therefore set high moral standards for the believers and is not prepared to compromise on them. It is not prepared to accept even the mildest dilution of these norms because they are considered essential for social peace and health of the society. Thus Islam condemns strongly such sly and evil acts as back-biting, mocking at others, insolence, pride and arrogance. As regards mocking at others it is pointed out: *“O you who believe let not some men among you laugh at others, it may be not that the latter are better than the (former) nor let some women laugh at others. It may be*

that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other by (offensive) nicknames. Ill seeming is a name connoting wickedness (to be used of one) after he has believed. And those who do not desist are indeed doing wrong.” (al-Hujuraat; 49:11)

The backbiters who talk ill of others behind their backs and attempt to smear their character and scandalise them are the meanest of people. Such people are cowards and lack courage of character. This character assassination by the backbiters and scandal mongers has been strongly condemned in the Qur’an *“Woe to every (kind of) scandal monger and backbiter.”* (al-Humazah; 104:1)

In the same vein a Muslim is asked to avoid a life of suspicion, of spying on each other and of speaking ill of others behind their backs. The persistence in this malicious act is not only sinful but according to the Qur’an is like devouring the flesh of the dead body of one's own brother which is most abhorring. The Qur’an thus ordains that *“O you who believe avoid suspicion (as much as possible) for suspicion in some case is a sin and spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it...”* (al-Hujuraat; 49:12)

The Prophet (SAWS) cautioned Muslims against these: *“Beware of suspicion, for, verily, nothing is more false than suspicion, and be not inquisitive, nor overhear anything, nor dispute anything with another, nor envy one another, nor hate one another, nor leave one another in the lurch; and be you all servants of Allah and brothers*

to one another, like as Allah has commanded you." (Bukhari & Muslim) During the course of a meeting with his companions the Prophet (SAWS) asked: *"Do you know what backbiting is? It is the speaking of one of you what he hates in his brother. A man asked, 'But what if it be in my brother?' 'It be in him as you say,' the Prophet (SAWS) replied, 'You have backbitten him; and if it be not in him as you say, you have falsely accused him of it."* (Abu Dawood and Tirmizi)

Pride, arrogance and insolence are also disdainful acts. The Muslims are warned severely: *"Swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth for God loveth not arrogant boasters."* (Luqmaan; 31:18)

Humility is the hallmark of a Muslim. Any expression of pride and insolence can be self-destructive. Therefore, the Qur'an warns *"...nor walk on earth with insolence for thou cannot rent the earth asunder, nor can reach the mountains in height."* (al-Isra; 17:37)

In this regard the parable of *Qaroon* (Korah) who was a very rich person among the people of Moses is most instructive. He always took pride in the wealth accumulated by him and walked with insolent pride among his people, some of whom even envied him. He eventually sank into the earth under the weight of his own wealth and sin which was a punishment meted out to him by Allah (SWT) and then the people of Moses realised that *Qaroon* (Korah) was penalized for his guilt of pride and insolence. The death and destruction of dictators and

tyrants like Adolph Hitler of Germany and Mussolini of Italy during the Second World War (1939-45) are very poignant examples of the fate which awaits rulers or even individuals intoxicated with pride and arrogance because of their wealth and military power. The arrogant great powers in the world acting with brute military force against the weaker peoples and states to terrorise them into submission should learn a lesson otherwise they will face divine retribution and meet their nemesis in the not too distant future.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE IN ISLAM

The foundation of Islamic state must be firmly based on total and impartial justice. Thus the divine dispensation of justice does not discriminate between the rich and the poor, the king and the beggar, the mighty and the meek and the ruler and the ruled. The basic principle is equity with justice. The guilty must be punished irrespective of the position they occupy. We have it on the authority of the Qur'an that even the father of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (AS), son of Prophet Nuh (Noah)(AS), and the wife of Prophet Lut (Lot) (AS) were not spared. Despite their family relationship with the prophets of their age they were severely punished for their blasphemous acts against Allah (SWT). In this divine dispensation of justice even the Prophets have not been spared. Prophet Yunus (Jonah) (AS) was severely reprimanded for his action in anger and haste. Even Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was cautioned when he frowned at a poor blind man (Abdullah Ibni Umm-e Maktoom [RA]) who had come to seek enlightenment while the Prophet was busy talking to rich Pagan Quraysh leaders. This is what the Qur'an has to state on this matter: *"(The Prophet) frowned and turned away because there came to him the blind man (interrupting). But what could tell you but that perchance he might grow (in spiritual understanding)? Or that he might receive admonition and the teaching might profit him? As to one who regards himself self-sufficient to him you attend; though it is no blame to you if he will not grow (in spiritual understanding). But as to him who came to you striving earnestly and with fear (in his heart),*

of him you are unmindful. By no means (should it be so) for it is indeed a message of instruction." (Abas; 80:1-12)

The Qur'an outlines three cardinal principles of justice. Firstly it should be total and absolute. Secondly it should be impartial and fair. The parties in dispute should be given fair and equal chance to present their respective cases. And finally it should be based on the principles of equality without any discrimination on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion, colour or status. Allah (SWT) thus commands in the Qur'an: "... *And when you judge between man and man that you judge with justice...*" (an-Nisa; 4:58)

This was also precisely the instruction given to Prophet *Dawood* (David) (AS) who was exceptionally gifted by Allah (SWT) with wisdom and a profound sense of Justice: "*O David! We did indeed make you a vice-gerent on earth - so judge you between men in truth (and justice); nor you follow the lusts (of your heart) for they will mislead you from the path of Allah...*" (Sad; 38:26)

The 'lusts of your heart' obviously mean personal prejudices, likes or dislikes which should not find any place, if justice has to be truly just and impartial. Further no judgment should be hastily delivered until all the parties in the dispute are fairly and patiently heard. Dawood (AS) was presumably tested in this respect when in the case of 99 ewes and one ewe of two brothers; he hastily gave judgment in favour of the brother with one ewe without listening to the case of the other brother. On the sudden disappearance of the two brothers after he

delivered the judgment Dawood (AS) realised his lapse and prostrated before Allah (SWT) seeking pardon (Sad; 38:23-24) (Abdullah Yusuf Ali note 4176). The Prophet (SAWS) also stressed this point in one of his traditions: *“When two persons bring a dispute to you for decision, do not deliver a judgment unless you have given an equal hearing to both of them”* (Bukhari - Quoted by Qutubuddin Aziz. The Prophet and the Islamic State p: 62).

Objectivity in dispensing justice particularly when relations are involved is most difficult to accomplish. Its accomplishment should be the hall mark of a Muslim for he is not expected to give up the path of justice even if it may adversely affect him personally or his family members. In such delicate situations man is advised against following his lust. This warning is conveyed forcefully: *“O you who believe stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah even as against yourselves or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) the rich or the poor for Allah can well protect both. Follow not the lusts of your hearts lest you swerve and if you distort justice or decline to do justice verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do.”* (an-Nisa; 4:135)

A Muslim is cautioned not to allow his personal prejudice to obstruct the path of justice for that will displease Allah (SWT) immensely. This is pointedly referred to in *Surah al-Ma’edah* wherein a believer has been sternly asked to *“...stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to do wrong and depart from justice. Be just that is next to piety, and fear Allah. For*

Allah is well acquainted with all that you do.” (al-Ma’edah; 5:8)

One of the most revolutionary reforms which Islam brought about in the judicial system of tribal Arabia was to introduce the system of total equality in adjudicating on retaliatory killings. The Qur’an categorically lays down that the person who has committed murder must be punished and not the innocent lowly people as was the pre-Islamic tribal practice in Arabia. The second principle was that a noble freeman cannot escape punishment by substituting slaves or a couple of poor of his tribe for punishment. The system of punishment by substitution was abolished: *“O you who believe the laws of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free man for free man, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand and compensate with handsome gratitude...”* (al-Baqarah; 2:178)

In an authentic Tradition the Prophet (SAWS) states *“He who kills his slave we shall kill him and he who cuts the nose of his slave, we shall cut his nose.”* (Bukhari and Muslim).

The principle of equality in punishing the murderer put an end to the retaliatory blood killings. The rich and the influential free men were made to realize that they were not above the law. They would be punished if found guilty. Prior to the promulgation of this Qur’anic Law they regarded themselves above law and could

escape with impunity. This law of equality in retaliatory killings had a most salutary effect and almost completely eliminated killings from the Islamic state of Madinah. The Qur'an had hinted at its concealed benefits. *"In the Law of equality there is a (saving of) life to you, O you men of understanding that you may restrain yourselves."* (al-Baqarah; 2:179)

The Qur'an has also kept the doors of kindness and mercy open by giving the right to pardon the killer to the nearest of the blood relations of the victim such as the father, brother and the son in lieu of a decent ransom amount. The interesting point is that the court or the jury has not been given this right. However a merciful attitude has been strongly commended in the Qur'an.

The most magnificent aspect of the Qur'anic or the divine law of Justice is that it banishes the difference between the master and the slave and the ruler and the ruled. They have the same rights and are subject to the same laws. This principle was strictly implemented in the Islamic state. This is abundantly illustrated in two notable cases, one related to Ali (RA) the fourth *Khalifah* (Caliph) versus a Christian and the second concerned El-Hadi the Abbaside Ruler versus a commoner. Ali (RA) had somehow lost his armour and found it in the possession of a Christian. Ali (RA) claimed it from the Christian which he refused to return. The *Khalifah* (Caliph) lodged a complaint in the court of a famous judge Shurayh. In the court when the judge asked the Christian about the armour he boldly claimed that it belonged to him! Ali (RA) was asked to

furnish proof about his ownership of the armour. He said he had none and the case was decided in favour of the Christian. The Christian admired the Islamic justice and was so impressed that he converted to Islam and addressed the Caliph as follows *"I declare that such are the rulings of the Prophets. The Caliph sues me in the court of his Judge who gives his verdict against him! I hereby declare that there is no God but Allah (SWT) and that Muhammad is His servant and Apostle. The shield is yours Caliph. I followed the army after the battle of Siffin and the coat of armour dropped from your camel"* Ali (RA) replied *"Now that you have adopted Islam, the shield is yours"* (Sayed Qutb).

In the other case a commoner who owned an orchard complained in the court of Judge Abu Yusuf that the *Khalifah* (Caliph) El-Hadi was exploiting his orchard. The Caliph produced some witnesses against the complaint of the commoner. The Judge asked El-Hadi to swear by Allah (SWT) that his witnesses were telling the truth. The king declined and the verdict went in favour of the commoner and the king accepted it.

It has been stated earlier that no case should be decided unless the parties involved are properly heard. We therefore conclude this discussion on justice in Islam by a quote regarding its implementation in the Islamic state by the Prophet (SAWS) himself: *"A Muslim widow, whose husband, Sa'ad Ibn Al-Rabi, was martyred in the battle of Uhud went with her two orphaned daughters to the Prophet in the mosque and complained that Sa'ad's brother had taken over all the estate, giving no property*

to Sa'ad's daughters who now needed help to get married. The Prophet summoned the daughters' uncle and, after having heard his version also, ordered him to give two third of his estate to his nieces, one eighth to the widow and keep the rest to himself." (Qutubuddin Aziz: The Prophet and the Islamic State p: 64).

ISLAMIC STATE: A PIONEERING WELFARE STATE

Human beings are the Vice-Gerents of Allah (SWT) on earth and the custodian of earthly resources. Consequently compassion and clemency towards both humans and animals are the essential ingredients of Islamic teachings. Islam strongly advocates the unity of all living beings because they are all created out of water (al-Anbiya; 21:30). The Prophet (SAWS) very emphatically states: *“Have mercy on all those on earth so that you may get mercy from Heaven”* (Bukhari). The concept of welfare of all living beings, humans and animals are an integral part of Islamic belief. The Prophet (SAWS) was once asked: “How Islam can be practiced?” He replied: “By providing food (to the hungry) and greeting those whom you know and those you do not know” (Bukhari and Muslim). The Qur’an also enjoins upon Muslims to return evil with good: *“Nor can good and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better; then he between whom and you was enmity will become your friend and intimate.”* (Fussilaat; 41:34)

The Qur’an is very categorical and candid and so are the sayings of the Prophet (SAWS) that individuals do not exist just for themselves or for their family only. They have to keep in view the welfare of other less fortunate members of the society as well. The Qur’an commands: *“...But it is righteousness to believe in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book and the Messengers; to spend your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the way farer, for those who ask and for the ransom of slaves...”* (al-Baqarah; 2:177)

This verse very concisely and precisely focuses on human welfare in its totality and highlights its universality. The Prophet (SAWS) also stresses *"He who has food for two let him invite a third; and he who has food for four let him invite a fifth or sixth"* (Bukhari and Muslim). It is thus very clear that human beings should take care of others who are destitute, lack shelter, cannot feed and clothe themselves. These concepts of welfare were deeply internalized right from the inception in the Islamic state established by the Prophet (SAWS) and subsequently strengthened by the four rightly guided Caliphs who succeeded him to govern the Islamic state after his death. Thus the Islamic state, while promoting the Qur'anic values, became also the custodian of human welfare and developed institutions to perpetuate it. It is this concept of human welfare which provides the foundation for social peace in the Islamic state or in any state. It adequately takes care of the problems generated by the unequal distribution of resources and income.

Inequality in human intelligence and skill and in the distribution of natural resources is a law of nature. This phenomenon of natural inequality is dearly stated in the Qur'an: *"...He enlarges and restricts the sustenance to whomsoever he wills..."* (ash-Shura; 42:12)

This fact is restated in *Surah Bani Israel*: *"See how We have bestowed more on some than others; but verily the Hereafter is more in rank and gradation and more in excellence."* (al-Isra; 17:21)

In the second verse those who lack worldly possessions are being asked not to be upset with these differences in wealth for the real treasure of wealth and happiness lies in the Hereafter where the pious and not the men with worldly riches will benefit most. Nonetheless this inequality in intellectual and material resources causes wide income disparities between individuals as well as communities. Thus we have rich and poor people and communities. The poor suffer a lot because of the poverty of their resources and are subjected to hunger and starvation. They cannot eat two square meals a day; have hardly any clothes to wear and houses to live in.

The modern capitalist socio-economic system has failed to mitigate the suffering of the have-nots. In fact it has accentuated their problems and made the rich, richer and the poor, poorer. There is no inbuilt mechanism within this system even to minimize the vast income gap between the haves and the have-nots. The communist government in the erstwhile Soviet Union made a valiant effort to eliminate socio-economic disparities but the system collapsed since it defied the law of nature.

Islam, while realizing the reality of the problem, developed an inbuilt mechanism, both materially and spiritually, in order to mitigate and minimize the sufferings of the poor and the needy. Firstly, it imposed an obligatory *Zakaat* tax on all Muslims whose savings exceeded the exemption limit for payment of *Zakaat*.

Secondly, one fifth of the war booty received was reserved exclusively to be spent on the poor and the needy. Finally, the affluent Muslims were encouraged to spend on the upkeep and maintenance of the poor in order to please Allah (SWT) and be handsomely rewarded in the Hereafter. The Qur'an declares that the wealth accumulated by the rich must be shared with the poor: *"And in their wealth there is due share of the poor and deprived."* (al-Zaariyaat; 51:19)

Payment of *Zakaat* is obligatory on all Muslims whose savings exceeds the stipulated exemption limits. It is collected specifically to be spent on the upkeep, maintenance and education of the poor and the needy. It has been regarded almost as important as the five times daily obligatory *Salaat*. There are numerous Qur'anic verses where *Salaat* and *Zakaat* have been clubbed together, thus elevating the status of charity to the level of worship. As for instance in the following verse: *"Those who believe in Allah and do righteous deeds and establish regular prayers and give Zakaat will have their reward with their Lord....."* (al-Baqarah; 2:277)

Those who do not fulfill this obligation of paying *Zakaat* will have, their hoarded wealth heated in hell fire and their foreheads, flanks and backs branded with it (at-Tawbah; 9:3435). The Prophet also sternly warned all those who defaulted on *Zakaat*: *"He to whom Allah (SWT) has given wealth, and who pays not its Zakaat, his wealth shall be made on the Day of Resurrection, into a bald headed serpent having two fangs: it shall be put upon him"*

as a collar, then it will seize his two projecting parts of the lower jaw and say: "I am thy wealth, I am thy treasure." (Bukhari and Muslim)

In principle, according to the Qur'an, the entire property and wealth acquired as spoils of war belonged to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAWS) (al-Anfaal; 8:1). However the Prophet (SAWS) was given discretion to distribute it as he thought appropriate subject to the condition that *"...out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war) a fifth share is assigned to Allah - and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer..."* (al-Anfaal; 8:41)

Within the family Islam enjoins upon its affluent members to look after the poor and the needy and to see that they are not starved, have a roof over their heads and are decently clothed. As regards others who do not have any relation to give them food and shelter, the state has to look after them. *"In case of poverty, destitution, vagrancy and indebtedness when an individuals' earning power is inadequate to meet expenses the state must compensate for the deficit. All indigent people are entitled to government allowances from the public treasury."* (Syed Qutb, p: 61)

Among the righteous deeds, charity and helping the poor and needy occupy a pre-eminent position. These have been enshrined in the Qur'an as integral part of the Islamic faith and ethos.

In *Surah at-Tawbah* the believers, men and women, have been called as *".....protectors of one another, they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil. They observe regular prayers and practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Prophet....."* (at-Tawbah; 9:71)

Helping the needy and the poor should be done very quietly. It should not be displayed and proclaimed loudly for others to see. In fact it would be better if none, except Allah (SWT) is a witness to one's charitable deed. It must not be done ostentatiously for that may undo its solemn effect. Hence, Allah (SWT) warns the believers: *".....cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury like those who spend their substance to be seen of men but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day....."* (al-Baqarah; 2:264)

At the spiritual level the affluent Muslims have been repeatedly told that helping the poor and the needy are a righteous deed most appreciated by Allah (SWT). It is most emphatically stated in the *Surah al-Baqarah* verse 177 cited earlier. Further they have been encouraged to do so because the wealth spent on welfare measures of the poor multiplies fast and brings in its wake eternal reward of heavenly bliss as against the hoarded wealth which makes life miserable in this world and in the Hereafter. Charitable acts which are performed to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT) have remarkable multiplying effect: *"The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it grows seven ears, and each ear has hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whomsoever he pleases....."* (al-Baqarah; 2:261)

Islam also provides for welfare measure for another section of the community i.e., the old and the aged and particularly the parents. This responsibility has been squarely put on their children. They have been asked to take care of their parents the same way they looked after them in their childhood. This concern for the parents expressed in the Qur'an also symbolizes the concern for the old and aged in general. Basically the old and aged in the society should be nurtured and nursed by their children if they are alive or their nearest relations and they should in no way be left to fend for themselves.

Islam attaches great importance to the institution of parenthood which has been treated with great deference in the Qur'an. Muslims have been enjoined to treat their parents with utmost respect, love and affection. The Qur'an asks the believers, nay the entire mankind, "*... To be good to your parents ...*" (al-An'am; 6:151)

In addition to this general reference for kindness towards parents, the Qur'an specifically commands man to be kind to his mother for "*...In pain did his mother bear him and in pain did she give him birth...*" (al-Ahqaf; 46:15)

This is repeated in another *Surah*: "*And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him and in year two was his weaning. Show gratitude to Me and your parents. To Me is (your final) Goal.*" (Luqmaan; 31:14)

It is the greatest honour that Allah (SWT) can bestow on parents when all men and women are being commanded to be grateful to their parents as they are grateful to Allah (SWT). Parents are to be shown reverence but they are not to be worshipped. Allah (SWT) alone is worthy of being worshipped. Respect, kindness generosity and humility towards parents are forcefully reiterated in the Qur'an:

".....you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in their life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them but address them in terms of honour. And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility and say: 'My Lord! bestow on them your Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood'." (al-Isra; 17:23-24)

"We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents..." (al-Ahqaaf; 46:15)

".....treat with kindness your parents and kindred and orphans and those in need...." (al-Baqarah; 2:83)

Elucidating further, the Holy Prophet (SAWS) has this to say: *"The grievous sins are; the joining (of other with Allah), disobedience to parents, killing of living beings, and swearing to a lie."* (Bukhari & Muslim)

The importance that the Prophet (SAWS) attached to the service of the parents is borne out by the following tradition. *"A man asked permission of the Prophet (SAWS) (to take part) in a Jihaad. The Prophet (SAWS) asked, 'Are*

your parents alive?' He said, 'Yes.' The Prophet (SAWS) said, 'Then go and do Jihaad (strive hard) for them.'" (Bukhari & Muslim)

On rights of other relatives, the Holy Qur'an states: *"And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want..... And even if you have to turn away from them in pursuit of the Mercy from your Lord which you do expect, yet speak to them a word of easy kindness."* (al-Isra; 17:26, 28)

In the Islamic State established by the Prophet (SAWS) the orphans, the invalid, the old and the aged who had none to look after them were put under the care of the state. Even the old and disabled Jews and Christians who were the citizens of the state were granted adequate pensions during the *Khilaphat* of Muar (RA). (Sayed Qutb, p: 60)

It is thus abundantly clear that Islam lays great stress on the care, and concern of the poor, the needy, the orphans, the handicapped and the old and aged. The Qur'an prescribes definitive measures to be adopted in this regard and gives high priority to its implementation as a religious obligation. Thus the welfare concept in an Islamic state is inherent to its ideology.

THE CONCEPT OF *JIIHAAD* IN ISLAM

It is an article of faith with the Muslims that the Islamic ideology as enshrined in the Qur'an, is divinely ordained and hence is the most comprehensive and complete value system for the benefit and salvation of mankind. The Qur'an thus enjoins upon Muslims to spread this divinely ordained values of life so that human societies are guided in the right direction for the maintenance of freedom, equality, dignity and universal brotherhood. It is by the implementation of these Qur'anic values and ethical norms that a fair, just and harmonious development of societies, free from oppression, tyranny and exploitation can be ensured. This was best exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) who struggled ceaselessly and relentlessly for thirteen years against the barbarism of pagan Makkans never resorting to violence even under grave provocations. After the migration, when Islam was established in Madinah, the Prophet (SAWS) founded an ideal Islamic state, which epitomized the cardinal principles of governance of the affairs of the state inspired by the Qur'an. The minorities were more than fairly treated and there was total peace and harmony among the different sections of the communities living in Madinah and the neighboring territories under this Islamic state.

Both, the Qur'an and the Prophet (SAWS), encourage the Muslims to endeavor consistently and persistently to establish a just and fair society based on the divine principles as explained in the Qur'an. This effort has to be peaceful unless forced to take a combative form (*Qitaal*,

meaning 'fight') in defence of the state. *Jihaad* as defined in the Qur'an is a noble struggle, waged intellectually, spiritually and, if needed, militarily; purely in the defence of Islam and for just cause without any malice, feeling of vengeance and vendetta and not motivated by any selfish and aggressive designs. Word *Jihaad* is always suffixed by the phrase '*fi sabeelillah*, which literally means 'in God's Path', a crucial pre-condition for its validity. Though the phrase is not commonly used in expression, it is always meant to be in that sense, i.e., '*fi sabeelillah*'. It lays down the scope and direction of the hared struggle. Qur'an also exhorts Muslims to use all legitimate means, i.e., self (*Nafs*) and material resources (*Amwaaal*).

'God's Path' (*fi sabeelillah*) cannot be other than upholding and applying day to day conduct of life of those noble values that are enshrined in Qur'an and were practised by the Prophet (SAWS). This is not an easy task with sole intention of attaining salvation, i.e. eternal life of bliss after passing out of this physical life, unless once is convinced at heart and constant in effort with tenacity and perseverance of the highest order.

Of the many forms of *Jihaad*, the intellectual and spiritual components are repeatedly stressed in the Qur'an and by the Prophet (SAWS). The Muslims, since the beginning of the 20th century, have been carrying on their struggle or *Jihaad* by the power of the pen and tong, believing in the maxim that "pen is mightier than the sword". Shah Waliullah, Syed Qutb, Dr. Iqbaal, Maulana Azaad, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi were the great exponents

of Islam and directed their efforts to promote and propagate Islamic values peacefully and rationally through the powerful medium of the pen speech quite forcefully. They also accomplished a fair degree of success in their mission to project the correct image of Islam keeping Muslim *Ummah* on the path of moderation in the face of new challenges due to political developments after the 1st world war. It may however be pointed that any intellectual effort that harms the feeling of people, spreads malice, spits venom, or incites people to communal hatred and violence; contravenes the basic principles of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah* and cannot be considered as such. They are counterproductive and not only damage irreparably the noble concept of *Jihaad* but also the image of Islam. Therefore, any movement launched in the name of *Jihaad* is un-Islamic deserving unequivocal condemnation.

The importance of the spiritual component of *Jihaad* is evident from the fact that both the Qur'an and the Prophet (SAWS) encouraged the Muslims to endeavour ceaselessly to control selfish desires, the main hurdle on the path of piety, and counter them with compassion, justice, and strength of character. This is the prime object of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah*. Such a selfless effort constitutes the spiritual component and is deemed to be the core of the concept of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah*. It should not at any cost be polluted by a mix of selfishness, aggressive designs and unfair means. This is just not acceptable to Islam. This *Jihaad* against self (*Nafs*) or "the fight which we wage against ourselves" according to Prophetic traditions, is the most meritorious forms of *Jihaad* in Islam (Marcel a Boisard

[1988] A *Jihaad: A Commitment to Universal Peace*, American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, USA, p: 24).

The internalization of the spiritual values of *Jihaad* is essential in any movement which is launched in the cause of Allah (SWT). Its military manifestation is rather subsidiary in nature and of secondary importance. The primacy of the spiritual aspect of *Jihaad* in Islam is evident from the fact that the Prophet (SAWS) refused permission to a young man to join a military expedition because he was going to leave behind his old parents at home. Instead he advised him to do "*Jihaad in the service of his old parents*" (Bukhari and Muslims).

If a person succeeds in overcoming selfish desires, refrains from lust of life, controls anger, desists from acting in vengeance and pardons mistakes of others, he is supposed to have attained the pinnacle of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah*. The Qur'an exhorts Muslims to attain this goal. "*Those who spend (freely) whether in prosperity or adversity, who restrain anger and pardon all men - for Allah loves those who do good.*" (Al-e-Imran; 3:134) The Muslims are also advised "...to be patient in pain (suffering) and adversity ..." (al-Baqarah; 2:177) Thus, a true Muslim is defined in the Qur'an as one who is notably marked for his pious deeds and keeps away from evil action: "*You are the best of the peoples evolved for mankind enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah.....*" (Al-e-Imran; 3:110)

The combatant form or military manifestation of *Jihaad* referred to as '*Qitaal*' in Qur'an making a clear

distinction between non-violent and violent struggle. It has to be perceived within the spiritual context of the concept of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah*. '*Qitaal*' has to be non-aggressive in character, motivated only to serve the noble cause and to defend aggression against Islam. The combatant form or military manifestation of *Jihaad* is referred to as '*Qitaal*' in Qur'an thus making a clear distinction between non-violent and violent struggle. It has to be perceived within the spiritual context of the concept of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah*. '*Qitaal*' has to be non-aggressive in character, motivated only to serve the noble cause and to defend aggression against Islam. It can be undertaken only to defend Islam, if attacked. "***Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged -- surely God is able to help them.***" (al-Hajj; 22:39)

Qitaal is more of an emergency that compels limited military action considered un-avoidable by the established and legitimate government alone and none else. All violent movements in the name of *Jihaad* by any group or individual outside the government are illegal and need to be nabbed in the bud by the government. Peaceful struggle may be launched to fight corruption and oppression within one's own society if and when the government is negligent. But never does Islam allow people to take law in their own hands and use violent means to achieve these ends and give it the name of a *Jihaad*.

Qitaal can never be aggressive in nature and expansionist in design. This is evident from the expedition

to Tabuk which the Prophet (SAWS) led to defend Islam (against the aggressive designs of the forces of Romans Byzantium). The Muslim forces were set in battle order. The Romans instead of attacking the Muslims withdrew their forces. Observing that the danger was the Prophet (SAWS) withdrew his forces and returned to Madinah. He did not go on the hot pursuit of the withdrawing Romans. Obviously, the Prophet (SAWS) had no aggressive and expansionist design. Once the danger was over he called off the expedition. This, as exemplified by the Prophet (SAWS), is the real object of Qitaal, the military manifestation of Jihaad.

That the Prophet (SAWS) did not have aggressive designs in his fight against the enemies is also distinctly borne out by the following two injunctions given by him to Ma'az bin Jabal and A1i (RA) who had both been dispatched to fight at the head of Muslim armies. Injunction to Ma'az (RA): "Do not fight them (the enemies) before you call them to be converted to Islam or to conclude a covenant. And if they decline, do not fight them until they take the initiative, and when they do so, wait until they slay one of your men. Then show them the body of the slain and say to them 'Is there no better way than this?' If God converts one single man through your example it will be better for you than to own the whole world." Injunction to A1i Ibn Abu Talib (RA): "If you enter their (enemy) territory, do not fight them before they attack you wait until they slay one of you, do not fight them before showing them the slain and ask them whether

or not they will affirm that there is only one God.” (Zahra, Abu [1987]: Concept of War in Islam, pp.: 40-41)

It is unfortunate, and ironical, that this dignified and noble concept of *Jihaad*, and its combative form, *Qitaal*, has been grossly misused and totally distorted by some non-governmental, fanatic and narrow minded Muslim religious leaders. They have not only committed grave sins but have also provided a stick to the opponents of Islam. They disturbed peace, spread anarchy, considered worse than murder in the language of Qur'an, killing many innocent Muslims and non-Muslims that included a large number of women, children and elderly. They will surely be accountable for all these acts of terror even though they consider their heinous and sinful activities as the only form of *Jihaad*. They designate every militant movement against all non-Muslims, and even Muslims not subscribing to their ideology as *Jihaad*. Many amongst Muslims feel that with these misguided and malignant elements within, Islam does not need external enemies. This is the kind of damage which Muslim *Ummah* is suffering. This needs to be appreciated and efforts launched to counter it by all means at one's disposal.

The Qur'anic injunctions firmly prohibit the killing of the innocents. But, in all the current militant movements, initiated by various Muslim factions, mainly the innocents are being killed. They resort to violence at the slightest pretext and demonstrate Islam as a blood thirsty intolerant religion with all its ugly connotations.

They never pause to think for a moment whether their violent actions of hurling bombs at innocent people and causing bloodshed in vengeance have the sanction of Qur'anic injunctions and traditions of the Prophet (SAWS). These violent dogmatic actions of the so called protagonists, protectors and torch bearers of Islam present Islam as the destroyer of human civilization, intolerant of all other religions and against social, educational and scientific progress of mankind. This tyrannical form of the so-called *Jihaad* spreads terror and reflects a diseased mind. It has provided the western media and the Orientalists with the opportunity to demonize *Jihaad*, Muslims and Islam. This grossly misdirected militancy in the name of *Jihaad* leads non-Muslims to visualize that it must have the sanction of the Qur'an and thus Robert Payne called it as "brutal encouragement to war repeated in the Qur'an" (*The History of Islam* [1987] - Dourest Press, New York, p: 84).

The obscurantist and fanatic factions among the Muslim religious leaders overlook the fact that the Qur'an forbids compulsive conversion to Islam "***Let there be no compulsion in religion...***" (al-Baqarah; 2:256) This is also borne out by the fact that in India, where Muslim Kings ruled for nearly 1000 years remained pre-dominantly non-Muslim. The non-Muslims could have been forcibly converted to Islam and the demographic picture might have been totally different than what it is today. Instead they enjoyed full religious freedom and security under Muslim rule in India. However, a significant number of non-Muslims did voluntarily converted to Islam, partly to

participate in the political and social privileges enjoyed by the Muslim rulers, but mostly through the persuasive efforts and noble deeds of the Muslim in general and Sufi Saints in particular. It was their strength of character and courage of conviction that yielded rich dividends for Islam in India. It is this nobility of thought and deed and firm resolve to achieve objectives peacefully is the distinguishing feature of *Jihaad* - a sincere effort to accomplish a noble mission. The principle of religious freedom to minorities was clearly spelled out by the Prophet (SAWS) in a Charter to the Christians of Najraan and the neighboring territories: "There shall be no interference with the practice of their faith or their observances; nor any change in their rights and privileges. No bishop will be removed from his bishopric, any monk from his monastery or any priest from his priesthood. And they shall continue to enjoy everything great and small as heretofore. No image or cross shall be destroyed; they shall not oppress nor be oppressed; they shall not practice the right of blood vengeance as in the days of ignorance; no tithes shall be levied on them nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for troops" (Qutubuddin Aziz: [1991]): *The Prophet and the Islamic State*; p: 120 - Laureate Packages, Press Chamber, 1.1 Chandigarh Road, Karachi, Pakistan). Even after the expansion of Islam outside the Arab-World, the Muslim rulers firmly adhered to the basic principles laid down in this charter.

Armed struggle for the just cause in the name of Allah (SWT) is subjected to very strict regulations and has to be conducted within the limits strictly ordained in the

Qur'an: *"Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress the limit; for Allah loves not transgressors."* (al-Baqarah; 2:190) Qur'an limits the bloodshed to the barest minimum when inevitable: *"And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."* (al-Baqarah; 2:192)

It obviously implies that though the Muslims should fight with vigour in order to restore peace and freedom but they can fight only with those who fight against them. While waging this struggle they should not commit excesses for otherwise the defenders of the faith will become oppressors. Consequently the objective of the defensive struggle to restore human values, eliminate oppression and establish peace and tranquility will be completely lost. The concept of an armed struggle (*Qitaal*) in the cause of Allah (SWT) is unambiguously expressed in *Surah an-Nisa*: *"And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated and oppressed? Men, women and children whose cry is: 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and appoint for us with your mercy one who will protect and raise for us one who will help.'"* (an-Nisa; 4:75)

Thus the principal object of the combatant form of *Jihaad* is to fight the oppressors and protect those being oppressed. Finally enact the Islamic law so that a just society is fully and firmly established. Similarly Allah (SWT) has granted restrictive permission to the Muslims to fight against the unbelievers because they are fighting against

you: “.....and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together. But know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves.” (at-Tawbah; 9:36)

Again while exhorting Muslims to fight the aggressive non-believers because the latter do not spare the believers, yet while so doing they ought not to transgress the limits prescribed by Allah (SWT) and his Prophet (SAWS).

It is important to note that all the battles and military expeditions initiated by the Prophet (SAWS) right from Badr to Tabuk were in response to provocations or for self-protective measures. These battles clearly illustrate the particular nature of Islamic war “It is just in its causes, defensive in its initiative, decent in its proceedings, pacific in its end and humanitarian in its treatment of the conquered enemy.” (Boisard: op. cit p: 36)

As regards the conduct of Muslim soldiers during the course of the ‘*Qitaal*’, Abu Zahra in his book *La Conception* quotes the following tradition from the Prophet (SAWS): “..... Do not kill their old people, the infants or women. Do not be excessive and take care of your spoils; act in the right way and do good” (p: 53 Quoted by Hameedullah in *Muslim Conduct* pp.: 304). The principles that governed the conduct of Muslim soldiers while fighting in the cause of Islam were elaborately spelled out by Abu Bakr (RA), the first *Khalifah* of Islam: “Remember that you are always under the gaze of God and at the threshold of your death, and that you will account for your deeds on

the Day of Judgment. When you are fighting for the glory of God, acquit yourselves as men, without leaving your backs; but let not the blood of women, children or the aged be a blemish on your victory. Do not destroy palm trees, do not burn houses or burn fields, never cut down fruit trees and do not kill cattle unless you are forced to eat them. When you grant a treaty or capitulation, take care to fulfill their conditions. As you advance, you will come across religious men who live in monasteries and who serve God in prayer; leave them in peace, do not kill them and do not destroy monasteries...." (Amir Ali: Spirit of Islam - pp.: 86-87; Quoted in Boisard: op. cit. p: 46). These instructions of the First *Khalifah* based on Qur'anic injunctions and the traditions of the Prophet (SAWS) truly and faithfully reflect the philosophy, the attitude and conduct of the soldiers of Islam in their battles against the enemies of Islam. Never even once they deviated from these instructions guided by piety and clemency. We would like the fanatic Muslim religious leaders to pause and reflect for a moment if their calls for *Jihaad* conform to the noble norms set by the Prophet (SAWS) and *Khulafa ar-Rashideen* (the four rightly guided *Khalifah*). The answer will definitely be in the negative. Their call for *Jihaad* is motivated by self-aggrandizement, revenge and vendetta and their victims are mostly innocent people. Can this really be called *Jihaad* which flouts the principles and objectives laid down in the Qur'an and ignores the precepts and practices of Prophet (SAWS). The killing of an innocent persons like Daniel Pearl in Pakistan (January - February 2002) and dastardly demolition of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York

(September 11, 2001), USA which caused the death of thousands of innocent persons were crimes against humanity. They bring disgrace and ignominy to Islam and by no stretch of imagination can be equated with *Jihaad* or *Qitaal* and will not have the sanction of Islam.

It may also be noted that the holy war cannot be continued if the enemies call for peace. The Qur'anic instructions are clear in this regard: *"But if your enemy inclines towards peace, you also do incline towards peace, and trust in Allah....."* (al-Anfaal; 8:61)

The Qur'anic instruction is unambiguous that in the event of clear and sincere offer of peace, hostilities should cease forthwith: *"...If Allah had pleased, He could have given them power over you and they would have fought you. Therefore if they withdraw from you and fight you not, and instead send you (guarantees of) peace, then Allah had opened no way for you (to war against them)."* (an-Nisa; 4:90)

It is ironic that the western scholars distort the basic concept of *Jihaad* in Islam by quoting Qur'anic verses out of context as for instance they point out that in the following verses the Muslims have been incited to brutally kill the non-believers wherever they find them: *"Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, from among the people of the Book until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission and feel themselves subdued."* (at-Tawbah; 9:29) In another verse in the same Chapter they

conclude that the Muslims are commanded to fight fiercely against the unbelievers and the hypocrites: ***“O Prophet! Strive (fight) hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be firm against them. Their abode is hell an evil refuge indeed.”*** (at-Tawbah: 9:73)

Citing these two verses the critics charge that Islam is intolerant of other religions and has been largely spread by military might and forcible conversions. This interpretation ignores the fact that even these two verses are subject to the restrictions laid down in ***“and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,”*** (at-Tawbah; 9:36) and ***“fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you.”*** (al-Baqarah; 2:190) and ***“But if they give over, surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.”*** (al-Baqarah; 2:192) Even in verse 73 of *Surah* at-Tawbah (9) the command to fight the unbelievers and hypocrites has been given because they uttered blasphemy after accepting Islam and ***“they mediated a plot”*** against the Prophet (SAWS) which they failed to execute, (at-Tawbah; 9:74) They failed to keep their covenant and had to be punished.

Before we conclude this discussion on *Jihaad* it seems appropriate to quote the views of a leading Orientalist about the basic object of *Jihaad*: “The Qur’an began to urge the Muslims of Madinah to participate in *Jihaad*. This would involve fighting and blood shed, but the root JHD implies more than a ‘holy war’. It signifies a physical, moral, spiritual and intellectual effort. There are plenty of Arabic words denoting armed combat, such as *harb* (war), *sira’a* (combat), *ma’araka* (battle) or *Qitaal*

(fighting), which the Qur'an could easily have used if war had been the Muslim's principal way of engaging in this effort. Instead it has chosen a richer word with a wide range of connotation. *Jihaad* is not one of the five pillars of Islam. It is not the central prop of the religion despite the common Western view. But it was and remains a duty for the Muslims to commit themselves to a struggle on all fronts i.e., moral, spiritual and political to create a just and decent society, where the poor and the vulnerable are not exploited, in the way that God had intended man to live. Fighting and warfare might sometimes be necessary, but it was only a minor part of the whole *Jihaad* or struggle. A well-known *Hadith* (Tradition) has Muhammad (SAWS) saying on returning from a battle, "We return from the little Jihaad to the greater Jihaad, the more difficult and crucial effort to conquer the forces of evil in one self and in one's own society in all the details of daily life." [Karen Armstrong (1992): *Muhammad - A Biography of the Prophet*, Harper, San Francisco, And p: 168].

It may thus be concluded that *Jihaad fi sabeelillah* in Islam implied a hard and ceaseless endeavour on the part of every Muslim to improve the conditions of individuals and society, eliminate corruption, oppression and injustice by setting personal examples through strength of character, courage of conviction, patience and perseverance and compassion and clemency. The mission has to be accomplished peacefully and never aggressively. The combatant form of *Jihaad* i.e., *Qitaal* should be defensive in nature and restrictive in character as ordained in the Qur'an. All the war expeditions of the Prophet (SAWS)

were defensive in nature. This however could not be sustained subsequently in the history of Islam. The noble concept of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah* has completely lost its human, moral, intellectual and spiritual component and is now restricted to its rigid, narrow aggressive combatant form of *Qitaal* which contravenes the its fundamental principles as ordained in the Qur'an. It is high time that the primacy of the moral and spiritual component of *Jihaad fi sabeelillah* is fully restored and its combatant character (*Qitaal*) is subdued and tempered with compassion and clemency as laid down in the Qur'an: "***And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful***" (al-Baqarah; 2:192) and implemented by the Prophet (SAWS).

QIYAMAH AND ACCOUNT ABILITY ON THE DAY OF RECKONING:

It is proposed to conclude this study on Islamic values with a brief description of the phenomenon of *Qiyamah* or Annihilation of the Universe and Accountability of Man on the Day of Resurrection (Reckoning) which are essential components of the Islamic faith and an integral part of the Islamic value system. They highlight the transitory character of life on earth, instill a profound fear of Allah (SWT), the Supreme Authority of the universe, in the heart and mind of man and make him conscious of his accountability to this Authority for all his earthly deeds on the Day of Reckoning when all the dead souls will be brought back to life. Life on earth will be meaningless and chaotic if the concept of ultimate accountability is eliminated from the Islamic value system. The validity of the concept of Accountability is now universally accepted.

QIYAMAH: ANNIHILATION OF THE UNIVERSE:

The annihilation of the Universe or *Qiyamah* will be a catastrophic event of unimaginable magnitude. The laws of the universe will be completely broken and it will be in violent commotion. It will be: *"The (Day) of Noise and Clamour. (It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about, and the mountains will be like carded wool."* (al-Qariah; 101:1, 4 &5)

The Qur'an asserts categorically that the Day of Judgment has to happen. Those who disbelieve in its

occurrence will do so at their own peril and which they will regret most when they will be asked to dwell in Hell to serve as fuel to the fire of Hell.

The *Qiyamah* will be a terrible day *"When the earth is shaken to its utmost convulsion and the earth throws up its burden from within."* (az-Zalzalah; 99:1-2)

It will be a most frightful day. The system of the universe will be completely disheveled *"And the moon is buried in darkness. And the sun and moon are joined together."* (al-Qiyamah; 75:8-9)

The Qur'an reiterates that let there be no doubt that all mankind will be gathered together on the Day of Judgment: *"Allah! There is no god but He: of a surety He will gather you together on the Day of Judgment, about which there is no doubt. And whose word can be truer than Allah's?"* (an-Nisa; 4:87)

The state of commotion and turmoil will settle down before the commencement of the Proceedings of the Day Judgment. Every soul will be brought back to life in a split second and divine justice will be dispensed with speed and absolute fairness. *"It will be no more than a single blast, when lot they will all be brought up before Us!"* (Yaaseen; 36:53)

As the proceedings commence *"And the earth will shine with the glory of its Lord: the Record (of Deeds) will be placed open; the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward; and a just decision will be pronounced*

between them and they will not be wronged (in the least). And to every soul will be paid in full (the fruit) of its deeds; and (Allah) knows best all that they do.” (az-Zumar; 39:69-70)

On that Day no one will share the burden of other. Even the parents and their children will not come to each other's help or rescue. The Qur'an declares: *“And no bearer of burdens shall bear another's burden and if one heavily laden calls another to (bear) his load, nothing of it will be lifted even though he may be near of kin...”* (Faatir; 35:18)

ACCOUNTABILITY AND DAY OF RECKONING:

Man being the Vicegerent of Allah (SWT) (*Khalifah*) is the custodian of the earth. He has been created with a mission and purpose to establish equality of mankind, provide social justice to all without any discrimination, establish the rule of righteousness, compassion and clemency for the welfare of human beings, bring the entire mankind into a single fraternity in order to eliminate conflict and war and strive for universal peace. He has therefore been endowed with an onerous responsibility which he is expected to discharge with zeal and energy and with sincerity and honesty. Man has therefore been categorically told that he has not been created just for the fun of it, for mere merriment and enjoyment on earth: *“Did you then think that We had created you in jest, and that you would not be brought back to Us (for account)?”* (al-Mu' minoon; 23:115)

Since man is the Vicegerent of Allah (SWT) on earth, he has therefore the unique distinction of being imbued with His spirit. Nothing is therefore beyond the reach of man provided he makes sustained effort to acquire knowledge, to promote welfare of mankind, universal peace and brotherhood and acknowledge with gratitude the Supreme Authority of Allah (SWT). He has gifted man with intelligence, understanding and discretion to choose between good and evil His accountability is all the more greater because Allah (SWT) has not only placed His bounties at the disposal of man, they have been subjected to his control as well. According to Qur'an man has been *"...placed with authority on earth and provided for you therein with means for the fulfillment of your life..."* (al-A'raaf; 7:10)

Through his intelligence, research and technology man can make use of the night and day, sun, moon and stars for his benefit and for the promotion of peace and progress of human civilization, (an-Nahl; 16:14). Similarly all the earthly resources have also been placed at his disposal (al-Jathiyah; 45:12-13). He has already made considerable use of them. The rivers have been dammed to produce power and irrigate agricultural fields; agricultural productivity has been improved phenomenally, industrial and mineral production has been diversified to meet the growing needs of the society. Thus man exercises total control over his terrestrial resources and is therefore held answerable to Allah (SWT) for his conduct as regards the utilization of these

resources, their equitable distribution to eliminate hunger and poverty.

Although Allah (SWT) is the Supreme Controlling Authority, nonetheless individuals have the discretion, according to Qur'an, to choose between good and evil: *"By the soul and the proportion and order given to it; and its inspiration as to its wrong and its right. Truly he succeeds that purifies it and he fails that corrupts it!"* (ash-Shams; 91:7-10)

He has also been consistently provided with guidance by prophets commissioned by Allah (SWT) and divine books revealed through them. This system of divine guidance continued till the last of the Prophets, i.e. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) who has left behind the Qur'an, which will be available to mankind for its guidance till this world lasts. If man adheres to the Qur'anic guidance and that of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAWS) sincerely he will always be on the right course.

The fact that man has been granted discretion and hence made fully accountable also for his deeds is reiterated as follows: *"Verily, we showed him the way whether he be grateful or ungrateful"* (al-Insan; 76:3)

Accountability is a very valid concept. If there is no accountability the world will be a most chaotic place to live. Irrespective of the position and status one enjoys, the idea of being answerable to either the people's parliament or to superior officers, instills discipline and motivates people to work with vigour and energy. They tend to

follow rules, serve the interests of their employers and show results. They are aware that if they do not show results they may be reprimanded, suspended and even fired. These fears constantly haunt those who are employed and make them behave and perform with a sense of responsibility. The concept of accountability permeates every aspect of human life from the family level, to the national and international level. Those who consider themselves above accountability; whether individuals, groups, or governments; behave in an irresponsible manner and this eventually leads to the breakdown of the system and total chaos.

It is to this concept of accountability that the Qur'an stresses repeatedly and forcefully. One idea that the Qur'an constantly drives in our mind is that a person's life in this world is only a transient phase. On the basis of his/her deeds in this world he/she will be assigned a lasting abode - Heaven or Hell - to dwell in, after death. The nature of that abode will be determined by the deeds performed by him/her in this world. For this purpose all those who lived on earth will be brought back to life to account for their deeds. An individual by nature is attracted by the comforts and luxuries of life in this world and therefore invariably ignores the fact of his/her eventual death and permanent abode in the Hereafter. He/she also overlooks the fact that there will be a Day of Reckoning when the entire humanity will be brought back to life to account for deeds performed during life span on earth. The Qur'an thus constantly reminds man about his accountability and Day of Reckoning when on "*That Day*

man will be told what he put forward and all that he put back. Nay, man will be evidence against himself, even though he were to put up his excuses.” (al-Qiyamah; 75:13-15)

The Qur’an states clearly that the life and death have been created by Allah (SWT) so *“.....that He may test which of you is best in deed.....”* (al-Mu1k; 67:2)

Man is repeatedly warned that nothing can be concealed from Allah (SWT) and nothing can escape His surveillance. He can see any event that occurs in the universe, can listen to any conversation, secret or open, that takes place on the earth and in heaven. The Qur’an avers that *“.....My Lord knows (every) word (spoken) in the heavens and on earth: He is the One that hears and knows (all things).”* (al-Anbiya; 21:4)

Thus even the minutest of human act, evil or pious, will be within the knowledge of Allah (SWT). The surveillance is complete when Qur’an points that wherever the individuals or groups may be, Allah (SWT) is also with them: *“...and He is with you wheresoever you may be. And Allah sees well all that you do.”* (al-Hadeed; 57:4)

Even the most confidential of conversations and discussions are within the knowledge of Allah (SWT) which is confirmed by the revelation that when only two are discussing matters confidentially He is secretly present as the third. This is beyond the comprehension of man, nonetheless it is a fact for Allah (SWT) proclaims in the

Qur'an that He is far more closer to man than even his jugular vein: *"It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."* (Qaaf; 50:16)

Human mind cannot comprehend but it is true since the Qur'an repeatedly asserts that Allah (SWT) has the power to unfold all secrets of the universe including those concealed within hearts and minds and which have not been even articulated. As for instance in the following verse the Qur'an reveals that Allah (SWT) *"...has full knowledge of what is in the hearts of men."* (al-Hadeed; 57:6)

The Qur'an asserts authoritatively in *Surah Faatir* that besides the secrets of the hearts, Allah (SWT) is knowledgeable of the total secrets of the universe. In fact there is nothing in this world or beyond that can be outside the realm of his knowledge: *"Verily Allah knows all the hidden things of the heavens and the earth. Verily He has full knowledge of all that is in (men's) hearts."* (Faatir; 35:38)

The depth and canvas of divine knowledge is unfathomable. It has to be absolute and unchallenged if Allah (SWT) has to dispense total justice. This is candidly explained in the following verse: *"Don't you see that Allah does know (all) that is in the heavens and on the earth? There is not a secret consultation between three that He makes the fourth among them - nor between five that He makes the sixth - nor between fewer nor more, but He is with them wheresoever they be. In the end will He*

tell the truth of their conduct, on the Day of Judgment. For Allah has full knowledge of all things.” (al-Mujadilah; 58:7)

Moreover they will witness their own records which will be comprehensive and total. They will be made available to them in boldly written transcripts like computer printouts so that each individual should be able to read and judge for himself his ultimate destiny i.e. the fire of Hell or the blissful peace of Heaven. The Qur'an presents this situation on the Day of Reckoning most graphically: *“Every man's fate we have fastened on his own neck. On the Day of Judgment we shall bring out for him a scroll which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him): Read your (own) record sufficient is your soul this day to make out an account against you.”* (al-Isra; 17:13-14)

On that Day the men will *“.....be shown the Deeds that they (had done). Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.”* (az-Zalzalah; 99:6-8)

The Prophet (SAWS) put this idea in a most thought provoking way: *“Three things follow a dead man, (of these) two return and one remains with him; his people, his wealth, and his deeds follow him, but his people and his wealth return, and his deeds alone remain (with him).”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

CONCLUSION

This monograph was compiled to present in outline a faithful account of the Islamic values with a view to triggering the mind of the reader, both Muslims and non-Muslims, to get motivated to undertake serious, sincere and unbiased study of the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. It will also convince all fair, logical and discerning minds that there is a great amount of sense and merit in demand for governance according to Islamic *Shari'ah* which is in total conformity with human nature for it enshrines equality of man, restores his dignity and self-respect, dispenses even-handed justice without fear and favour, ensures equitable distribution of wealth, guarantees welfare of the poor, the needy, the handicapped, and the old and the aged, eliminates exploitation of the poor by the rich, dominance of mighty over the meek, the master over the slave. A total disregard of the Islamic values by the Muslims themselves, and absence of their implementation in letter and spirit, has tended to cast a false image of Islamic law and has so drastically mutilated its noble shape and form that the implementation of the Islamic *Shari'ah* is considered inhuman and a serious danger to the peace and tranquility of the world. To visualise Islamic values, which are the redeemer of human civilization and liberator of human souls, as the perpetrator of its destruction is the greatest travesty of truth and tragedy of mankind. It is incumbent upon Muslims to strive unceasingly to present the true

image of Islam to remove this false and distorted picture of Deen Islam by their own deeds, precepts and practices.

Let us conclude on a note of optimism that the truth will eventually prevail. The eternal relevance of Islamic values and their universal applicability will soon dawn upon the peoples of the world, both Muslims and non-Muslims, for Allah (SWT) has categorically stated: *“The Truth has now come (to light) and falsehood withered away: for behold all falsehood is bound to wither away.”* (al-Isra; 17:81)

It is incumbent upon Muslims to strive ceaselessly in this direction.

APPENDIX-I

**SOME SELECTED TRADITIONS OF
THE PROPHET (SAWS) ON
HUMAN CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOUR**

**SOME SELECTED SAYINGS OF
THE PROPHET (SAWS) ON
HUMAN CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOUR**

ABUSE: *“Of the two who abuse and curse each other, the blame lies upon him who begins first, unless the wronged man exceeded the limits.”* (Muslim)

ANGER: *“He is not strong or powerful who throws people down, but he is the strong among us who controls himself when angry.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

BEGGING: *“The upper hand is better than the lower hand; the upper hand bestows, and the lower begs.”* (Bukhari and Muslim)

BRIBERY: *“The Prophet (SAWS) cursed the giver of bribes, and the taker of bribes in deciding cases.”* (Tirmizi)

CALUMNY: *“A columnar shall not enter Paradise.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

DIVORCE: *“The most hateful of (all) lawful things in the sight of Allah, is divorce.”* (Tirmizi & Abu Dawood)

ENVY: *“Be on your guard against envying others, for verily, it eats up goodness like fire eats up fuel.”* (Abu Dawood)

GREED: *“The son of man becomes weak from old age, but two things grow young in him; greed for wealth, and eagerness for life.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

BROTHERHOOD: *“By him in whose hands is my life, no servant (of Allah really) believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

CONTENTMENT: *“When one of you sees another who is superior to him in wealth and birth, let him look to him who is inferior to him. That is more proper that you hold not in contempt the favour of Allah towards you.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

FORBIDDING EVIL: *“Whoso of you sees wrong, let him undo with his hand; and if he cannot (do it), then let him speak (against it) with his tongue; and if he cannot (do this either), then (let him abhor it) with his heart; and this is the least of faith.”* (Muslim & Abu Dawood)

FORGIVENESS: *“Wealth decreases not by almsgiving, and Allah only increases His servant in might by forgiveness; and no servant (of Allah) shows humility for the sake of Allah, but Allah also exalts him.”* (Muslim & Tirmizi)

GRATITUDE: *“He who is not grateful to men is not grateful to Allah.”* (Tirmizi)

HOSPITALITY: *“Whoso believes in Allah and in the Last Day, let him honour his guest with all kindness; at the same time it is not lawful for a guest to remain with his host so as to make him sin (by his inability to treat him for a longer period, equally hospitably).”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

MANNERS: *“The most beloved of me among you is he who is the best in manners among you.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

“When there are three persons, let not two engage in a private discourse without the third, for that may grieve him.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

MODERATION: *“O you people, take to works such as you are able (to perform regularly), for verily, Allah is not tired (of recompensing you) until you are tired (of working), and verily, the most beloved of (all) works in the sight of Allah is that which continues (regularly) although it be little.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

PIETY: *“Verily, Allah does not look to your figures, nor to your bodies, but looks into you hearts and to your deeds of piety.’ Then pointing to his chest, the Prophet (SAWS) said, ‘Herein lies piety.’ This he repeated thrice.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

APPENDIX - II

**OBSERVATIONS OF SOME
DISTINGUISHED SCIENTISTS ON
THE EXISTENCE, UNITY AND SUPREMACY
OF ALLAH (SWT)**

SCIENTISTS ADMIT THE EXISTENCE, UNITY AND SUPREMACY OF ALLAH (SWT)

Some of the most distinguished scientists like Newton, Copernicus, Galileo and even Einstein did believe in the existence of Allah (SWT) as the Supreme Being, and the One and only One Creator and Sustainer of the universe. The scientists marvel at the cosmic laws and the mathematical equations that operate in the universe. As regards the mathematical equations and number games in the universe they observe that these numbers have been so finely adjusted as to make possible the development of life if the universe "had been different we would not be here". (Stephen Hawking - See Alam, [1999]: *Scientific Significance in Selected Qur'anic Verses*, p.39) In order to stress our point regarding the Unity and Supremacy of Allah (SWT) we quote below the views of some of the leading scientists in diverse fields. They all declare emphatically of the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator and the Sustainer of the Universe:⁴

The famous Arab astronomer, Abdullah Muhammad Ibni Jabir Al-Battani, who spent forty years from 878 to 918 A.D. in studying heavenly bodies, says: "The science of the stars tends to recognize God's oneness and highest Divine wisdom." (*History of Astronomy* by A. Pannekoek, Inter-science New York, 1961)

4. These quotes have been taken from the booklet:
Prof Saleh Muhammad Alladin: *The views of Scientists on the Existence of God* (1991).
For further details see: John Clover Monsma (Ed) (1959) – *Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe* – Pockets Distributing Co. 11 Oak Lane Fort, Mumbai – 1.

Max Plank, the world famous scientist of the 20th century, and a Nobel Laureate in Physics (1920) remarks that "Religion and Natural Science are fighting a joint battle in an incessant, never-relaxing crusade against skepticism, against dogmatism and against superstition, and the rallying cry in this crusade has always been, and always will be: On to God." (*Evidence*; p:247)

Sir Isaac Newton is regarded as the greatest of all the scientists that the world has produced. According to him the universe could not be explained without belief in God. He says: "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being." (*Our Solar system and the Stellar Universe*, by Charles Whyte, p.131 Charles Griffin & Co. Ltd. London 1923)

Galileo, the famous 16th century Italian astronomer, was overwhelmed when he looked through the telescope and discovered multitudes of stars in the Milky Way, Jupiter's satellite, phases of the planet Venus, craters on the moon, and sun spots etc., he expressed his admiration of God's creation as follows: "I am quite beside myself with wonder and infinitely grateful to God that it has pleased Him to permit me to discover such great marvels." (*The Growth of Physical Science* by Sir James Jeans p: 173, Cambridge; p: 1951)

Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientists of the 20th century, expresses his admiration in the following words: "The most beautiful and the most profound

emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms of this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness." He goes on to state: "My religion consists of a humble admiration of the inimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God." (*The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, by Lincoln Barnett p: 118. Mentor 1950)

Dr. Edmund Carl Kornfeld, a research chemist, strongly supports these remarks of Einstein: "I subscribe to that statement unreservedly. It is my firm conviction that there is a God, and that He planned, created and sustains the universe." (*Evidence*; p: 174). He expresses his own views in the following words: "We will admit that we must believe in a supreme creative intelligence in Nature, or as the only alternative to this we must believe that the universe as we find it has come about as the result of chance, and chance alone. To one who has seen marvelous complexity and yet the pervading order in organic chemistry - especially that in living systems - the idea of chance is repugnant to the extreme. The more one

studies the science of molecular structure and interrelation, the more one is convinced of the necessity of a planner and designer of it all..... The simplest man-made mechanism requires a planner and a maker. How a mechanism ten thousand times more involved and intricate can be conceived of as self-constructed and self-developed is completely beyond me." (*Evidence*; p: 176)

Dr. John Cleveland Cothram, Professor of Chemistry, University of Minnesota, says: "The study of matter and energy consistently has shown in the past and still continues to show that the behaviour of even insensible matter is not at all haphazard but on the contrary 'obeys' definite natural laws." (*Evidence*; p.38) He further says: "Can any informed and reasoning intellect possibly believe that insensible matter just chanced to originate itself and all this system, then chanced to impose this system upon itself, where after this system just chances to remain imposed? Surely, the answer is 'No'." (*Evidence*; p: 41)

Dr. Thomas Davis Parks, an expert in chemistry, points out that "Water is the only substance which has the exceptional property that its density decreases on freezing and by virtue of this property life in the ocean is preserved. Does not one see deep wisdom behind this?" (*Evidence*; op. cit 75)

Dr. Irving William Knoblauch, Professor of Natural Sciences, Michigan State University, USA says: "I believe in God..... because I do not think that the mere

chance could account for the emergence of the first electrons or protons, or for the first atoms, or for the first amino acids, or for the first protoplasm, or for the first seed, or for the first brain. I believe in God, because to me His Divine Existence is the only logical explanation for the things as they are." (*Evidence*; p: 89)

Dr. Albert Mc Combs Winchester, an internationally renowned biologist affirms his faith in the existence of God in the following words: "After many years of study and work in the fields of science, my faith in God, rather than being shaken, has become much stronger and acquired a firmer foundation than heretofore. Science brings about an insight into majesty and omnipotence of the Supreme Being which grows stronger with each discovery." (*Evidence*; p: 165)

It is therefore clear that we cannot visualize the operation of these natural laws without the existence of a Supreme Creator i.e. Allah (SWT) or God. This argument is so rational that only an irrational mind will still argue against it and in favour of the creation of the universe by chance or accident.

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