

THROUGH FORCE OR FAITH?

A Reply to Pope Benedict XVI

ISLAM INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LTD.

Through Force or Faith?
A Reply to Pope Benedict XVI

A Compilation of Friday Sermons delivered
by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Khalifatul-Masiḥ V,
and
various rebuttals written by other scholars

First published in Urdu in Germany, 2008
(ISBN: 978-3-932244-38-4)
First English translation published in the UK, 2019
Translated by: Khalil Mahmood Malik

Published by
Islam International Publications Ltd
Unit 3, Bourne Mill Business Park,
Guildford Road, Farnham, Surrey UK, GU9 9PS

Printed in UK at
Raqem Press, Farnham, Surrey

For further information please visit www.alislam.org.

Cover design by: Farhan Naseer

ISBN 978-1-84880-871-3
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword to the Present Edition</i>	vii
<i>Foreword to the Urdu Edition</i>	ix

PART I - A COMPILATION OF FRIDAY SERMONS HIS HOLINESS MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD

Refutation of the Allegations Made Against Islam	1
Principles to Promote World Peace.....	37
Sanctions for Self-Defence in Islam.....	55

PART II - OTHER SELECTED WRITINGS

Chapter 1	77
<i>Analysis of the Papal Lecture</i>	77
Chapter 2	107
<i>Islamic Teachings about Jihad</i>	107
<i>Concluding Remarks</i>	164

Chapter 3	167
<i>Holy Prophet and Wars</i>	167
Chapter 4	199
<i>Interaction with non-Believers</i>	199
Chapter 5	213
<i>Faith and Reason: Islamic Perspective</i>	213
Chapter 6	237
<i>Islam: Knowledge, Wisdom, and Rationality</i>	237
Chapter 7	253
<i>Novelty in the Teachings</i> <i>of Muhammad?</i>	253
<i>Publisher's Note</i>	313
<i>Glossary</i>	317

The God of Islam is the same God who is visible in the mirror of the law of nature and is discernible in the book of nature. Islam has not presented a new God but has presented the same God who is presented by the light of man's heart, by the conscience of man, and by heaven and earth.

(*Majmū'ah Ishtihārāt*, vol. 2, p. 310–311, ed. 1972)

FOREWORD TO THE PRESENT EDITION

Religious misunderstanding bears the unfortunate responsibility of causing much of man's misery and malign throughout history. This underscores the great burden that weighs upon religious leadership to uphold the virtues of integrity and scholarship when making public statements about other faiths. Failure to do so inevitably leads to ignorance and mischief, not to mention the immense embarrassment once the attempted slander backfires and exposes the perpetrator's incompetence, irresponsibility, and/or bigotry.

On September 12, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI delivered a lecture at the University of Regensburg in Germany. During that lecture, he made an innuendo that Islam was spread by the sword, referencing a medieval polemic authored by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1350–1425 CE). The Pope also insinuated that the verse in the Quran forbidding compulsion in matters of faith (2:257) applied when the Holy Prophet^{sas} was in a state of weakness, but this standard was changed once he attained

a position of power. These statements created an uproar across the Muslim world.

In defence of the true teachings of Islam, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Khalīfatul-Masiḥ V, refuted the erroneous statements made by the Pope. Ahmad immediately delivered sermons with rebuttals following the papal lecture. In 2008, these were published in an Urdu book along with several additional chapters that thoroughly refute the misconceptions in the Pope's lecture.

This is the English translation of that book. The translation was performed by Dr. Khalil Mahmood Malik. I would also like to thank Qamar Ahmed Zafar, Zulfiqar Abbasi, Munawar Ahmed Saeed, Luqman Tahir Mahmood, Syed Sajid Ahmad, Syed Faraz Hussain, Hassan Faiyaz Khan, Naveed Ahmed Malik, and Naser-ud-Din Shams for their valuable services.

May God bless everyone involved in producing this book and enable their diligent efforts to open the eyes of those blinded by the ignorance and bigotry of these age-old allegations against Islam. *Āmīn.*

Al-Ḥāj Munir-ud-Din Shams

Additional Wakīlul-Taṣnīf

London

July 2019

FOREWORD TO THE URDU EDITION

The need of the time, as has been repeatedly emphasized, is a dialogue between Islam and Christianity. No one denies its benefit, but there does not seem to be much progress. What could be the reason for this? One possible explanation is that expectations are too high; and that, first, much work needs to be done to cross the divide and to bridge the distance between the two faiths—which has come about from centuries of conflict and mistrust—and to promote mutual trust to establish interfaith peace and tolerance. It is also true, however, that only inter-religious peace can ensure world peace.

With reference to dogmas and doctrines, academic discussion and discourse is helpful to remove misunderstandings. But cooperative, practical efforts to achieve and maintain higher moral standards in society can be more effective in bringing religions closer, because these higher moral objectives are shared by all religions. The process of mutual understanding can be enhanced if cooperative efforts are made for this noble objective.

For a proper introduction to one another, it is essential to respect the partner in dialogue. The Holy Quran instructs

Muslims not to use unseemly words even for the deities of the idolaters because they may react strongly.

On 12 September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI gave a Papal lecture entitled, 'Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections' at the University of Regensburg in Germany, where he had himself taught as a professor of theology prior to his papacy. The real topic of his papal lecture was not dialogue, but the compatibility of reason and faith. It is a welcome step that people of faith should reject unreasonable attitudes. Unreasonable views, whether they are ascribed to a religion or to any other sphere of life, need to be rejected.

Rationality is one faculty that brings about balance and moderation in our daily activities and pursuits; that is to say, we are enabled to act 'righteously'. This is the criterion by which we can evaluate the beauty of our actions. This beauty of our actions should not merely be an ideal. It should have a profound link and relationship to reality. Islam defined the attainment of this objective as the ideal for its followers. It is only with a true understanding of God Almighty that man can act 'righteously' in every state, favourable or adverse, in prosperity or in destitution. God Almighty has created man so that he may worship Him, develop an understanding of Him, and emulate His attributes.

One of the attributes of God is Ḥakīm [the Wise]. Therefore, it is essential for every human being to use wisdom in his word and action. The order and the organization of the universe God Almighty has created reflects His attribute of Ḥakīm. Every expression of disorder and discord originates in being removed from the order created by God and its wisdom. In its very name, the religion of Islam carries the message of peace, because the connotation of

Islam is 'peace'. Any teachings, any charter that advocates unrest cannot be related to Islam even remotely. Turmoil and disorder are anathema to Islam. Anything of this nature ascribed to Islam is patently false. It is the foremost obligation of Muslims to remove such misconceptions.

The first part of this book comprises three sermons of His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, the head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Then, in the second part of the book, which comprises seven chapters, different objections of the papal lecture are answered. His Holiness^{aba} had entrusted me with the task of a detailed presentation of different aspects of Islamic teachings referred to in the Papal Lecture. Mukhtar Ahmad Cheema, Mubarak Ahmad Tanvir, and other helpers have assisted me in the compilation of this book. I am deeply obliged to all of them. May Allah give them the best reward.

In concluding, it is our prayer that may Allah, the Exalted, open up the hearts of people to the true teachings of Islam and enlighten them with the essence of the Faith of Muhammad^{sas}.
Āmīn.

Humbly,
Haider Ali Zafar
Missionary-in-Charge
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Germany

PART I

*A Compilation of Friday Sermons by
His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad*

REFUTATION OF THE ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST ISLAM

in the Papal Lecture at Regensburg, Germany



*Friday Sermon by His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad
Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah
Delivered on September 15, 2006 in London*

After reciting *Tashabbud*, *Ta'awwudh*, and *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* Ḥudūr^{aba} said:

Yesterday there was news that the Pope delivered a lecture at a university in Germany, and in the course of it mentioned some Islamic teachings and made some comments about the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet^{sas}, by alluding to some writer, which did not have even the remotest connection to Islam. This is a clever tactic of theirs, done so that they can absolve themselves through quoting others, but all the while saying what they want to say. The Pope said some things about the Holy Quran, Islam, and

the founder of Islam which painted a wrong picture of what Islam is, and so has caused much distress to Muslims. This also displays how against Islam he [the Pope] feels in his heart of hearts. The position of the Pope is such that it was not appropriate for him to say such things in this way irrespective of the context.

These days, when sentiments of hatred against Muslims are being stoked up in the West under one pretence or another, such a statement from the Pope is akin to adding fuel to the fire. What he should have said was that although some misguided Islamic organizations have adopted violent methods, Islamic teachings appear to be against them and that we should work together to maintain peace in the world so that we can save innocent people from death and destruction. Instead, he has led his followers to believe that this is the Islamic teaching. I thought the Pope was a responsible person and a scholar, and that he had some knowledge about Islam. Rather than this, his statements have revealed his total lack of knowledge. He should have tried to promote peace in the world by propagating the teachings of the Messiah whose successorship he claims. The Messiah taught to be kind even towards one's enemies.

On the one hand, imputing erroneous things to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and the Quran is playing with the emotions of Muslims (as I have previously said), and as a result has caused those who cannot control their emotions to act out in a way that provides further opportunity for propaganda against Muslims; and then on the other hand, the followers of the Pope, as well as those who live in the West who already believe Islam to be an extremist religion, will further increase in their hatred of Muslims. May Allah show mercy and protect the world from discord and turmoil. Aḥmadīṣ

should always pray to this end and, with prayers, they should also respond to the questions that were raised in the lecture that the Pope delivered. We have only these two weapons that we can use, and no other reaction has ever been shown by an Aḥmadī, nor will it ever be, God willing.

I shall now read out the summary of the Pope's objections that he raised against the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}.¹ The proceedings were sent for from Germany. He says that he had read an old dialogue, the gist of which has been published by a professor of a university. This old dialogue took place between an erudite Kaiser [Roman Emperor], Manuel, and an educated Persian in 1391 CE in Ankara, after which it was then put down in writing by the same Christian emperor. He [the Pope] did admit that, since this dialogue was recorded by the Christian emperor, it was presented more from his own viewpoint. It's clear how honest [his intentions were] in that the discourse made little mention about what was said by the Muslim scholar, but was more of his [Kaiser Manuel's] own viewpoint.

Anyway, with regard to the questions that were raised, [the Pope] says that in this particular lecture he wants to talk about one point, which is that in his dialogue the Kaiser mentioned jihad whilst the Kaiser certainly knew that, in Islam, there is no compulsion in faith—referring to *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257—he then further says that the Kaiser also knew the latter's teachings about holy war, or jihad, in the Quran, and that there are details mentioned about jihad in the Quran where treatment is different for the People of the Book than for the infidels (he came up

1. This account has been obtained by Germany. [Publisher]

with this reference on his own.) He further says that the Kaiser came to the fundamental question of his interlocutor in startling brusqueness, and then said, ‘What does faith have to do with coercion?’ He then proceeded to say, ‘Show me what is new that Muhammad^{sas} brought. You have received only evil and inhumane teachings. After that, he taught that the message he brought should be spread with sword. *إِنَّمَا لِلَّهِ* [Innā lillāh]¹. After stating this he says that the Kaiser explains in detail why it is against reason to spread religion with force. This teaching is in conflict with the Divine Being and the nature of Spirit. He says that God does not like bloodshed, and that logic and deeds are in conflict with the Divine Being. Faith is the fruit of the spirit, not of the body. He further says that for the Kaiser, who was shaped by Greek philosophy, the aforementioned was a self-evident truth; whereas God, according to Islamic teachings, is Absolutely Transcendent. His Will is not bound up with any earthly categories, not even that of Rationality.

After this, by referring to a French Islamist, a statement of Ibn Ḥazm is quoted that, ‘Nothing would oblige Him to reveal the truth to us. Were it God’s Will, He would even have us practice idolatry.’ (It is not known whether Ibn Ḥazm even penned these words as no reference is given.)

The Pope goes on to say, ‘Is the conviction that acting unreasonably contradicts God’s nature merely a Greek idea, or is it always and intrinsically true? I believe that here we can see the

1. Part of an Arabic phrase from the Holy Quran that is recited by Muslims to express their deepest pain. The full phrase translates as: ‘Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return.’ [Publisher]

profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the Biblical understanding of faith in God'. (The rest is a long lecture.)

In the lecture, as I have already said, he himself concedes that the Kaiser's own words have [been documented in] more detail as compared with the answers of the Persian scholar. The Christian scholar who wrote this narration obviously had to strengthen his arguments to express his superiority. The counterarguments have not been presented and thus fairness has certainly been compromised.

Whatever the meaning of this, what we Muslims understand—moreover, what we Aḥmadīs understand—I shall briefly explain using the *Qurān* and the practice of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}. Not a whole lot can be said here but the answers to these questions shall, God-willing, be prepared for the Pope and an attempt will be made to convey them to him so that, if he is still unaware and oblivious regarding the true teachings of Islam, he should come to know something of it; provided that he, realizing his station, reads what is stated with fairness and ponders over it.

Our hearts hold Jesus in high esteem. We acknowledge him as a prophet of Allah, the Exalted. Indeed, we acknowledge all prophets who came to any nation and we hold them all in high esteem. Christians should respect and honour the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} in deference to the sentiments of Muslims.

As I have said, the Pope, alluding to the Kaiser, states that the Kaiser certainly knew of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257. This verse [includes]:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فِي الدِّينِ

There should be no compulsion in religion. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257)

The Pope states that this chapter is from amongst the early chapters [to have been revealed]. In fact, it is not from that much of the early period. Rather, it is from the first one or two years in Madinah. But the Kaiser knew of the later chapters as well, and was aware of the subsequent teachings about 'jihad'. Regardless, whether he knew them or not, he certainly had a biased view. He stated that the Quran advocates different treatment of infidels and the People of the Book, whilst there is no concept of coercion in religion. He said (per his assertion, God forbid) that in the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, you will find nothing besides evil and inhumane precepts; and that (God forbid) Islam is meant to be spread with the power of the sword.

He attributed something erroneously that is not even remotely related to Islamic teachings, and then goes on to pass judgment by himself that these unreasonable things are in conflict with the justice of God. He then continues on to say that an intelligent person does not need force or coercion or weapons. Indeed, it is correct that an intelligent person does not need weapons or force. This he said correctly. There is absolutely no need for this. But then why are the superpowers of the present day using force to interfere with the affairs of other nations while sitting thousands of miles away? He did not address this question, so we should start with letting them explain whether what they are doing is right or wrong.

Then there are the internal wars that took place in the history of Christianity. Why turn a blind eye to these wars? Which

category do they fall into? Then, what happened in Spain—speaking of the ‘Inquisition’—what category does that fall in? I will not outline the details of it here, for they all know it quite well.

He [the Pope] states that he [Kaiser] was aware of the subsequent teachings, so then what are the Islamic teachings about propagating the Faith, and what was the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas}? That ‘knowledgeable one’ [Kaiser Manuel] was unaware of them, but let me delineate them.

Islam is the ‘religion of nature.’ It certainly does not teach that if someone slaps you on one cheek, you offer the other too. Those who were given this teaching should inform us to what extent they are acting upon it. These are the very flaws of their teachings that have pushed the Christians of this age away from Christianity. One need only go to church once a week on a Sunday; yet, hardly anyone fulfils even this requirement anymore, except for elderly men and women. Now they have begun renting out churches for other functions, and in the Western world, there are countless churches which have ‘For Sale’ signs.

One professor from America, Edwin Lewis, writes that the people of the 20th century are not willing to accept Jesus as God. The president of St. John’s College, Oxford, Sir Cyrel, writes that it should always be remembered that a large proportion of men and women of Europe and America is not Christians anymore. Perhaps it would also be correct to say that the majority of them is like this now. Similarly, there are several statements of these people about Africa. They admit that these teachings are coming to an end now. This they know. Therefore, only one option is left for them and that is to use unfair tactics against Islam.

So where lies the truth in the matter of whether or not Islam

was spread by force as the non-Muslims claim? They claim that the Kaiser had knowledge about the commandments of the *Quran*. So let's see what the *Quran* says. Allah, the Exalted, says:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ مَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

And say, *It is* the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve. (*Sūrah al-Kahf*, 18:30)

Allah, the Exalted, had the Holy Prophet^{sas} make the declaration to the world that Islam is the 'Truth' and is from your Lord. Let whosoever believe in it and let whosoever deny it because:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

There should be no compulsion in religion. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257)

Then Allah, the Exalted, says in the Holy *Quran*:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

Say, O ye men, now has the truth come to you from your Lord. So whosoever follows the guidance, follows it only for the good of his own soul, and whosoever errs, errs only against it. And I am not a keeper over you. (*Sūrah Yūnus*, 10:109)

Its practical application was also shown by the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Therefore, when [the tribesmen of] Banū Naḍīr were sentenced

to exile for some of their excesses and transgressions, the *Anṣār*¹ wanted to take back their children whom they had given to Banū Naḍīr since their birth. The Holy Prophet^{sas} intervened and said, ‘No, what you have given them is theirs now. There is no compulsion in faith. They will now stay with them.’

It was due to his teachings that his *Khulafā*^{ra} [successors] and companions^{ra} understood this dictum well and abided by it. Thus, one slave of Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra} narrates himself that Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra} asked him many times to become Muslim, but on his refusal, he would only reply, ‘That’s fine, for Islam does not permit coercion.’ Then, when the time of his death came near, he said, ‘I set you free. You are free and may go wherever you please.’ So, these are the standards for freedom of faith in Islam, both in precept and in practice. Even a slave could not be forced [to accept Islam], yet the Pope says that the religion of Islam has tyranny and oppression in it.

Then the Holy Quran says:

وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُصْحَابِ الْأُولَىٰ عَسَلَيْكُمْ ؕ فَإِنْ أَسَلِمُوا فَعَدَاهُمْ وَأِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاءُ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرَتِهِمْ عَلِيمٌ

... And say to those who have been given the Book and to the unlearned, ‘Have you submitted?’ If they submit, then they will surely be guided; but if they turn back, then thy duty is only to convey the message. And Allah is Watchful of His servants. (*Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān*, 3:21)

1. The Arabic term *Anṣār* (lit. ‘Helpers’) is used here to denote those Muslims who lived in Madinah and supported the Makkan Muslims who migrated there. [Publisher]

That is, now it is God's prerogative. He will decide who is to be apprehended, who is to be punished, who is to be treated how. As such, these are the injunctions. The last verse that I recited belongs to the period after the conquest of Makkah when [Muslims held] power was there; so instead of frivolous objections they should employ reason and fairness. Not even a single example of coercion is to be found in Islam.

They criticize the Holy Prophet^{sas} that he used coercion, but the Holy Prophet^{sas} could not bear someone accepting Islam even for expediency. Thus, one narration reports that an infidel prisoner was presented and he questioned [the Holy Prophet^{sas}] 'Why am I imprisoned? I am now a Muslim'. He^{sas} said, 'Not just now, but if you had accepted Islam before this then that would have been alright. Now you are a prisoner of war, and so are becoming a Muslim to gain your freedom'. He did not want to coerce him into becoming a Muslim. What he desired was that sincere hearts should be presented before Allah, the Exalted,. Thus, this prisoner was later released in exchange for the freedom of two Muslims.

In Islam, the ordinance of war is in effect only for such time as when the enemy is engaged in fighting or is creating conditions of unrest. When conditions become normal and sedition comes to an end, it is admonished that you have no right to fight. Thus, in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, says:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ۗ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is *freely professed* only for Allah. But if they desist, then *remember* that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:194)

That is, O Muslims, you ought to fight the infidels who engage in war till such time when no unrest is left in the country and everyone can adopt the faith that he likes for the sake of his God (not because of any fear or coercion). And if these infidels desist from their aggression, then you should stop fighting because you do not have the right to fight anyone except the transgressor.

Here, Allah, the Exalted, says that you ought to fight those infidels who fight with you till such a time when no unrest is left in the land. Its example is found in one instance: Ibn Umar^{ra} says, ‘We implemented the Divine command in this way that in the days of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, when Muslims were just few in number and anyone who adopted Islam was tortured in the path of Islam by the infidels, some would be killed, while others imprisoned; therefore, we fought until Muslims increased in numbers and strength, so that no threat was left for new Muslim converts. After this, when the threat from the infidel ceased to exist, this matter came to its conclusion.’

Then Allah, the Exalted, says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ قَوْمِينَ لَهُ شُهَدَاءُ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ آلَا
تَعْدِلُوا ۖ إِعْدِلُوا ۚ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O ye who believe! be steadfast in the cause of Allāh, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people’s enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be *always* just. That is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Aware of what you do. (*Sūrah al-Mā’idah*, 5:9)

Thus, it was this justice that created a revolution in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and this revolution took place even afterwards. If

one looks at the lives of the companions [of the Holy Prophet^{sas}] and analyses them, one realizes that the transformation that took place in them does not come about by changing faith under duress. Instead it happens when hearts are changed. It happens when the enemies are treated so graciously that even opponents become admirers.

Thus, at the time of the conquest of Makkah, Ikrimah, who was one of the fiercest opponents of Islam, ran away; but when his wife requested the Holy Prophet^{sas} for amnesty in order to bring him back, he was pardoned. Then, an amazing transformation occurred in him which could not have been achieved with any sword. He made such progress in his faith as could not have happened without love in his heart. His heart was filled with sincerity to such a degree as was not possible in the absence of love. The standard of sacrifice was raised in such a way that it was not possible without the transformation of his heart. The jealousy he displayed for the sake of Islam could only have originated by having a true appreciation for its message. The history is replete with remarkable examples of love and of jealousy for Islam set by the Companions.

The same Ikrimah who I mentioned earlier, it is related about him that initially he fought in every battle against the Holy Prophet^{sas} and spent all his energies to erase Islam. Ultimately, when Makkah was conquered, as I have said, he fled from Makkah, for he considered subordination to the Holy Prophet^{sas} a disgrace. But once he became a Muslim, his sincerity was such that during the caliphate of Abu Bakr^{ra}, he showed unparalleled chivalry in vanquishing the rebels. It is said that when fierce fighting broke out in one battle, and people were being felled like the grass is cut

with a scythe; in such a raging battle, Ikrimah charged into the heart of enemy forces with his comrades. Some people pleaded with him that the battle was getting too dangerous and it was not advisable to charge into the enemy forces like that, but Ikrimah did not concede. He charged onward, saying, 'I have fought against Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah for the sake of Lāt and 'Uzzā.¹ Today I shall not hold back in fighting in the cause of God'. And at the end of the battle, his corpse had innumerable wounds of spears and swords.

It is recorded about his financial sacrifices, that whatever Ikrimah^{ra} received in spoils, he would give it away in charity. He would spend in the service of the Faith without holding anything back. These changes that take birth in the hearts cannot be produced by the might of the sword. (*Iṣābah*, *Usudul-Ghābah*, *Istī'āb*)

The allegation of non-Muslims is that the religion [of the Makkans] was changed through coercion. History is replete with examples that refute such charges.

We have seen what the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} were. An incident is mentioned: The Holy Prophet^{sas} proclaimed: مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ, meaning that if a Muslim commits the murder of such a non-Muslim who has entered the asylum of an Islamic government, as a result of any verbal or viable agreement; he shall remain, besides the punishment of this world, deprived of the breeze of Paradise on the Day of Judgment (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*,

1. Two of the hundreds of idols worshipped by the Makkans prior to accepting prior to Islam. [Publisher]

Kitāb ad-Diyyāt, Bab Ismī Mun Qatala Dhimīyyan Bighair Jurum).

Let us now look at the practice of his successors. It is narrated that once Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra} passed by an area where excessive strictness was being used in collection of *jizya*¹ from non-Muslims. Seeing this, Umar^{ra} immediately stopped and inquired in a state of anger as to what was transpiring. He was told that those people would not pay the *jizya* and claim they do not have the capacity to do so. Umar^{ra} said, 'There is no reason to burden them with what they cannot afford. Let them go. I have heard from the Holy Prophet^{sas} that the one who vexes others in this world shall be under the chastisement of God on the Day of Judgment'. Thereby, the *jizya* was suspended for them (*Kitābul-Kharāj*, Faḍl Fi Man Tujib 'Alaih al-Jizya).

Umar^{ra} was so concerned about his non-Muslim subjects due to the emphatic advice of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that he made a specific testimonial at the time of his death. His words were: 'I exhort the Caliph who comes after me that he should treat the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state with much kindness and compassion, fulfil their agreements, protect them, fight their enemies for them, and not put such a burden or responsibility upon them that would be beyond their capacity'. (*Kitābul-Kharāj*, p. 72) If they were coerced into Islam, why would there be this much concern?

An agreement was reached by the Holy Prophet^{sas} with the Jews of Khaibar. The Holy Prophet^{sas} used to send his companion,

1. A minimal tax levied upon non-Muslim subjects of an Islamic government who in exchange received protection and public services that Muslims paid for through Zakat and other means. [Publisher]

Abdullah bin Rawahah^{ra}, for the collection of the revenue. Due to the influence of his teachings, Abdullah bin Rawahah would use such consideration in the division of the harvest that he would divide up the harvest and then give the right to the Jews to choose the portion they liked first and he would take the portion that was left behind for himself. (*Abū Dāwūd, Kitābul-Buyū*, Chapter regarding al-Masaaqah)

As I have said earlier, due to the precepts and the practices of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra} was extremely concerned about the rights and the comfort of the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state. He used to urge his governors to take special care of *Dhimmīs* [non-Muslim wards] and also used to inquire directly if they had any complaints. Thus, on one occasion, when a delegation of *Dhimmīs* presented itself to Umar^{ra}, the first question Umar^{ra} asked of them was whether they had any hardship on account of the Muslims. They replied, ‘We have not seen anything but the goodness of sincerity and kind treatment from the Muslims.’ (*Ṭabarī*, vol. 5, p. 2560)

When Syria was conquered, Muslims collected tax from the Christian population of Syria. But shortly thereafter, the threat of war by the Roman empire rose again, due to which the Muslim emir of Syria, Abu Ubaidah^{ra}, refunded the tax and said, ‘As we cannot guarantee your rights due to war, it is therefore not justified that we keep this tax with us.’ Seeing this, Christians could not help but pray for the Muslims and responded, ‘May God give you triumph over the Christians and may you become the rulers of this country again.’ (*Abū Yūsuf, Kitābul-Kharāj*, pp. 80–82, *Futūḥul-Buldān*, [Origins of the Islamic State] by Ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, p. 146)

This was the conduct of the Muslims. It was only after they achieved victory and the Muslims returned that tax collection was resumed. So I submit once again, is this what you call coercion?

Those who accuse the pure personage of the Holy Prophet^{sas} would see how much he cared for non-Muslims if they were only to look at and study history with fairness. He would invite to Islam, but with love and compassion, for it was to the benefit for the soul of that person.

In one narration, it is mentioned that the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his companions, even in the period of their dominion and rule, took great care of the feelings of non-Muslims. Once, a young Jewish man fell ill in Madinah. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} learnt about it, he went to enquire about him. Finding his condition critical, he^{sas} preached Islam to him. He was moved by his^{sas} preaching, but since his father, who was alive, was standing nearby, he began looking towards his father with a question on his face. The father told his son that if he wanted to accept it, he could do so. The boy read out the creed and became a Muslim. Upon this, the Holy Prophet^{sas} was much pleased and said, ‘Thanks be to Allah that one soul was saved from the fire of Hell.’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābul-Janā’iz*, Chapter: When a boy accepts Islam and then dies)

Now, after relating Quranic teachings and the few examples of the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, the truth about ‘coercion’ in regards to the allegation that Islam spread due to the power of the sword becomes quite clear. It has become quite evident about how Islam spread; as does what I had said in the beginning about the treatment that was meted out in Spain expose their true colours as well.

I shall now present some examples of what the fair-minded Christian Orientalists say about the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Thomas Carlyle says:

Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming Impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to any one. The lies, which well meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only. When Pococke inquired of Grotius, Where the proof was of that story of the pigeon, trained to pick peas from Mahomet's ear, and pass for an angel dictating to him? Grotius answered that there was no proof! It is really time to dismiss all that. The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred-and-eighty millions of men these twelve hundred years. These hundred-and-eighty millions were made by God as well as we. A greater number of God's creatures believe in Mahomet's word at this hour than in any other word whatever. Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition. I will believe most things sooner than that. One would be entirely at a loss what to think of this world at all, if quackery so grew and were sanctioned here. (*On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, by Thomas Carlyle, pp. 42-43, published in 1906 by Longmans, Green and Co., London and Bombay)

Sir William Muir (although a quite biased [orientalist] who has written many wrong things too) writes:

We may freely concede that it banished for ever many of the darker elements of superstition which had for ages shrouded the Peninsula. Idolatry vanished before the battle-cry of Islam; the doctrine of the unity and infinite perfections of God, and of a special all-pervading Providence, became a living principle in the hearts and lives of the followers of Mahomet, even as it had in his own. An absolute surrender and submission to the divine will (the very name of *Islam*) was demanded as the first requirement of the religion. Nor are social virtues wanting, and Mahometanism may boast of a degree of temperance unknown to any other creed. (*The Life of Mahomet*, vol. 4, by Sir William Muir, pp. 320–321, published in 1861 by Smith, Elder, & Co., London)

Edward Gibbon writes:

His beneficial or pernicious influence on the public happiness is the last consideration in the character of Mahomet. The most bitter or most bigoted of his Christian or Jewish foes will surely allow that he assumed a false commission to inculcate a salutary doctrine, less perfect only than their own. He piously supposed, as the basis of his religion, the truth and sanctity of their prior revelations, the virtues and miracles of their founders. The idols of Arabia were broken before the throne of God; the blood of human

victims was expiated by prayer, and fasting, and alms, the laudable or innocent arts of devotion; and his rewards and punishments of future life were painted by the images most congenial to an ignorant and carnal generation. Mahomet was, perhaps, incapable of dictating a moral and political system for the use of his countrymen: but he breathed among the faithful a spirit of charity and friendship: recommended the practice of the social virtues; and checked, by his laws and precepts, the thirst of revenge, and the oppression of widows and orphans. The hostile tribes were united in faith and obedience, and the valour which had been idly spent in domestic quarrels was vigorously directed against a foreign enemy. (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, vol. V, pp. 274–275, published in 1788, London)

Then John Davenport writes:

It is a monstrous error to suppose, as some have done, and others still do, that the faith taught by the Koran was propagated by the sword alone, for it will be readily admitted by all unprejudiced minds, that Mohammed's religion,—by which prayers and alms were substituted for the blood of human victims, and which, instead of hostility and perpetual feuds, breathed a spirit of benevolence and of the social virtues, and must, therefore, have had an important influence upon civilization,—was a real blessing to the Eastern world, and consequently, could not have needed exclusively the sanguinary means so unsparingly and so

unscrupulously used by Moses for the extirpation of idolatry. (*An Apology for Mohammad and the Quran*, by John Davenport, pp. 84–85, published in 1882 by Dryden Press, London)

Edward Gibbon writes:

The wars of the Moslems were sanctified by the prophet; but among the various precepts and examples of his life, the caliphs selected the lessons of toleration that might tend to disarm the resistance of the unbelievers. Arabia was the temple and patrimony of God of Mahomet; but he beheld with less jealousy and affection the nations of the earth. The polytheists and idolaters, who were ignorant of his name might be lawfully extirpated by his votaries: but a wise policy supplied the obligation of justice. (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, vol. V, p. 381, published in 1788, London)

Count Tolstoy says:

Undoubtedly the Prophet Muhammad is one of the greatest reformers who rendered extensive service to the human community. As an indication of his greatness, it suffices to mention that he guided an entire nation to the light of truth and made it incline to serenity and peace and opted to live a life of asceticism. He forbade acts of bloodshed and human sacrifice. He opened up for his nation the way to progress and civilization. That was a great feat which

nobody—no matter how powerful he may be—is able to achieve. Such a man, is highly respectable and estimable. (*Himāyat-e-Islām*, Lahore, 1935)

Furthermore, Bernard Shaw says:

The Medieval ecclesiastics either through ignorance or bigotry painted Muhammadanism in the darkest colours. They were in fact trained both to hate the man Muhammad and his religion.... I have studied him — the wonderful man — and in my opinion...he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. (*The Light*, vol. XII, No. 4 & 5, p. 15, under the heading Bernard Shaw's Latest on Islam, dated January, 24, 1933)

Another Christian Historian, Reverend Bosworth says:

... he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue, if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right Divine, it was Mohammed; for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. (*Mohammed and Muhammedanism*, by R. Bosworth Smith, p. 288–289, published 1889 by John Murray, London)

Pringle Kennedy writes:

Muhammad was, to use a striking expression, the man of the hour. In order to understand his wonderful success, one must study the conditions of his times. Five and half centuries and more had elapsed when he was born since Jesus had come into the world. At that time, the old religions of Greece and Rome, and of the hundred and one states along the Mediterranean, had lost their vitality. In their place, Caesarism had come as a living cult. The worship of the state as personified by the reigning Caesar, such was the religion of the Roman Empire. Other religions might exist, it was true; but they had to permit this new cult by the side of them and predominant over them. But Caesarism failed to satisfy. The Eastern religions and superstitions (Egyptian, Syrian, Persian) appealed to many in the Roman world and found numerous votaries. The fatal fault of many of these creeds was that in many respects they were so ignoble...

When Christianity conquered Caesarism at the commencement of the fourth century, it, in its turn, became Caesarised. No longer was it the pure creed which had been taught some three centuries before. It had become largely de spiritualised, ritualised, materialised.

How, in a few years, all this was changed, how, by 650 A.D. a great part of this world became a different world from what it had been before, is one of the most remarkable chapters in human history. This wonderful change

followed, if it was not mainly caused by, the life of one man, the Prophet of Mecca.

Whatever the opinion one may have of this extraordinary man, whether it be that of the devout Muslim who considers him the last and greatest herald of God's word, or of the fanatical Christian of former days, who considered him an emissary of the Evil One, or of certain modern Orientalists, who look on him rather as a politician than a saint, as an organiser of Asia in general and Arabia in particular, against Europe, rather than as a religious reformer; there can be no difference as to the immensity of the effect which his life has had on the history of the world.

To those of us, to whom the man is everything, the milieu but little, he is the supreme instance of what can be done by one man. Even others, who hold that the conditions of time and place, the surroundings of every sort, the capacity of receptivity of the human mind, have, more than an individual effort, brought about the great steps in the world's history, cannot well deny, that even if this step were to come, without Muhammad, it would have been indefinitely delayed. (*Arabian Society at the time of Muhammad*, Pringle Kennedy, pp. 8, 10, 18, 21)

S.P. Scott writes:

If the object of religion be the inculcation of morals, the diminution of evil, the promotion of human happiness, the expansion of the human intellect, if the performance of good works will avail in that great day when mankind

shall be summoned to its final reckoning, it is neither irreverent nor unreasonable to admit that Mohammed was indeed an Apostle of God. (*History of the Moorish Empire in Europe*, by S.P.Scott, vol. 1, pp. 126–127, published in 1904 by J.B.Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and London)

There are many quotes but I shall shorten it. Ruth Cranston writes in ‘World Faith’:

Mohammad never instigated fighting and bloodshed. Every battle that he fought was in rebuttal. He fought in order to survive and he fought with the weapons and fashion of his time.

Fashions in brutality change, as in everything else. It seems almost incredible now that in 1917 people were shocked at the killing of civilians in wartime. Certainly no ‘Christian’ nation of 140,000,000 people who today dispatch 120,000 helpless civilians with a single bomb can look askance at a leader who at his worst killed a bare five or six hundred. The slayings of Prophet of Arabia in a benighted and bloodthirsty age of the seventh century look positively puerile compared with our own in this ‘advanced’ and enlightened twentieth. Not to mention the mass slaughter by Christians during the Inquisition and the Crusades—when, Christian warriors proudly recorded, they ‘waded ankle-deep in the gore of Moslem infidels.’ (Ruth Cranston, *World Faith*, p. 55, Ayer Publishing, 1949)

Then John Davenport writes:

So much so that it may be affirmed with certain truth that if the Western princes had been lords of Asia instead of the Saracens and Turks they would not have tolerated Mohammedanism as Mohammedans have tolerated Christianity since they persecuted with the most relentless cruelty those of their own faith whom they deemed heterodox. (*An Apology for Mohammad and the Koran*, by John Davenport, p. 82, published in 1882 by Dryden Press, London)

The Promised Messiah^{as} states:

One objection put forward by the presenter of the treatise is that the Holy Quran contains the commandment to forcibly convert people to Islam. It appears that this person does not have any sense or knowledge of his own. He only toes the line of the priests. Because the priest have written, in their extreme cunning and prejudice as is their wont, in their books by way of fabrication that Islam has the commandment to make people Muslims by coercion, therefore he and his ilk have presented the same spurious allegation of the priests without any research or investigation. The Holy Quran clearly has this verse:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ

Meaning that, There should be no compulsion in religion. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257)

Certainly clear distinction has become manifest between guidance and misguidance. Henceforth what is the need for coercion? It is perplexing that despite it is spelled out with such clarity that no coercion should be used in matter of faith, yet they, whose hearts are darkened with malice and enmity, unjustly accuse the Word of God of endorsing coercion.

Now, by taking another verse, we seek the justice from those who are fair-minded that they should tell us, in the name of God, if this verse substantiates the teachings of coercion or, on the contrary proves the prohibition of coercion. The verse is:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ ابْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ¹
(Part 10, *Sūrah at-Taubah*)

This relief is necessary for those who are not aware of the essence of Islam. It is obvious that if the Holy Quran taught coercion, it would not have commanded that if an infidel desires to listen to the Holy Quran, he should be transported to his place of safety after he has heard it. Instead it would have instructed that when such an infidel is captured, he should be made a Muslim right there and then. (*Chashma-e-Ma'rifat*, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 232–233)

1. And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of you, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who have no knowledge. [Publisher]

The next question that he has raised is that the God of Islam is such that reason does not accept it. In fact, the God of Islam is such that He invites men to reason to convince them of His Existence. If everyone has this concept, that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and that He is its Proprietor, then this must also be conceded that He is the Lord of all powers. Instead of flouting Islam's concept of God, serious contemplation and reflection is needed.

The Promised Messiah^{as} says:

The God of Islam is the same God who is visible in the mirror of the law of nature and is discernible in the book of nature. Islam has not presented a new God but has presented the same God Who is presented by the light of man's heart, by the conscience of man, and by heaven and earth. (*Majmū'ah Ishtihārāt*, vol. 2, p. 310–311, ed. 1972)

He writes:

The attributes of God, to which the Holy Quran calls us are set out as follows:

Allah is He beside whom there is no god. Knower of the unseen and the seen, He is the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment, the Sovereign, the Most Holy, the Source of peace, the Bestower of security, the Protector, the Mighty, the Subduer, the Exalted. He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and

the earth glorifies Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise (*Sūrah al-Ḥashr*, 59:23–25). He has power to do all that He wills. He is Lord of the worlds, Most Gracious, Ever-Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:2–4). I respond to the call of the Caller when He calls on Me (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:187). The Ever-Living; He is Allah, the Single, Allah the Self-Existing and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him (*Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, 112:2–5).

This means that God is One and has no associate: that no one else is worthy of worship and obedience. He is so described for if He were not without associate, there would be the possibility that His associate might overcome Him and His Godhead would then be put in danger. No one else is worthy of worship means that He is so perfect and His attributes and excellences are so high and exalted, that if out of the universe a God were to be chosen on account of His perfect attributes or if one's mind were to imagine the best and highest attributes, He would be the highest than Whom nothing would be higher. To associate anyone lower with Him in His worship would be utterly wrong.

Thus, Islam is beyond any idolatry. This abomination and idolatry is perpetrated by the Christians that a Prophet of God has been erected as God. He is the Knower of the unseen, means that He alone has full knowledge of Himself and no one can encompass His Being. We can wholly observe the sun and the moon and every created thing, but we are unable to observe God

wholly. He is the Knower of the seen. Nothing is hidden from Him. Being God it could not be presumed that He was unaware of anything. He observes every particle of this universe, which a human being cannot do. He knows when He will destroy this system and bring forth the day of Judgment. No one except Him knows when that will be. Thus, He is that God Who is aware of all these times. He is Most Gracious; that is before the coming into being of creatures and their actions, out of His pure grace and in consequence of no action of any one, He makes provision for the comfort of everyone; as for instance, He made the sun and the earth and all other things for our use before any action proceeded from us. This bounty is called in the Book of God *Raḥmānīyyat*, and on account of this attribute God Almighty is called *Raḥmān*. He rewards good actions with gracious rewards and does not let go waste anyone's efforts. On account of this attribute, He is called رحيم [*Raḥīm*—the Merciful] and this attribute is called *Raḥīmiyyat* [Mercy]. مُلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ [*Māliki Yaumid-Dīn*—Master of the Day of Judgment], He has in His own hands the recompense of everyone. He has no agent to whom He has committed the governance of heaven and earth, having withdrawn Himself from it, leaving it to the agent to award punishment or reward.

He has no need. He has all powers. He does not need that He should make a council and then the council should help them. So if the question is that of logic, and that the concept of God by Islam is such that reason does not accept it; then reason does not accept their concept.

They have made three Gods that God's governance will be democracy. If even one of them dissents, it will be impossible to take any decision. He is *المَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ* the Sovereign, the Most Holy; that is, His sovereignty is subject to no defect, whereas human sovereignty is not free from defects. For instance, if the subjects of a human sovereign were all to leave the country and migrate, his sovereignty could not be maintained, or if his subjects were afflicted with famine, he would not be able to recover any revenue; or if his subjects were to dispute with him and question the basis of his sovereignty, what qualification for his sovereignty could he put forward? But the sovereignty of God is not subject to any of this. He can destroy in one instant the whole kingdom and create a new one. Were He not the Creator and All-Powerful, His sovereignty could not be maintained without injustice, for having forgiven the world once and bestowed salvation upon it, how could He have obtained another world to rule? Would He seize upon those who had attained salvation and revoke His salvation tyrannically? In such case, His Godhead would be called in question and like worldly sovereigns His Sovereignty would prove defective. Those who make laws for the world fall into different moods and have recourse to tyranny when they find that they cannot achieve their selfish purpose without tyranny.

For instance, a law permits that to save a vessel, the occupants of a boat might be allowed to perish, but God should not be subject to any such dire necessity. Had God not been All-Powerful possessing the capacity of creating from nothing He would have been compelled either

to have recourse to tyranny or to adhere to justice and be deprived of His Godhead. The vessel of God carries on with full power and justice.

Then He is *السَّلَامُ*, the Source of Security; that is to say, He is Himself secure against all defects and misfortunes and hardships and bestows security upon His creation. Had he been subject to misfortunes, for instance, had He been subject to being killed by people or by being frustrated in His designs, how would anyone's heart feel secure that God would save him from misfortunes? The false gods are described in the Holy Quran as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَكَقْوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

Surely, those on whom you call instead of Allah cannot create *even* a fly, though they should all combine together for the purpose; and if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they cannot recover it therefrom. Week indeed are *both* the seeker and the sought. They esteem not Allāh with the estimation which is His due . Surely, Allāh is powerful, Mighty. (*Sūrah al-Ḥajj*, 22:74–75)

God has all power above every other powerful one and He overcomes all. No one can seize Him or beat Him. Those who fall into such mistakes do not rightly estimate God and do not know what He should be. Then God is the Bestower of Peace and sets forth reasons in support of His excellences and His Unity. This is an indication that a believer in the True God will not be put to shame

in any company or before God Himself, inasmuch as he is furnished with strong arguments. But a believer in an artificial god is always in great distress. Instead of putting forward reasons he describes every senseless thing as a mystery so that he should not be laughed at and thus he seeks to hide established errors. God is *المُهَيِّمُنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ*, Guardian over all and Supreme over all. He sets everything right and is exalted above everything. *هُوَ اللَّهُ*, *أَخْلَقَ الْبَارِيُّ الْمَصُورُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءَ الْحُسْنَى*, *He is the Creator of bodies and souls. He gives shape to the bodies in the womb. All beautiful names that can be conceived of belong to Him. يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ*, those in the heavens and the earth glorify Him, which is an indication that there is life in the planets and that the dwellers therein follow divine guidance. He has power to do all that He wills, which is a great reassurance for His worshippers for if God were not powerful and were helpless, nothing could be expected from such a God, and then He says: *رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ*: *الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ - أَجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ* He is the Sustainer of all the worlds, Gracious, Merciful and Master of the Day of Judgment. He has not committed His power to anyone else. He responds to the call of everyone who calls on Him, that is to say, He accepts prayer. *الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ*, he is the Ever-Living and All-Sustaining. If He were not Ever-Living there would be fear lest He should die before us. He is Single, has no father and no son and no equal

and *no peer*. (*Islāmī Uṣūl kī Falāsfī*, Rūḥānī Khazāʾin vol. 10, pp. 58–63)¹

The Promised Messiah^{as} says:

It is important to realize that the religion which is championed as ‘Christianity’ is, in fact, the religion of Paul and not that of Christ, for the latter never taught the doctrine of the Trinity. As long as he lived, he only taught the Oneness of God and His being without partner. After he died, his brother James—who was his successor and a holy man—also taught the Oneness of God. But Paul unjustly opposed him and started preaching contrary to his true teachings, and went to the extent of creating a new faith. He set his followers against the Torah and taught them that there was no need for the Law after the Messiah’s Atonement, and Christians did not need to follow the Torah because the Messiah’s blood was enough to wipe away their sins. Another abomination which he introduced into this religion was that he made the eating of swine lawful, whereas the Messiah had declared swine to be an unclean animal. This is what he meant when he used the expression, ‘Do not cast pearls before swine’. While he compared the holy teachings to pearls, he likened unclean and impure people to swine. The truth is that the Greeks used to eat the flesh of swine, just like the people of Europe

1. This reference text also appears in *Philosophy of Teachings of Islam*, edition 2, pp. 92–101, published in 2017. [Publisher]

today, and it was in order to win their hearts that Paul declared it to be lawful, even though the Torah had forbidden it forever and had even forbidden anyone to touch it. Thus Paul is responsible for all the ills that are found in this religion. (*Chashma-e-Masīhī*, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 20. pp. 374–375)¹

The assertion of the Pope that there is great concordance between Greek thought and the kind of belief in God as based on Bible; the truth about that is that it was not the faith of Jesus. Instead it was an attempt to ingratiate with the Greeks. Those Christians who are honest, they know and admit Who the God of Islam is.

Edward Gibbon says:

The creed of Mahomet is free from suspicion or ambiguity; and the Koran is a glorious testimony to the unity of God. The prophet of Mecca rejected the worship of idols and men, of stars and planets, on the rational principle that whatever rises must set, that whatever is born must die, that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish. In the Author of the universe, his rational enthusiasm confessed and adored an infinite and eternal being, without form or place, without issue or similitude, present to our most secret thoughts, existing by the necessity of his own nature, and deriving from himself all moral and intellectual perfection. ... The first principle of reason and revelation

1. This reference text also appears in *Fountain of Christianity*, edition 2, p. 52, published in 2007. [Publisher]

was confirmed by the voice of Mahomet: his proselytes, from India to Morocco, are distinguished by the name of *Unitarians*; and the danger of idolatry has been prevented by the interdiction of images. (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, vol. V, pp. 203–204, published in 1788, London)

Thus it is the God of Islam that compels everyone, who reflects, to admit that prudent logical arguments are found in the God of Islam.

In the end I tell every Ahmadi that with all these battlefronts being opened against Islam, we can only pass through them successfully by bowing before God and by seeking His help. Therefore, call upon Him more than ever before that He should manifest His Providence, and the world is rid of false gods. Today, these people are targeting Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sas} due to the arrogance of their wealth and power, but their arrogance will be broken by the arrows of our prayers, God willing. Therefore, call upon that God who is the God of the Universe, who is the Lord of the Worlds, who is the God of Muhammad the Elect, the Chosen One^{sas} so that the dominion of that One and Only God is established on earth ever so soon.

Muslim countries should also heed. They should end their petty differences. They should end their mutual bickering and rivalries. They should work in coalition to raise the name of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. They should abstain from such actions that would prompt the others to point a finger at them. May Allah help them!

PRINCIPLES TO PROMOTE WORLD PEACE

in the Light of Islamic Teachings



*Friday Sermon by His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah
Delivered on June 22, 2007 in London*

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta'awwudh*, and *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*,
Huḍūr^{aba} said:

When disorder spreads everywhere in the world and peace appears to be elusive, as we all know, Allah, the Exalted, sends prophets for the reformation of His creation and to save His servants from this turmoil. When righteousness totally disappears from the world, it is at such times that prophets are sent. We observe that fourteen hundred years ago when righteousness had disappeared from the earth completely, and when discord was at its peak both on land and water, Allah, the Exalted, created the means to save the world from this turmoil by revealing His last law to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Allah, the Exalted, in revealing the Holy Quran to the Holy Prophet^{sas} taught us how to honour the rights of God and the

rights of mankind, which had either been forgotten by the believers of earlier prophets or those early prophets had not been given the injunctions of that sublime character. As for the idolaters, they had reached the peak of their ignorance.

The most critical point which the Holy Quran has drawn our attention to, for the proper discharge of all its injunctions, is righteousness. Thus, *taqwa*—righteousness—is of cardinal importance. If a man becomes fully aware and cognizant of it, he can become capable of acting according to the attributes of Allah, the Almighty. He can become their reflection and become capable of spreading them around. The Promised Messiah^{as}, emphasizing this crucial point, says:

In the Holy Quran, more emphasis has been laid on virtue and righteousness than on any other commandment. The reason for this is that righteousness bestows the strength to resist all vice and urges progress towards all good. The secret in placing so much emphasis on it is that righteousness is, in all circumstances, a charm that guarantees security and is a citadel for safeguarding against all harm. A righteous person can avoid many vain and harmful contentions that often lead other people to ruin and through their hasty actions and suspicions, sow the seeds of dissension among the people and provide an opportunity for the adversaries to lodge objections. (*Ayyāmus-Şulh*, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, p. 342)

Thus, it is righteousness which is the foundation of faith. As long as it persisted in Muslims, they continued to spread Allah's

message of peace in the world and noble souls kept joining them, and Islam emerged from Arabia and spread to other countries in Asia and the Far East. Africa benefited from its blessings too and the banner of Islam waved in Europe as well.

But when righteousness declined, when peace was replaced by selfishness, when the place of love and affection was taken by jealousy, rancour and grudges, Muslims became progressively deprived of those rewards and blessings that Allah had ordained for those who cherish His righteousness in their hearts.

Allah, the Exalted, brought down His final teachings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{ṣas} to remove the discord from the land and oceans. Even today, it is these teachings that have to replace darkness with light. Even today, it is these very teachings that have to remove the disorder in the world by its message of peace.

Though such people—from whose hearts righteousness has vanished and who have indulged in selfishness, jealousy, and malice—became deprived of it, yet God, the Exalted, did not retract the promise that He had made with the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}, who was the final Law-Bearing Prophet of Allah, that Islam is the religion which is destined to prevail over all religions. If anyone suffered, it were those who were devoid of righteousness, Islam did not suffer. Today, Allah, the Exalted, has raised a true lover of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} for the renaissance of Islam and its revival. Today, the believers of the Promised Messiah^{as} are to bring back the lost legacy of Muslims by acting upon the true teachings of Islam and by satiating their hearts with righteousness.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of every Aḥmadī to propagate this message of peace all around, and impress on every heart that Islam is the flag bearer of love and compassion and not of

violence. At every level, the teachings of Islam is meant to establish peace and harmony. The sublime guidance that Islam has offered to establish peace and harmony between nations and countries cannot be matched either by any human ingenuity or by any other religion. Only by implementing these sublime teachings, peace and harmony can be established in the world.

After the Second World War, an organization of nations emerged by the name of United Nations. We observe that it has met the same fate and is suffering the same plight that was suffered by the organization that preceded it. Great minds worked in collaboration and created this organization with great planning. Many committees were set up in it. The Security Council was established to maintain peace and accord in the world and to settle disputes. Another committee was set up to review the economic conditions whenever they become a cause for unrest. A Court of Justice was appointed. But, despite all this, what is happening in the world is quite obvious to all. The reason for these failures is the lack of righteousness. Some nations have set themselves up above others on the basis of their standard of prosperity, or because of their standard of knowledge, or because of their standard of might, or because of their level of learning, or because of their arrogance, or because of their perception that they are more peace loving than the rest. Different standards of permanent membership and non-permanent membership have been observed in a way that can never establish justice. Whenever any power has the authority to override a majority decision if done without spiritual insight and help from Allah and righteousness, this action can never be conducive to promoting peace. Therefore, if peace is to prevail in the world, it will be only through the

teachings that have been given by Allah, the Exalted, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} in which righteousness is the essential prerequisite. I shall now present some of its examples.

The Holy Quran teaches us concerning all nations as a humankind:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind, We have created you from male and female; and We have made you into clans and tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (*Sūrah al-Hujurat*, 49:14)

This is the teaching about Islamic brotherhood, and the commandment of Allah, the Exalted, for the establishment of Islamic brotherhood and for the establishment of peace. This command is given to a believer, who has the regard for Allah, the Exalted, to fully apply these teachings of brotherhood to himself and to spread it in the world. This is the principle by which mutual love and affection and mutual brotherhood can be established in the world. Otherwise, they can create as many security councils as they desire, but they cannot allay the anxiety of nations because the powerful have reserved greater rights for themselves than others. Thus, the security of the world can only be guaranteed and the unrest of the world can only be alleviated when the false and cruel notion of national superiority is eliminated. This anxiety cannot be allayed until the arrogance of racial and national superiority

leaves the hearts and minds. Peace cannot be established in the world until it is firmly driven into the minds of the people and governments that harbour the feeling of this racial, ethnic and national superiority—that we are all children of Adam and our being is the result of the union of man and woman under the laws of nature and, as human beings, we are all equal in the sight of God. In God's sight, if one is superior, it is on the basis of righteousness; and whose level of righteousness is higher is known only to God. No one is to judge his own righteousness as he is not to determine its standard, for he cannot estimate its quality.

Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, says that your rank, or you being better or higher than another human being, has nothing to do with your race or tribe or colour or your wealth or your high standing in your society. The superiority of a nation is not in its dominion over weaker people. These secular powers and governments may have a rank in the eyes of the world, but not in the sight of God, the Exalted. And what is not acceptable in the sight of God, the Exalted, cannot succeed in the apparently good objectives for which it is being used.

Islam considers all human beings to be one family. When they will live like a family, they will care for each other's welfare just as the members of a family, who have mutual love and affection, care for each other.

In this verse, Allah, the Exalted, has defined the concept of tribes and nations as a means to help recognize each other whether a Pakistani, a German or an African. Otherwise, as a race, you are all human. The emotions that a rich person has are the same as that of one who is poor. The emotions of a European are the same as that of an African. The emotions that those from the east have

are the same as that of ones from the west. Therefore, be sensitive to each other's feelings. If you will be mindful of these feelings, you will remain in peace. Allah, the Exalted, has endowed each nation with special qualities of its own, make use of them to maintain lasting love and reverence.

This, according to Islam, is the very standard for enduring peace. Otherwise, as I said, no matter how many security councils are formulated, no matter how many organizations are set up, they can never succeed in establishing enduring peace and security.

These Quranic teachings have not merely existed as a concept from earlier times; rather, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} acted upon it during his own lifetime. He looked after the poor, he loved the slaves, he restored the rights of the destitute and he ensured their proper status in society. Bilal^{ra}, who was an African slave, had been emancipated but had no stature in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad's treatment bestowed such a rank on him that even 'Umar^{ra} addressed him as 'Our Master, Bilal'. These are the ways to set the standards of peace.

At the occasion of the Final Pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} pronounced unequivocally:

You are all children of Adam, therefore, no Arab has any precedence over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any precedence over an Arab. Likewise, colour or race is not a reason for your superiority either.

This was the beautiful society that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} created, and this is the very society that the Community of the

Promised Messiah^{as} has to establish today under the instruction of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}.

Allah, the Exalted, has ordained international security, providing an ample reply, and a satisfactory explanation for those who say that Islam spread by the sword and ordains coercion. To the contrary, Allah, the Exalted, commands that those who are not terrorizing you, who are not at war with you (under some injunctions, war was a necessity; those details cannot be discussed here), who have not raised the sword against you; not only you cannot be harsh to them, but you be gracious to them, be kind to them, and observe all dictates of justice in their affairs, whether they are Christians or Jews or anyone else.

In this regard, the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

Certainly be kind to them, be compassionate to them, be equitable to them because God loves those who do so.
(*Nūrul-Qurān*, No. 2, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 9, p. 435)

This is in compliance with this injunction of the Holy Qurān, in which Allah, the Exalted, says:

لَا يَنْهَى اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَ لَمْ يُخْرِجُواكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَ
تُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

Allāh forbids you not respecting those who have not fought against you on account of *your* religion, and who have not driven you out from your homes, that you be kind to them and deal equitably with them; surely, Allāh loves those who are equitable. (*Sūrah al-Mumtahinah*, 60:9)

Here, reference is to the other injunction mentioned at another place that if you must raise the sword to stop disorder, you are permitted. Such people who create disorder and strife, who have raised the sword against you, against them you can declare war as a nation and as a sovereign government. But do not take undue advantage from this allowance. One who is not in confrontation with you, who is not persecuting you, who is not at war with you, who is not bent upon destroying you; in that case, it is an obligation on you that you observe all the dictates of justice and be kind to them and treat them well. This is what is going to endear you to Allah, the Exalted. Whether it is the declaration of war or the pronouncement of disapproval, it is only against those who have nothing else to do in the world than to create discord. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, does not condone friendship and affectionate relationship with such people. But He also does not permit one to disrupt the peace of those who are living peacefully.

It should also be clear here that according to Islamic teachings, declaration of war or the expression of any reaction is the prerogative of sovereign governments. If anyone from a small or a large group takes it upon himself, it will create anarchy within his own country and state. Unfortunately that is the very thing that is being displayed by the so called terrorists among Muslims in different countries. They have created chaos in their countries which is defaming Islam and Muslims.

There is another commandment of Allah, the Exalted, which is of great importance for international peace and inter-religious relationships. Allah, the Exalted, says:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

And revile not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, revile Allah in *their* ignorance. Thus unto every people have We caused their doing *to seem* fair. Then unto their Lord is their return; and He will inform them of what they used to do. (*Sūrah al-An‘ām*, 6:109)

In this regard, The Promised Messiah^{as} says:

God, through the Holy Qur’an, has cultivated refined and respectful etiquettes. He admonishes:

... وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ...

In other words, do not even abuse the idols of the non-believers lest they abuse your God out of ignorance. (*Sūrah al-An‘ām*, 6:109)

Now consider that this is the Quranic teachings despite the fact that it treats idols as of no significance. Yet God teaches the Muslims to abstain from insulting even the idols and admonishes them instead to adopt a course of gentle persuasion lest they [the idolaters] should be provoked, in turn, to abuse God. The Muslims would then be responsible for such abuses. (*Paighām-e-Şulh*, Rūḥānī Khazā’in vol. 23, pp. 460–461)¹

1. This reference text also appears in *A Message of Peace*, edition 2, pp. 32–33, published in 2007. [Publisher]

This is the ordinance of Islam for the maintenance of peace and harmony in the society and in the world. To retaliate filth with filth is like putting filth on oneself. If the opponent says something and you reply to them by maligning their idols, they can malign God in return. By giving this extreme example, Muslims have been cautioned that whenever they talk, their discourse should have prudence. It is not that they should show cowardice and be sanguine, but rather they should always be guided by the Quranic directive of ‘Dispute with sensible argument’ (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:126), and that they should always keep this directive in mind.

By giving this extreme example, Allah, the Exalted, taught us that if due to our ill-advised response, non-Muslims malign God, then every Muslim who has jealousy for God above everything else will be offended; as it should be. So due to our wrong choice of words, we will be responsible for the abuse of God by others. Similarly, if we abuse the elders of others, their higher ups and leaders, they in turn may also commit excesses.

That is why it is reported in the traditions that the Holy Prophet^{sas} said, ‘Do not slander your father’. Someone asked who would slander his parents. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} said, ‘When you abuse someone’s father, he will abuse your father and it will be as if you abused your own father’. This is the Islamic teachings to promote goodwill that ‘shirk’ [associating partners with God], which is so extremely abhorrent to God, and about which Allah, the Exalted, says that He will not pardon its punishment for those who commit ‘shirk,’ it is directed to address them within the boundaries of decency. The command for you is that your morals should be such that they should present the correct

picture of a Muslim. Therefore, it is the chore of a Muslim today that he proclaim these sublime teachings.

As for how to deal with those who do not desist from ridiculing Islam, God, the Exalted, has declared that the ill-fortune of such people has made their actions appear beautiful to them. They think their actions are laudable. But these people will ultimately return to their Lord after this life. And when they will return to God, He will apprise them of what they used to do. Then he will mete out the treatment that they deserve. About this, Allah, the Exalted, says:

الْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ مِّنَاجِ اللَّخِيرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيْبٍ بِالَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
فَأَلْقِيْهِ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيْدِ

Cast ye twain into Hell every ungrateful enemy of *truth*, ‘Hinderer of good, transgressor, doubter, ‘Who sets up another God beside Allah. So do ye twain cast him into the dreadful torment’. (*Sūrah Qāf*, 50:25–27)

This is what Allah, the Exalted, shall tell the custodians. In the next world, He will give them this treatment. The task that Allah has taken upon Himself, we need not worry about that.

These days there is much pandemonium about Rushdie, but even these kinds of faithless people have some god. Some organizations of the world or some influential men of the world or some governments of this world are taken by them as their god. God has a strategy to deal with such people. By us rioting; or by declaring that suicide attacks are justified and this should be our reaction; by doing or saying such things, a wrong image of Islam will be presented to the world and nothing would be achieved except an

erroneous misrepresentation, or our own assets being damaged by rioting.

The absurdities he uttered against Islam or the Holy Prophet^{sas}, even against the angels and God Himself, he did so years ago. It is his wont, and he is continuing to do so. Now, if any government, utterly disregarding the sentiments of Muslims, gives him some award or title for his deeds or for any other reason, then they will all be accountable to God. Allah, the Exalted, says that He will deal with them Himself.

Secondly, it is not as if there is no decency left in Europe altogether and that in Europe, or the West, there are no decent people left. Innumerable people here, even in England, have protested against it. Even members of Parliament have objected to the act, that he be granted knighthood, as it would have no benefit except to jeopardize the peace and goodwill in the world; no other objective can possibly be achieved.

In the same vein, when he wrote this book ten or twelve years ago; or rather, when he was made to write the book, as it is now coming to light that he was made to write the book; some commentators from here observed that it is evident that there was someone behind this and so was not his solo effort. It is a massive conspiracy against Islam; to incite further repulsion against Islam, and to provoke them in a way that they could then take further advantage of this opportunity. And, Muslims are only too eager to provide this opportunity. Nothing shall be achieved by a few protests, and then settling down quietly. It is a huge conspiracy. This conspiracy is not going to end by burning flags, burning pictures, burning effigies, or protesting. By doing these things, it will only help them realize their true purpose which is

to buttress their contention that Islam is a religion that they are making it out to be.

In any case, how Muslims should truly respond to such actions is that they should apply Islamic teachings upon themselves more than ever before so as to silence the world on its own, and invoke salutations upon the Holy Prophet^{sas} through which his followers can advance in spirituality and thereby present his pristine example before the world. But today, if anyone can do this, it is only the Aḥmadīs who have accepted the true disciple of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. If anyone can answer the critics, it is the Aḥmadīs. If anyone can show the sublime teachings of Islam to the world, it is the Aḥmadīs. Therefore, it is the obligation of every Aḥmadī that he strives harder than ever before in this regard, and he sends salutations on the Holy Prophet^{sas} ever more.

At the time that Rushdie wrote the infamous book, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV^{ra} had our Mohamed Arshad Ahmedi write a book in its rebuttal. The title of the book was *Rushdie—Haunted by His Unholy Ghosts*. I have asked that it again be made available, because it was not in stock; or if it was, it was only a small supply. Some changes also had to be made. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV^{rta} had given some instructions and explanation to him in regard to the addition of a chapter. I had told him to publish it again. Some time ago, a publishing company, that I do not recall the name of, did publish it and they are marketing it also. Now the Jamā'at is also publishing it. It will be available soon, God willing. It has been translated into Urdu. It should be given to the educated and serious audience so that reality is known to the world. Thus, this is the service by which the high morals of Islam will become known

and also the realistic ways to eradicate the unrest of the world will become manifest.

Allah, the Exalted, ordains in the Holy Quran that the peace of the world depends on justice. And just how high should your standard of justice be? Allah says , in this regard:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ آلَا
تَعْدِلُوا إِعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O ye who believe! be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be *always* just. That is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Aware of what you do. (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:9)

Explaining this, the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

“The enmity of the hostile nations should not inhibit you from justice. Adhere to justice as righteousness lies in it.” He says: You know how hard it is to deal with equity in matters relating to such nations who wantonly abuse and cause grief and commit bloodshed and give chase and kill children and women as the infidels of Makkah did; and then do not desist from warfare. But the Quranic teachings did not strip the rights of even such mortal enemies and admonished for justice and veracity... I tell you truly that it is easy to treat the enemy courteously but it is very difficult to safeguard the rights of the enemy and not to abandon equity and justice in disputes. It is the feat only of the brave.

It is easy that one may sit down and talk calmly with the enemy but it is very difficult and an act of great valour that one may forget enmity entirely and then dispense justice to him. Thus, in this verse, God did not mention love but mentioned the standard of love because the one who will be fair to his mortal enemy and will not overlook truth and justice is the one who truly loves. (*Nūrul-Qurān*, no. 2, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 9, pp. 409–410)

[The Promised Messiah^{as}] said that Allah, the Exalted, did not just say, 'Love them,' but instead said that the standard of your love should be such that the enemy who has reached the extreme of animosity—keeping this extreme example before you of how the Meccans treated Muslims, how they treated the Holy Prophet^{sas}, they committed murders, they committed atrocities—yet it was said that you have to treat even such people with justice. When this happens, goodwill grows, and this is the message of peace that can deliver peace to the world in reality.

These are the true teachings of Islam and these are its standards. When there will be genuine affection, and the dictates of justice will be met; then the message of peace will also be conveyed. This was also the noble practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that brought the leading chiefs of Makkah into the lap of Islam at the occasion of the conquest of Makkah. This practice of his became a bastion of security for the enemies. The declaration of 'No reckoning for you on this day' (*Sūrah Yūṣuf*, 12:93) disseminated the fragrance of peace at that occasion and forever thereafter. This is the pinnacle to which is tied the security of the world. Otherwise, all the great governments, no matter how much they espouse justice, will

continue to be exploited by the conspirators. They will continue to follow the dictates of such organizations that hold the key to the economy of the world; they claim they are for the world peace but in practice they foment strife both in ocean and on land.

These were some of the commandments of the Holy Quran in this context, that I outlined, which reflect this sublime teachings. May those days come soon when such governments are also established in the world that would show the real picture of Islam. May such rulers appear who assist in the implementation of the beautiful Islamic teachings of peace in the world coming behind the shield of the true disciple of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and the Imam of the Age and tread on the path of righteousness. It is for the Ahmadi's today to get busy with prayers for the achievement of this result.

May Allah accept our prayers and make this world an abode of love, compassion, and peace, and may everyone have only one God who is the singular and unique God.

SANCTIONS FOR SELF-DEFENCE IN ISLAM



*Friday Sermon by His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah,
delivered on June 29, 2007 in London*

After reciting *Tashabbud*, *Ta'awwudh*, and *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, Ḥuḍūr^{aba} said:

In the previous sermon, I had mentioned the principles of peace, harmony and goodwill for reformation and restoration of justice. I had mentioned Quranic injunctions in this regard that the foundation of goodwill and peace can be laid only by attending to the dictates of justice and that its foundation depends on righteousness. And, in the Holy Quran, there is such emphatic exhortation—and repeated exhortation—for a Muslim to stay on righteousness that it cannot even be imagined that a ‘believer’ can play any role in the unrest of the world.

In this regard, I had mentioned the teachings of the Holy Quran with this reference that it does not behave a Muslim, either as an individual or as a government, that it should not fulfil the dictates of justice because of hostility towards a nation. Islam enjoins establishing and fostering peaceful and harmonious

relationships with every nation except those who try directly to force war upon Muslims.

In this vein, I shall further mention Quranic teachings as to why and to what extent war is permitted. And if war, which Islam sanctioned in its early days, is not waged under specific conditions, what kind of harm can be done and what type of horrible consequences are to be expected or were expected at that time. This shall prove that the sanction to fight was for the sake of peace and security of the world, and not for the promotion of unrest and chaos in the world, as the anti-Islam propagandists are clamouring about.

If we discuss the actions of their own religions and their governments—of these opponents, or their cohorts, or their supporters—and the efforts they are making to destroy the peace and security of the world and its harmony, they would have no rebuttal; but our intent is not to further fan the flames of their malice and the rancour and jealousies of the hearts. Therefore, I shall outline here the Quranic teachings that will further explain the principles for which the permission of war or fighting was granted. This, by itself, will further underscore the sublime teachings of Islam. These are such wonderful teachings that they establish their stature with majesty and elegance when contrasted with the teachings of any other religion. No other teachings can even come close. Therefore, in this regard, no Aḥmadī needs to adopt or display a contrite attitude in answering any critic of Islam. Every injunction of the Holy Quran is replete with deep wisdom whose intent is to establish the ‘Rights of God’ and the ‘Rights of Man’.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained the reasons for the wars that were fought in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sas} or in the times

of the righteous successors. He further enumerates three reasons for them:

Firstly, for self defence; that is, as means of self preservation; for one's own protection and defence.

Secondly, for punishment; that is, life for life. When Muslims were attacked, wars were fought to punish the enemy. Islamic state was in place; the jurisdiction to punish existed.

Thirdly, for ensuring freedom; that is, for the purpose of breaking the might of adversaries who used to kill and persecute people for becoming Muslims. This was done in order to break the strength of those people who persecuted those who accepted Islam.

Now, let us look at the Quranic teachings for those wars and for what reason they were fought. By looking at these teachings, even a person of average intelligence can understand that the conditions in which Muslims were permitted to fight or engage in war were such that, if permission was not granted, the peace of the world would have been jeopardized and security would have vanished. These are such beautiful teachings that, as I have said earlier, the teachings of any other religion—be it Christianity or Judaism or any other religion—cannot even come close.

Allah, the Exalted, says in the Holy Quran:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ

Permission *to fight* is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allah, indeed, has power to help them. (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:40)

Then, He says:

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَا دَفْعَ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ بِعَصَاهُمْ
بِبَعْضٍ لَهْدًا مَتَّ صَوَامِعُ وَبَيْعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ ۖ وَمَسْجِدٌ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَ
لِيُنْصَرَّنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly, only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah.’—And if Allah had not repelled some people by means of others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft remembered, would surely have been destroyed. And Allah will, surely, help him who helps Him. Allah is, indeed, Powerful, Mighty. (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:41)

That is, permission is granted because:

Firstly, بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ because of the atrocities they were subjected to; they were being slaughtered without any justification; therefore, the permission is given to them that, now that your sovereignty is established, if you are attacked, or if someone comes to kill you, you fight back and take revenge; or, now that a sovereign state exists, punish the murdered as retribution.

Secondly, it is stated that أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ, that is, they were expelled from their homes without any justification. What is their fault? The fault is that they say رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ—that is, Allah is our Lord.

Then, Allah, the Exalted, says that if this permission were not granted—which was given after a long period of perseverance by Muslims and after putting up with atrocities and being subjected

to the grind of oppression—oppression and tyranny would have prevailed all over.

Thus, a procedural injunction was given that when any nation remains subject to the tyranny of another nation for a prolonged period, authority is sanctioned that when it establishes its sovereignty it can engage in war if it has the jurisdiction; but its intent is to end tyranny and not to give license to go beyond limits in avenging the atrocities. Even this sanction has been restricted. This prudent injunction ensured the security of other religions as well because, if this permission was not sanctioned, the houses of worship of every religion would be razed by the tyrants, resulting in further increase in hatred and disappearance of peace from the world. Allah, the Exalted, says that it has always been permissible to stop the tyrant. Thus, if they accuse the state of Islam, it is an extremely unfair allegation. When tyranny exceeds bounds, force is needed to stop it.

Islam does not practice coercion in matters of religion. It affirms that there is no compulsion in this matter. It did not force anyone into its own religion, nor is it possible, nor is there any injunction for it. Religion is a matter of conscience for everyone. Therefore, everyone has the right to live his life according to his choice.

In this injunction, Muslims are reminded of this important matter too that where you have sovereignty, you must abstain from unjustly razing the synagogues, churches, and houses of worship of other religions, otherwise, this cruelty will be reciprocated and your mosques will also be razed and thus a chain of disorder will ensue.

Unfortunately, these days, some opportunist mullahs, in some

Muslims countries, including Pakistan, are serving notices in the name of Islam even to Christians. A few days ago, it was in the newspapers that in Charsadda, notice was given that either they should become Muslims or they would be killed or their church would be demolished. Some were actually razed to the ground a few years ago. This is what has defiled Islam and has provided the opportunity to the opponents of Islam to criticize Islam. Today, the humiliation that Muslims are suffering everywhere is because they are violating the injunctions of Allah, the Exalted. Otherwise, it is Allah's promise that if you will endeavour to end disorder and mischief, Allah's help and support shall accompany you. Today we see that Allah's help and support assisting Muslim government is not evident anywhere. They are in a very dismal state.

Then, there is the persecution of Aḥmadīs. They try to demolish their mosques. In some places, they do succeed. They are disobeying Allah, the Exalted. They are being disobedient to Allah, and because of it, the bounty of God is receding. Consider the plight of Pakistan. As I have said earlier, most countries are in the same predicament. Therefore, if the government does not reign in the ignorant Maulawīs even now then theirs is a war with Allah. As far as the Aḥmadīs are concerned; Aḥmadīs, due to the compliance with the teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as}, do not react to persecution with violence. In their respective countries, in deference to the laws of those countries, they put up with atrocities and have been patient. Besides, now in the times of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the overt battles with guns and cannons are forbidden. Aḥmadīs are not going to retaliate but God Almighty, in accordance with His promise, shall most certainly come to support the Promised Messiah^{as}.

The Islamic countries, where Aḥmadīs are being persecuted or where laws are promulgated against Aḥmadīs, should be mindful that on account of excesses in these atrocities, this ordinance of Allah *دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ*, that defence of people by Allah, the Exalted, is sometimes enacted by making some groups clash with others (*Sūrah al-Ḥajj*, 22:41), may operate against them for their ingratitude.

Allah, the Exalted, has not said that this ordinance is only for Muslims that, if Muslims are oppressed, they have the permission to raise the sword, or that this peace and security is only to safeguard the rights of Muslims, instead, this ordinance is for the followers of any religion that if they are persecuted, Allah will make provision for them too. Aḥmadīs, who are not only Muslims, but due to their acceptance of the Imam of the age, who came in accordance with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, they are more compliant with the injunctions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} than all others. They have established the creed, *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ* [There is none worthy of worship except Allah], more firmly in their hearts than all others; they know its spirit and have conviction in this creed more than all others. By persecuting them, by destroying their mosques, the adversaries of the Aḥmadīs bring themselves under the indictment of the saying in which the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that any Muslim who attacks another Muslim is a Muslim no more.

The definition of a Muslim, as I have explained earlier, is that he should believe in the creed, *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ* [There is none worthy of worship except Allah], and he should have faith in it. Thus, the Community of the Promised Messiah^{as} is not going to raise hand against anyone because we live under governments

and we do not have a government. Besides, in the times of the Promised Messiah^{as}, jihad has been forbidden in the sense that force is not to be used anyway. We do not raise our hand against anyone even under mundane conditions. The question of raising our hand against those who affiliate themselves with the Holy Prophet^{sas} cannot even arise. The adversaries of the Aḥmadīs may do whatever they like, from us there is always the message of goodwill for them. We have faith that Allah, the Exalted, Himself shall open the avenues to eradicate these atrocities. Tomorrow, if not today, God-willing, these avenues shall open and God-willing, Aḥmadīs shall breathe freedom everywhere.

But we also agonize that if these governments and their miscreants do not stop, then those whom Allah, the Exalted, according to His decree, may send for protection, may not observe any limits. It is quite possible that many among them would be those who would not abide by the tenants of Islam. They would have no limits to their excesses and they could go beyond any bounds. Therefore, we should pray for them too that Allah may give them common sense. Whereas, on the one hand, this message is a reassurance for the oppressed Muslims, on the other hand, it is a grave warning for those who, despite calling themselves Muslim, do not desist from tyranny.

Thus, as I said, Allah, the Exalted, has vouchsafed the security of every human being in this proclamation. One who is called a Muslim, and yet fails to act accordingly, comes under the censure of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, all those who are known as Muslim, they should, instead of defiling Islam, try to benefit from it by rectifying their conduct and acting on the dictates of Allah, the Exalted, ever more diligently. Otherwise, God's help will never

be on their side. May it be that Muslims take heed, and, under this command, be the champions to safeguard every oppressed individual, and be the ones to stop every tyrant from transgressing, because the security of Muslims, as I have said, is also linked to this command.

In the next verse, Allah, the Exalted, says:

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

Those who, if We establish them in the earth, will observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt and enjoin good and forbid evil. And with Allah rests the final issue of all affairs. (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:42)

This is their conduct when they gain power; when they overcome the tyrants with the help of Allah; when they have their own state where they can live according to the tenets of Islam; they should analyse themselves and realize that whatever they have achieved is a favour from God. Now, they are not going to be like those whose mission is to deprive people of their freedom. A Muslim state is expected to ensure freedom of thought and conscience for every citizen, irrespective of religion or other affiliations, where everyone is expected to participate freely in the politics of the country, where everyone has equal opportunity to succeed as a citizen. This is the responsibility of Islamic governments. The etiquette of running an Islamic government will be learnt and the ability to ensure the rights of its citizens will be acquired only when it will always be kept foremost in the mind that the Being of Allah, the Exalted, is watching me all the time. If I usurp the rights of anyone,

nothing will save me from seizure by Allah, the Exalted, because He has an eye on everything. Therefore, a Muslim, or indeed a Muslim government, will have to become a true worshipper when they attains power and peace and security; because without becoming a true worshipper, without establishing Prayers, fear of Allah cannot develop in the hearts. The real Prayers are those that are offered with fear of Allah and righteousness, otherwise, Allah, the Exalted, has declared that there are many worshippers who are cursed by Allah, whose Prayers shall be thrown at their faces. Therefore, it will have to be assessed whether we are offering those Prayers that are the Prayers of those who live their lives according to the ordinances of God. Additionally, financial sacrifices will have to be made in contradistinction to usurpation of what belongs to others by way of transgression. Then there is the exhortation to enjoin good and forbid evil and this is not possible without the righteousness from Allah, the Exalted.

The gist of all this discourse is that a Muslim state, after acquiring sovereignty, should not preoccupy itself with increasing its power by nefarious means, instead, it is its responsibility to safeguard the rights of every citizen, irrespective of religion or race; and to give due respect to the poor so that an atmosphere of peace and security may develop in the society and country. It is the responsibility of Muslim state to guarantee the freedom of every citizen to adopt a religion according to his conscience; and to worship accordingly; and to safeguard his places of worship. This is what also guarantees peace and security.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of all Muslim states today to present this real picture of Islam to the world. The Ahmadiyya Community does not have the sovereignty but we can pray that

may Allah give these people the capacity that they may present the correct picture of Islam so that these attacks that are being made on Islam from all directions—and these attacks are indeed because of failure to understand Islam and because of some of the wrong attitudes and wrong actions of some Muslims—could be prevented.

Further, Allah, the Exalted, says that this permission of war is extended to an Islamic state on the basis of the reasons that have been mentioned earlier, yet, despite the permission, its limits have been defined and its rules and regulations have been set. There is no open license. As has been mentioned earlier, if the enemy commits atrocity, it should not happen that you become cruel too. On the contrary, as far as possible, limit your war to the extent that is necessary to stop tyranny. No transgression should be committed by the Islamic state.

Allah, the Exalted, says:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191)

Then, He says:

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجْتُمُوهُمْ ۚ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۗ فَإِن قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ ۗ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكٰفِرِينَ

And kill them wherever you meet them and drive them

out from where they have driven you out; for persecution is worse than killing. And fight them not *in, and* near the Sacred Mosque until they fight you therein. But if they fight you, then fight them. Such is the requital for the disbelievers. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:192)

Then, He says:

فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

But if they desist, then surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:193)

Then He says:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is *freely professed* for Allah. But if they desist, then *remember* that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:194)

Thus, this is the teachings of Islam about peace based on justice and equity that war is permitted only if the war is strictly for Allah, the Exalted. A deed dedicated to God can not be rooted in tyranny. Therefore, the purport of fighting for the sake of God is to fight those who stop from the worship of Allah, who persecute and, as has been mentioned before, who have exceeded all bounds in oppression and tyranny. Therefore, this fight should have no motive other than whatever is being done is solely for the sake of God. Any war that is for personal greed and ambitions, or to

expand the influence of one's sovereignty, is strictly forbidden in Islam.

It is further said that such a war is justified only if the enemy is the first to attack. It is also not permitted that if you are at war with a particular nation, you may attack every individual of that nation. If you do so, it will be transgression and Allah, the Exalted, reproves transgression. Your fight should strictly be with the soldiers who confront you in arms.

Further, it is commanded to constrain the war. You are not to keep expanding the battlefronts just to teach the enemy a lesson. Moreover, it is prohibited even to fight in the vicinity of places of worship, except if the enemy leaves no choice, let alone the notion of destroying them. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sas} always specifically admonished his armies that cloisters and churches are to be protected, they are not to be destroyed, and they are not to be damaged. It is unimaginable to fight in the vicinity of the Sacred Mosque, this is the house of God that is destined to unite the peoples of the entire world with peace and security on one hand to make them one united nation; therefore, its sanctity is to be maintained under all circumstances except only if you are forced by the enemy, and he attacks you, then it is a compulsion.

Allah's intent, by sanctioning war, is to remove tyranny from the world, therefore, it is said that when anarchy ends or the enemy renounces war then no transgressions should be committed by a Muslim. Once religious freedom is established, there is no justification for wars for political objectives. These are the Islamic teachings. If the objective of Islam was only to spread Islam by force, there would not have been this injunction, فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ that is, if they desist, there is no retaliation against them. So, do

not look for excuses to fight. Everyone has the right to lead his or her life according to the religion they have chosen. War is on only as long as they are fighting with you. It is not to enforce a change of their religion.

Then, at one place, Allah, the Exalted, says:

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِن يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَّا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۚ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُذُورُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past will be forgiven them; and if they return *thereto*, then verily the example of the former peoples has already gone before them. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:39)

Then, it is said:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَ يَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ ۚ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

And fight them until there is no persecution and religion is wholly for Allah. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Watchful of what they do. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:40)

Then, it is said:

وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

And if they turn their backs, then know that Allah is your Protector. What an excellent Protector and what an excellent Helper! (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:41)

Thus, Allah, the Exalted, had this proclamation made through the

Holy Prophet^{sas} that we are not fighting this war as a transgression or extortion. Indeed it is you who targeted us for persecution in Makkah, and now, too, you are forcing the war upon us. It is being said to the infidels after the Battle of Badr, which was fought shortly after the migration from Makkah. The memories of the atrocities, excesses, and transgressions perpetrated by the infidels of Makkah were still fresh. How the Muslims were persecuted, the pain and suffering inflicted upon even the Holy Prophet^{sas} himself, these memories were still raw. When, in the battle of Badr, the infidels attacked and suffered defeat; this uplifted the spirits of Muslims. Their faith in the help of Allah, the Exalted, was further enhanced too. But Allah, the Exalted, had this proclamation made that the heart of a Muslim is far beyond grudge, rancour, and vengeance. Every Muslim is expected that he should be a symbol of peace at large. This proclamation was made that we forgive your old transgressions, we even forgive your forcing war upon us, if you wish to make an agreement with us not to fight us again. If you make this pledge, then we will also abide by it. But if you do not abstain, we have no choice. Whenever you will attack, or persecute our comrades, other Muslims, it will be avenged in order to stop your belligerence. Thus, if we have to fight for the sake of Allah's religion and for the peace and security of the world, we shall.

This is also criticized that it is said:

وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ

And religion is wholly for Allah. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:40)

They revile Islam that it means that Muslims are enjoined to

continue fighting and continue to spread Islam with the force of sword till Islam spreads all over the world. This is their poor understanding and comprehension, and their maligning of Islam. If you look with reference to the context and consider other relevant verses, some of which I have already mentioned, it plainly implies that because the matter of faith of everyone is with his God, everyone should adopt whatever faith he likes. It is incumbent on every Muslim to convey the message of Islam; but to forcibly make people accept it is not his task. This is Allah's domain. 'Faith becomes wholly for Allah' means that whatever you do, do it strictly for Allah, not that you force Islam on others. If someone does not accept, it is his prerogative. The action of everyone is in front of Allah, the Exalted; He will adjudge as He pleases.

This accusation is also levelled against the person of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that he too, God forbid, wantonly invaded and coerced people to become Muslims, and wars were fought for this very purpose. Besides this, another argument is also advanced that when the Holy Prophet^{sas} wrote letters of preaching to the kings or when he dispatched armies or when a battle was engaged, he would send the message of *أَسْلِمُوا تَسْلَمُوا* or *أَسْلِمْتُ تَسْلَمُوا* that is, accept Islam and you will be safe. And they infer from it that it is a threat that either accept Islam or else we shall make you accept it with our might.

Firstly, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said it purely for the purpose of preaching that it is the message of Islam that is really the message of peace, therefore, submit to it and come under its shade. These critics look only with a worldly viewpoint. They should at least have the sense that the Holy Prophet^{sas} wrote those invitational letters to mighty kings and wrote those letters simultaneously,

and, according to the critics, these are threatening words; these letters are being written at the same time to all the great powers of the world, to the kings, that if you do not submit, get ready for war. If one accepts their assertion, it is even beyond a person of average sense to commit such an act, that is, that he should simultaneously confront the entire world, particularly when the strength of Islam at the time was only limited. They should use some common sense, they should ponder a little.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} was the prophet of God. He had complete faith in the being of God. He did give this message but only because he desired well for mankind and he was convinced that there was peace and security only in this religion. This religion alone could ensure peace and security, therefore, the world needed to accept it. And, with this motivation, he sent this message to different kings. No one could have had greater conviction than the Holy Prophet^{sas}, who was sent by God with His last law-bearing message to the world, that it was this message that vouchsafed the peace of the world. Thus, in this vein, in these very words, he also invited the kings. And, due to the same compassion, before the beginning of a battle, he would send this message to every tyrant who was determined to extirpate Islam, that Islam is the message of peace and security and goodwill; now that you are pushing the war upon us, even then we still, avoiding the confrontation, give you the message of peace that if you wish to remain attached to your religion, you are free to do so. You may worship according to your tradition but renounce instigation against Islam and persecution of Muslims. Now that you have forced war upon us and you are not willing to accept this alternative, there is only one resolution left and that is if you lose the war, you will have to come

in submission; or if you submit and surrender to Islam without the war, that is acceptable too; all your rights shall be safeguarded.

Thus, this allegation is absolutely false that, God forbid, it was some kind of a threat. No matter how it is taken, it was the implementation of the injunction that you have to strive to establish peace till such time that religion becomes totally for God. Everyone has to be given religious freedom. History bears witness how, during wars, he tended the vanquished and how he exhorted others to do so. He even said that no treachery should be used in war. His attacks were also carried out in broad daylight. Instruction was not to kill a child, not to kill a woman, not to kill priests and religious leaders, not to kill elderly, more precisely not to harm anyone who does not raise a sword even if he is young and able. Terror and harassment is not to be created in the country at war with you. When the armies have to camp during war, they should camp at such places that would not inconvenience people. He admonished that anyone who does not observe these guidelines, his fight will not be for the sake of God but will be for the sake of his own ego. And, the wars that are fought for personal egos comprise nothing but tyranny and transgression. Thus, it is to stop the tyranny and transgression and to promote peace that there is this command that every action of yours should be for the sake of God.

Look at the height of humanistic compassion. While giving instructions, he admonishes not to smite the enemy on the face; try to minimize the losses to the enemy; ensure the comfort of the prisoners. Perhaps it was reported by a prisoner of the Battle of Badr that the house where he was incarcerated, its household survived on dates but gave him bread. Even if a child found some

bread, he would offer it to him. He said that sometimes he was embarrassed and would try to return it but they insisted and returned the bread to him (because it was the directive, it were the Islamic teachings). Even the children had this attitude. These were the teachings of goodwill, the teachings of peace, the teachings of compassion, the teachings of safeguarding the rights of others that the Holy Prophet^{sas} inculcated in his followers. Even the children understood that Islam is nothing other than peace and goodwill.

In order to have good relations with all nations, cordial treatment of its envoys is essential. It was his directive that foreign ambassadors should be given special treatment. They are to be respected and honoured. Even if they make a mistake, you have to overlook and ignore it. In order to establish this peace, he said that if a Muslim is guilty of maltreatment of a prisoner of war, that prisoner should be released without ransom. Thus, these instructions tell us that Islamic wars were not just for the sake of war; they were for Islam, for Allah, the Exalted; they were for establishment of the freedom of conscience and religion and to provide peace and security of the world.

With regard to the kind treatment of prisoners, Quranic injunction is that if there is no one to emancipate a prisoner or a slave and he does not have the means to do so on his own either, it is said:

وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَأَنْتُمْ مِنْ
مَعَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ أَنْتُمْ

... And those of your slaves who desire a deed of liberation to be contracted, write it down for them if you see in them any good *potential* and give them out of that wealth which

truly belongs to Allah which He has bestowed upon you...
(*Sūrah an-Nūr*, 24:34)

The expense of war, at that time, was paid by individuals. Therefore, the owner who has that slave, he should bear some of his expenses. If he does not, Muslims should collectively provide for him so that he could get his freedom or he could be freed by writing a deed; or if it could benefit him, make it up privately if there is any deficit left so that he could earn his livelihood freely. This way, by becoming a free citizen of the society, he could join in the national growth because his skill will be benefiting him along with helping the country.

These are the beautiful teachings of Islam that disseminates peace in every aspect, in every section of the society. It garners freedom for everyone. May Allah enable every Aḥmadī to introduce the world to the luminous and sublime teachings of Islam by presenting different aspects of this beautiful teachings of God.

PART 2

Other Selected Writings

CHAPTER I

Analysis of the Papal Lecture

by Mohammad Ilyas Majoka

On September 12, 2006, the spiritual leader of the Catholic Christians, Pope Benedict XVI, gave a lecture at the University of Regensburg in Germany. Its subject was the relationship between faith and reason. In the course of the lecture, the Pope read out some excerpts from a long dialogue in which baseless allegations have been made on Islamic teachings. The aforementioned dialogue took place between the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II Palaeologus, and a Persian scholar, perhaps in A.D. 1391. While reading some of the sections of the excerpts, the Pope made comments in his own words on some occasions, from which an erroneous impression emerges about Islamic teachings.

The passages of the speech in which Islamic teachings are targeted for objections are reproduced here.

I

...Here I would like to discuss only one point—itsself rather marginal to the dialogue as a whole—which, in the context of the issue of ‘faith and reason,’ I found

interesting and which can serve as the starting-point for my reflections on this issue.

In the seventh conversation edited by Professor Khoury, the emperor touches on the theme of the holy war. The emperor must have known that *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:256 reads: ‘There is no compulsion in religion’. According to the experts, this is one of the chapters of the early period, when Mohammed was still powerless and under threat. But naturally the emperor also knew the instructions, developed later and recorded in the *Quran*, concerning holy war. Without descending to details, such as the difference in treatment accorded to those who have the ‘Book’ and the ‘infidels’, he addresses his interlocutor with a startling brusqueness on the central question about the relationship between religion and violence in general, saying ...

II

Then the Pope says further:

The emperor, after having expressed himself so forcefully, goes on to explain in detail the reasons why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. ‘God’, he says, ‘is not pleased by blood—and not acting reasonably is contrary to God’s nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever

would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death ...(Reading by the Pope, on September 12 2006, at the University of Regensburg, Faith, Rationality, University)

III

The decisive statement in this argument against conversion through violence is this: not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God's nature. The editor, Theodore Khoury, observes: "For the emperor, as a Byzantine shaped by Greek philosophy, this statement is self-evident. But per Muslim teachings, God is absolutely transcendent. His will is not bound up with any of our categories, even that of rationality.

IV

Here Khoury quotes a work of the noted French Muslim R. Arnaldez, who points out that Ibn Ḥazm went so far as to state that God is not bound even by his own word, and that nothing would oblige him to reveal the truth to us. Were it God's will, we would even have to practice idolatry.

V

Is the conviction that acting unreasonably contradicts God's nature merely a Greek idea, or is it always and intrinsically true? I believe that here we can see the profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the biblical understanding of faith in God.

Commenting on the aforementioned dialogue, the Pope said that it is a brusque statement and that this dialogue was recorded by Manuel himself in A.D. 1391 and for this reason, Manuel's own arguments are more elaborate than the arguments of the Persian scholar.

Regardless, the Pope did not admit anywhere in his entire speech that he considers the objections of Manuel to be erroneous. After the lecture, Muslims all over the world and some fair-minded non-Muslim scholars protested. Upon this, the Pope issued statements to the effect that he was sorry that his lecture was misunderstood and that his only objective, by referring to this dialogue, was to encourage further dialogue between religions. Even then, he did not admit in any statement that the criticism of Manuel was wrong.

A reasonable way to promote the inter-religious dialogue would have been to highlight the values that are shared by religions so that the discussion would start from a common ground. Instead, while speaking on faith and reason, a highly imprudent way was adopted. It is poignant to note why the Pope, who is known as a scholar and was a professor at a university, presented such an objectionable excerpt in the first place?

Before we analyse this point, let us see the historical perspective in which the aforementioned dialogue took place.

Historical Analysis of Manuel's Dialogue

Manuel II Palaeologus was the Kaiser of Byzantine from A.D. 1391-1425 and his capital was Constantinople (present-day Istanbul, Turkey). Manuel began his political career as the governor of Thessaloniki. At that time, his father John V was the King of Byzantium. Turks had captured the areas encircling Thessaloniki and thus, the city was also at the mercy of Turks and paid tribute to them. Due to these conditions, Manuel had to fight the Battle of Philadelphia (present-day Alasehir) for the Turks. In April 1387, before the Turks' complete conquest of Thessaloniki, Manuel escaped to Lesbos. In the meantime, due to the civil war and defeats at the hands of the Turks, John V lost his reign to his nephew. In 1390, when John V was restored with the help of the Turks, he had to give his son as an obedient vassal to the Turkish emperor. At the death of John V, Manuel fled the Turkish camp in February 1391 and succeeded in reaching Constantinople and became the king of this declining kingdom. From here, he started the efforts for holy war against the Turks. During the time he was in the custody of Turks, he had to participate in some military campaigns of the Turks. During this time, from October 1391 to December 1391, Manuel enjoyed the hospitality of the Turkish magistrate of Ankara, who was known as Mudarris. It is with him that he had the entire dialogue that was edited by Manuel

himself at a later date and is known as ‘Twenty-Six Dialogues with a Persian’. Professor Wilhelm Baum writes about it,

Apart from the emperor’s writings there is no independent proof that the conversations ever took place. They must represent a mixture of fact and fiction...The emperor relied for his sources on the Apology of Christianity against Islam by his maternal grandfather, John VI Cantacuzenus. That in turn rested on the “Confutatio Alchorani” by the Dominican friar Ricoldo of Montecroce (died 1320), which Demetrius Kydones had translated into Greek. Grandfather and grandson thus remained entirely within the framework of traditional Byzantine anti-Islamic polemics. (Wilhelm Baum, *An Online Encyclopedia of Roman Emperors*, Manuel II Palaiologos www.roman-emperors.org)

In the backdrop of these events, it becomes easy to understand that why an emperor of a declining kingdom who is suffering defeats upon defeats at the hands of the Muslims adopts an extremely parochial and hostile attitude when he talks to a Muslim about Islam. The Pope has presented Manuel as an erudite but the truth about Manuel’s scholarship becomes evident by reading his dialogue with the Persian scholar. In particular, his knowledge about Islam was very limited; it might be described as based on hearsay. Besides, Orientalism was not yet established as a formal discipline which, today, is the basis of knowledge about Islam in the West. One interesting aspect is that, in presenting this excerpt, the Pope

has made some observations which show that even the Pope's knowledge about Islam is extremely limited.

Nature of the Pope's Objections against Islam

In his lecture, the Pope has raised objections in two ways. One is that he has raised objections indirectly, by referring to Manuel, Khoury and Arnaldez, by saying that it is not him but others have said so. Some objections he has made directly.

The details of the latter category of objections are as follows:

1. He has translated jihad as 'Holy War' and has presented the two words as interchangeable.
2. While quoting the verse, لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ, that, 'There should be no compulsion in religion' (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257), he has tried to create the impression that the Holy Prophet^{sas} taught peace when he was in a state of weakness (God forbid) and later on enjoined war.
3. He objected that the Holy Quran does contain injunctions with reference to the 'Holy War'.
4. He objected that the Holy Quran sanctions differential treatment of the People of the Book and infidels. That is, the treatment of the People of the Book is different from the treatments of the infidels.

The above-mentioned four objections are made by the Pope

directly. The rest of the objections are made obliquely by using the words of others as follows:

1. Kaiser Manuel's words are quoted, 'Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman,' and that...
2. He enjoined spreading the faith through violence.

Then, using this specious assumption as the foundation, he presents this precept that spreading faith through violence is something unreasonable, and not acting reasonably is contrary to the nature of God. Moreover, to convince a reasonable person, what is needed is the ability to speak well and not the use of force. This contention is correct in principle but the Pope draws this conclusion from it, in the words of Professor Khoury, that:

3. For the emperor, as a Byzantine shaped by Greek philosophy, this statement is self-evident. But for Muslim teachings, God is absolutely transcendent. His will is not bound up with any of our categories, even that of rationality.

In other words the insinuation and the innuendo is that the Kaiser had studied Greek philosophy, and for him, it was axiomatic that God's dictates are not against reason. Therefore, in matters pertaining to faith, coercion cannot be permissible. But since the God of Muslims is not bound by rationality, therefore, He taught the use of coercion in matters of faith. God forbid, this

is the heinous concept that the Pope has maliciously attempted to ascribe to the God of Muslims.

4. In order to substantiate this belief that he has ascribed to Muslims, he has referred to a book of Professor Khoury in which he has quoted from a book by another writer, Arnaldez, who recorded a quote from Ibn Ḥazm, ‘God is not bound even by His own word, and that nothing would oblige Him to reveal the truth to us. Were it God’s will, we would even have to practice idolatry’. (Here it is relevant to confirm whether Ibn Ḥazm even said it or not and if he did, what did he exactly say?)

After constructing his theory on a spurious assumption, the Pope draws the final conclusion that:

5. ‘The belief that God does not act contrary to rationality and such belief in God as based on the Bible, there is perfect concordance’.

In other words, the conclusion is being drawn that the teachings of Christianity are strictly in accordance with rationality and those of Islam are just the opposite.

It is quite obvious that the Pope has deliberately criticized Islam indeed; and then, to support it, he has leaned on quotations of other people.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST ISLAM IN THE POPE'S LECTURE

The objections that the Pope made directly:

1. He has translated jihad as 'Holy War' and has presented the two words, jihad and Holy War, as interchangeable.
2. While quoting the verse *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ*, 'There should be no compulsion in religion' (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257), he has tried to create the impression that the teachings of peace was offered when the Holy Prophet^{sas} was in a state of weakness, that is, during his Meccan life period before migration to Madinah, and later on, when he gained power, that is, after migration to Madinah, he enjoined war. (God forbid)
3. He objected that the Holy Quran does contain injunctions with reference to the 'Holy War.'
4. He objected that the Holy Quran sanctions differential treatment of the People of the Book and Infidels. That is, the treatment of the People of the Book is different from the treatments of the infidels.

Then the following objections have been made in the words of the Kaiser:

5. 'Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman'. (God forbid)

6. The Holy Prophet Muhammad enjoined spreading the faith through violence. (God forbid)

He presented this argument against the coercion in faith in the words of the Kaiser

Spreading faith through violence is something unreasonable and not acting reasonably is contrary to the nature of God.

The Pope made the following assumptions:

For the Kaiser it was self-evident. The proof given for this assumption is that Kaiser was shaped by Greek philosophy.

7. Muslims believe the God is Transcendent, and His Will is not constrained by any categorization by man. Thus, He is not even constrained to act rationally.

Proof of this assumption is given by quoting Ibn Hāzīm as following:

‘God is not bound even by his own word, and nothing would oblige him to reveal the truth to us. Were it God’s will, we would even have to practice idolatry.’

After constructing the edifice of his theory on a fabricated assumption, the final conclusion drawn by the Pope is:

There is perfect concordance between the belief that God does not act contrary to rationality and the belief in God that is based on the Bible.

In other words, it is being deduced that the teachings of Christianity are exactly according to rationality and those of Islam are just the opposite. It is quite obvious from it that the Pope has intentionally criticized Islam in his lecture and has sought support for it by quoting others.

Dialogue with Two Medieval Christian Rulers

The Pope began his speech with the dialogue of Manuel, who was the emperor of a declining kingdom which was in a losing battle with Muslims, whereas there have been other Christian emperors preceding him whose dialogues about Islamic teachings and the founder of Islam are preserved in history. Many such Christian emperors were a thousand-fold greater in their might and the expanse of their domain such as Heraclius, Kaiser of Rome, and Negus of Abyssinia. If emperors are to be quoted, to begin the discussion, one should start with these emperors.

It is recorded in history that after the Truce of Hudaibiyah, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} wrote letters to different kings, he wrote one to Heraclius too. The emperor of the Byzantine Empire (575–641) was on his way to Jerusalem to fulfil a vow.

He received the letter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} at Jerusalem. At that time, an arch-enemy of Muslims and the chief

of the Quraish of Makkah, Abū Sufyān, was in Syria on a trade expedition and was staying at Gaza. (*Sīratun-Nabī, Ibn Kathīr*, Urdu translation of Hidayatullah Nadwi, vol 2, p. 347, published at Maktabah Qudusiyyah, Lahore, October, 1996.)

When Heraclius learned that a trade caravan was visiting from Arabia, he summoned them and asked them some questions about the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The entire dialogue of Heraclius is preserved in history. Thus, it is narrated in Bukhārī by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbas that Abū Sufyān bin Ḥarb told him that Heraclius summoned him, along with the contingent of Quraish, and they all were in Syria on a trade mission. It was at the time when the Holy Prophet^{sas} had made a truce with Abū Sufyān and the infidels of the Quraish. They came to him while he was at Jerusalem. He summoned them to his court and Roman leaders were in attendance. Heraclius called him to come forward and called his own interpreter too. He asked, ‘Who among you is nearest in relationship to this man who claims that he is a prophet?’ Abū Sufyān used to tell that he replied that he was the nearest to him among all those people. Hearing this, he said, ‘Bring him closer to me and bring his companions close too and keep them behind him.’ Then he told his interpreter to tell them, ‘I am going to ask him about that man. If he fabricates, you must deny him.’ (Abū Sufyān used to say) By God, if I were not concerned that they would denounce me, I certainly would have told lies about the Prophet of God.

After it, the first question he asked me was: How is his family? I said: That is a noble family among us. He asked: Has anyone else among you made such a claim before him? I said: No. He asked: Has there been any king among his forefathers? I said: No. He asked: Are the noble people his followers or the poor? I said: Not

powerful ones, instead they are poor. He asked: Are they expanding or shrinking? I said: They are not shrinking, instead they are expanding. He asked: Does anyone, after entering his faith, get disillusioned and apostate? I said: No. He asked: Did you accuse him of fabrication before his claim? I said: No. He asked: Does he renege on his promises? I said: No. Now we are in a temporary truce with him. We do not know what he is going to do in this period. Abū Sufyān used to say that, except for this, he did not get a chance to introduce any comments in his conversation.

Heraclius asked: Have you fought any wars with him? I said: Yes. He asked: How did the fighting turn out? I said: The fighting between us has had ups and downs. Sometimes he has hurt us and sometimes we have hurt him. He asked: What does he enjoin you? I said: He enjoins worship of only One, 'Allah,' and not setting up any partner with Him and repudiate what your ancestors say. And, he enjoins us Prayer, truthfulness, chastity, and kinship.

On this, he told his interpreter to tell him, I had asked you about the lineage of this man and you said he is of a noble descent among you. This is how all prophets are raised from among the noble families of their nations. And I had asked you if anyone else among you had made such a claim. You said, No. From this, I understand that if someone else had made such a claim before him, I would have said that he is a man who is just reiterating a thing that was said before him. And I had asked you whether there was any king in his ancestors and you said, No. I thought that if there had been a king in his ancestors, I could say that he is man who wants the kingdom of his forefathers. And I had asked you if you had accused him of fabrication before his claim and you said, No. I know that it is just not possible that he would abstain from

lying about humans but would fabricate a lie about God. And I had asked you if powerful people have become his followers or the weak, and you had said that the weak among you have become his followers; and such people become the followers of prophets. And I had asked you if they are growing or shrinking, and you stated that they are increasing; and that is exactly what happens with faith till it reaches its pinnacle. And I had asked you if anyone after joining his faith left it after becoming disillusioned and you stated No. And faith is exactly like this that its succour permeates the hearts. And I had asked does he renege on his pledges, and you said, No. Messengers are exactly such. They do not break a pledge. And I had asked you what does he enjoin you? You stated that he enjoins you to worship Allah, and not to set up any partners with Him and he prohibits you from worshipping idols, and he enjoins you Prayer, truthfulness, chastity. Therefore, if what you say is true, then soon he will become the master of where I stand. And I already know he was soon to appear but I did not imagine that he would be from among you (Arabs). If I knew I could reach him safely, I would accept hardship to get his audience and if I was in his attendance, I would wash his feet. (Bukhārī, Book on the Beginning of Revelation)

Similarly, Najāshī (Aṣḥamah) of Abyssinia was the ruler of the state of Aksum. The title of the ruler of Aksum was Najāshī (*The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Addition vol. VII, Leiden, 1993).

In the time of the Najāshī, some Muslims migrated to Abyssinia to escape persecution by the Quraish of Makkah. Quraish sent ‘Abdullāh bin Rabī‘ah and Amr bin al-‘Ās with gifts to Aṣḥamah to have him expel the Muslims from Abyssinia. Instead of forming

a one-sided opinion, Aṣḥamah summoned Muslims and inquired them about their beliefs. Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib explained on behalf of Muslims:

O king! We were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols, we lived in unchastity, we ate the dead bodies, and we spoke abominations, we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood were neglected; we knew no law but that of the strong.

In these conditions Allah raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called to the Oneness of Allah and taught us not to associate anything with Him. He forbade us the worship of idols; and he enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of the neighbours and kith and kin; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly from the vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer Prayers, to render alms, and to observe fast.

We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship Allah and not to associate anything with Him, and we have allowed what He has allowed, and prohibited what He has prohibited. For this reason, our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forsake the worship of Allah and return to the worship of idols and other abominations. They have tortured and injured us, until finding no

safety among them, we have come to your country, and hope you will protect us from oppression.

Najāshī asked, ‘Do you have with you some of what this Prophet has brought from Allah?’

Ja‘far replied affirmatively. Najāshī said, ‘Read it for me.’ Thereupon, he recited the beginning portion of *Sūrah Maryam*. Najāshī started weeping and said, ‘Without a doubt, this and what Jesus brought, is the light from the same source.’ He returned the envoys of the Quraysh declaring that he would not hand over the Muslims to them.

The next day, they (envoys of Quraysh) approached Najāshī again and said that they (the Muslims) say something unseemly about Jesus, son of Mary.

Najāshī summoned the Muslims again and inquired, ‘What do you people say about Jesus, son of Mary?’

Ja‘far replied on behalf of the Muslims, ‘We say what our Prophet^{sas} brought to us that he is a servant of God, His messenger, His spirit, and His word.’

Najāshī picked up a straw and said, ‘By God, Jesus, son of Mary, is not more than what you said by as much as this straw’. (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. 1, p. 290; published in Beirut)

Above two are the examples of Christian emperors who were not weak like Manuel. Instead, they were the rulers of great empires and possessed power and might, but they were fair-minded and had the courage to speak the truth. If the Pope wishes to give an example of a Christian ruler for interfaith dialogue, he ought to start with these Christian kings who, despite having power and might, as opposed to the condition in which Manuel was, did not

use prejudice and falsehood with regard to Muslims. On the contrary they admitted, with courage, what they saw was reasonable.

Critical Review of the Objections

It is quite obvious that the aforementioned excerpts, upon which is laid the foundation of the Pope's entire lecture, were not mentioned fortuitously but were indeed selected deliberately. The objections presented earlier bear it out that the lecture was carefully worked on and specific references were researched to use as foundations. Dr. George Friedman, who is the director of the American institute, Stratfor Geopolitical Intelligence, writes in commentary on this lecture of the Pope;

It is obvious that Benedict delivered a well-thought-out statement. It is also obvious that the Vatican had no illusions as to how the Muslim world would respond. The statement contained a verbal blast, crafted in a way that allowed Benedict to maintain plausible deniability. Indeed, the Pope already has taken the exit, noting that these were not his thoughts but those of another scholar. The Pope and his staff were certainly aware that this would make no difference in the grand scheme of things, save for giving Benedict the means for distancing himself from the statement when the inevitable backlash occurred. (Faith, Reason and Politics: Parsing the Pope's Remarks, Dr. George Friedman, <https://richgibson.com/faithreason-politics.htm>)

Hiding behind the words of others while accusing Islam and the founder of Islam, did the Pope forget those parts of the history of Christianity when Christians coerced people to change their religion?

The Pope, in the course of his lecture, accused the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} of the abomination that he preached peace when he was in a state of weakness. Commenting on this lecture of the Pope, famous German philosopher Professor Kurt Flasch writes:

When Christianity gained power in 313, it adopted, within a short period, the same ways of coercion that it had suffered from. While it remained weak, it preached religious freedom. When it became the state religion, it displayed fundamentalist rigidity against the heretics. Even in the nineteenth century when it was in majority, it kept itself busy with polemics against the idea of tolerance. (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, no. 239, on October 17 2006, about Church Fathers and other Fundamentalists, by Kurt Flasch)

It is hard to find any parallels with the atrocities committed against Muslims and Jews by the Christian rulers during the Spanish Inquisition. Renowned Jewish peace activist and columnist Uri Avnery writes:

When the Catholics re-conquered Spain from the Muslims, they instituted a reign of religious terror. The Jews and the Muslims were presented with a cruel

choice: to become Christians, to be massacred or to leave.
(*Reflections on History and Religion: Muhammad's Sword*,
Uri Avnery, Baltimore Chronicle 23 September 2006)

The opinions attributed to Ibn Ḥazm that the Pope referred to were also held by Don Scotus and in the last section of his speech, the Pope briefly mentioned that too. Then why did he not confine his lecture to Christianity?

Here, it begs the question: 'Why did the Pope level these baseless objections at Islam in the first place?'

One possible reason could be that, by this approach, he wanted to divert the attention of his audience from the painful Church history of religious persecution so as to prove the concordance between rationality and Christianity. This is so because Church dogmas, especially the doctrine of Trinity; the Church's coercion in the name of religion; countless killings and burnings alive do not concur with human rationality.

Rationality and Authentic Christian Authors

What has been written by Christians in contravention to rationality is well illustrated by the book of the well-known philosopher Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 430) who was recognized by the Church as a pious and honourable man. In it, Augustine has undertaken, in exchange of letters with Simplician who later became the Bishop of Mailand, a philosophical discussion on the Christian concept of forgiveness.

Augustine published these letters in A.D. 398 and these are

known in the Christian world as ‘Gnadenlehre’ or the ‘Teachings of Forgiveness’. They were translated into German for the first time in 1990 under the auspices of Professor Kurt Flasch. He also edited this book and wrote a review on it and entitled it as ‘Logik des Schreckens’, that is, the ‘Logic of Terrorism’ because according to Professor Kurt Flasch, the message conveyed by the book is that of terrorism and not forgiveness. Hence, he writes:

Obviously Augustin had a different conception of mercy than the people of today. For Augustin ‘Mercy’ and ‘Terror’ clearly belonged together. (*Logic of Terror*, by Kurt Flasch, 1990, p 13)

Then, referring to religious persecution, he writes:

Augustin spricht 397 noch nicht von Ketzerverfolgung, aber er schafft hier die Grundlage für seine Rechtfertigung der Gewalt. (*Logik des Schreckens*, Kurt Flasch, 1990, p. 12)

Though, in 397, Augustine does not mention the prosecution of heretics, however here he lays the fundamentals for his justification of coercion.

While talking about how Augustine implemented his concept after its publication, he writes:

Ten years after writing this tract, Augustine assured correct spellings mobilized the army in order to maintain orthodoxy and to fight against dissenting Christians. After this, the ‘righteous’ stained their hands with the blood of

the ‘sinners,’ and thus Augustine became the paragon of religious intolerance. (*Logik des Schreckens*, Kurt Flasch, 1990, p. 14)

This teaching of Augustine should not be treated lightly. Both Catholic and Protestant church accorded great importance to these teachings and the writings of Augustine left indelible imprint on Christian thinking and Christian teachings. Thus writes Kurt Flasch:

The Catholic as well as the Protestant adopted these doctrines in their official pronouncements in principle even if not in its details. (*Logik des Schreckens*, Kurt Flasch, 1990, p. 14)

The foundation of religious persecution and terrorism that was laid in this treatise had its expression wherever Christians ruled. It was used to justify innumerable atrocities, for example, the burning of women alive after being accused of sorcery, etc. Kurt Flasch writes:

Augustine’s breakthrough text reflects the history of terror in Europe. It casts light on the history of the Western Christianity that extends from the fanatic virtuousness of Robespierre to the genocides of the 20th century. (*Logik des Schreckens*, Kurt Flasch, 1990, p. 16)

Here it is not irrelevant to mention that Augustine, who is considered as one of the ‘Fathers of the Church,’ published

aforementioned treatise himself in A.D. 398 and its first German translation was done in 1990. Prior to it, the rest of the books of Augustine had been translated, but this book had not been brought into the public view.

Since Christian doctrines do not appeal to man's rationalism, and the Pope could not possibly have furnished any positive example from his own religion for his address, therefore, by making baseless accusations about Islam, he has attempted to connect Christian teachings with rationalism by a convoluted reasoning.

In Western countries, the conflict between religion (Christianity) and science is quite flagrant. The fact of the matter is that each year Christians are abandoning the Church in large numbers so much so that the Church is facing the difficulty of how to provide for the upkeep of the churches that are being shut down. Just in Germany, hundreds of churches are being closed. This year, Professor Petzinka of the University of Darmstadt chose the topic, for the master's thesis for his architecture students, of how to transform the buildings of those churches which are not being used due to lack of parishioners and have no one to take care of so that they may serve some other purpose. Thus he writes,

It is a fact that the Church has lost its monopoly as the guiding force in the society. As a result there has been a decline in the need to build new churches and unfortunately even present churches are being demolished. For example, the Protestant Churches in Frankfurt have the capacity for 400,000 members, but it has the membership of only 145,000. Some reviews boldly predict that every third of the 32,000 Churches will be sold sooner or later

or demolished. More than 1,000 churches in Germany are in urgent need of restructuring. (Prof. Graduate Engineer Karl-Heinz Petzinka, Department of Building Technology Designing, University of Darmstadt)

In these circumstances, when the Christians are leaving the church in hoards and hundreds of churches are forced to close their doors for business, it behoved the Pope to try to show the rationality of the teachings of Christianity as embodied in the Bible so that people, convinced by his logical exposition, would stop abandoning the church in such large number. Now, he may have succeeded in garnering the sympathy of the fundamentalist elements among the Christians of Europe, he would certainly not win the hearts of the Christians who have abdicated the church only because of the Christian teaching not being compatible with Rationalism.

One possible explanation for Pope's baseless criticism of Islam could be that he wished to provide the intellectual foundation therewith for the war that some western countries have waged against the Islamic extremism, and have even attacked some Muslim countries on this pretext. Some Western political figures have started to frame it as the Clash of Civilizations. The Pope may not personally concur with these opinions, he has certainly attempted to provide the intellectual basis for the above mentioned conflict.

Many fair-minded scholars have raised voices against the Papal lecture that the Pope has very shrewdly reviled Islam in the name of promoting inter-religious dialogue but it is imprudent. Berliner Zeitung, a newspaper from Berlin writes:

The Pope wanted to support the interfaith dialogue. He based this demand on a quotation in which the teachings of Muhammad^{sas} are called evil, inhuman and unreasonable as if he extended his hand for reconciliation but spit on it before that. What was the deviant logic by which Pope acted this way? You do not have to be a prophet to predict, beforehand, that it will provoke indignation and outrage. For this reason, many people are expressing the view that he deliberately wanted to provoke. He did not mention that Islam considered itself a rational religion compared to miracle-believing and mystery-cherishing Christianity, and, in his discretion, prudence was in keeping it concealed. Above all, he never mentioned how the inter-cultural dialogue is possible?’ (Berliner Zeitung vom 16 September 2006, “Benedikts Ring”, Seite 4, Beitrag vom Christian Esch)

The Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba} says in his analysis of the Pope’s lecture:

These days when feelings of hatred against Muslims are being stoked in the West by using one excuse or the other, such a statement by the Pope was like adding fuel to fire. What was needed was for him to say that, though today some misguided Islamic organizations have adopted violent methods, Islamic teachings appear to be against them and we need to work together to maintain peace in the world to save innocent humanity from death and destruction. Instead he has tried to lead his followers down the

path that Islamic teachings are what they are perceived to be. I thought that the Pope was a responsible person and a scholar and that he had some knowledge about Islam too but, by making this statement, he has exposed his utter ignorance.

He should have tried to promote peace in the world by pursuing the teachings of the Messiah whose successorship he claims. He [Jesus] has taught kind treatment even of the enemies. On one hand, by imputing erroneous things to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and Quran, Muslims have been provoked and, as a reaction, those who cannot control their emotions, will act out in a way that will give them an opportunity to do further propaganda against Muslims. On the other hand, the followers of the Pope and those who live in the West who already believe Islam to be an extremist religion, will further increase in their hatred of Muslims. (Friday Sermon of Khalīfatul-Masīh V^{aba} delivered September 15, 2006 www.alislam.org)

Rules for Interfaith Dialogues

Commenting on the reaction to his lecture, the Pope stated that his objective was to promote interfaith dialogue. We have already discussed how incorrect his statement and his approach were. Here it is worth discussing as to what ought to be the rules for interfaith dialogue. What approach should be taken that would not offend the sensibilities of any religion and would allow interfaith

dialogue to advance in a positive way? Some of the principles presented by the Holy Quran in this regards are presented here:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَ
لَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Say, O People of the Book! Come to a word equal between us and you—that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partner with Him, and that some of us take not others for Lords beside Allah'. But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we have submitted to God. (*Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:65)

One principle that is defined here is that, initially, come together on the values that are shared. Purpose is to make such programs on shared values in collaboration that would benefit mankind at large.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

And revile not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus unto every people have We caused their doing to seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return; and He will inform them of what they used to (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:109)

Here, respect of each other's sentiments is taught. In arguments, especially in religious arguments, people generally fail to maintain control of their emotions and in excitement, start denigrating each other's deities which creates religious hatred and people drift

further apart instead of coming closer. Therefore, maligning each other's deities has been forbidden.

The practical lesson given in these teachings has profound wisdom in it. If one offends the religious sensibility of a person, the latter gets the right to reciprocate. And when he did so in retaliation, it would be irrelevant whether the religion he is denigrating is right or wrong. Both parties have an equal right to retaliate. (*Islam and Contemporary Issues*, p. 47; Mirza Tahir Ahmad, 2005).

أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطَنٌ مُّبِينٌ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Or, have you a clear authority? Then produce your book, if you are truthful. (*Sūrah aṣ-Ṣāffāt*, 37:157–158)

Another principle enunciated is that during a dialogue, the follower of each religion should present the argument to support his claim from his respective religious book. This is a sound principle for inter-religious dialogue that is spelled out here. Whereas a follower of a religion asserts that his religious holy scripture is a 'revealed book,' he ought to substantiate his beliefs from his own scripture. By doing so, the Holy Quran elevates the interfaith dialogue to an intellectual level by providing a scientific basis for it.

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۗ

... And help one another in righteousness and in piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression... (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:3)

Earlier cooperation on common issues was advised. Here it is

further clarified that the collaboration should not involve committing transgression against anyone.

One other principle defined by the Holy Quran is that it should be agreed on that the followers of only one religion are not the exclusive custodians of the truth but other people also own 'truths' and they too have these qualities. The Holy Quran makes a clear declaration to this effect when it says,

وَمِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ

And of those We have created, there are a people that guide *men* with truth and do justice therewith. (*Sūrah al-A'rāf*, 7:182)

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation... (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:126)

What the Pope quoted from Manuel, that 'whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly,' has already been very clearly enunciated by the Holy Quran several hundred years before Manuel and that is 'call unto the way of the Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortations and when you have to argue, use sound and strong argument.' Perhaps Manuel said so having heard from Muslims.

By adopting the Islamic principles to promote interfaith accord that we have mentioned, a peaceful environment of love and affection, accommodation, tolerance, and understanding can be established in actuality. The principles offered by Islam are exactly in

accordance with human logic and wisdom. Therefore, until such attitude is adopted, genuine peace cannot be established.

After a detailed analysis of the Pope's lecture, we shall expatiate, in the succeeding chapters, on those Islamic teachings that were mentioned by the Pope in his discourse. All his objections and misrepresentations shall be discussed at length to understand what are the true Islamic teachings after all, what is the concept of God in Islam, what is the new message that Islam brought for the world, and what novel teachings does it present.

CHAPTER 2

Islamic Teachings about Jihad

by Mohammad Ilyas Munir

With reference to jihad, a spirited but false propaganda is made against the Islamic teachings that, God forbid, Islam is the faith of coercion and it is the religion of terrorism. These days, too, this propaganda is being made vehemently. Benedict XVI has also very callously attacked the great personage of Muhammad^{sas}, who was sent as mercy to all worlds, on the same account in his Regensburg lecture. He has said that Muhammad^{sas} brought, in the name of jihad, such teachings that resulted in propagation of faith with the sword and people were coerced into Islam. This kind of criticism of Islam is done entirely by way of malice. In the following section, this entirely wrong and false accusation is reviewed in the light of the Holy Quran, and is refuted on the basis of the Arabic lexicon and in the light of the actual practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his companions.

Before we respond to the accusation of the Pope, we would like to make it clear that some support to the opponents of Islam in this accusation is provided by those who subscribe to the doctrine of propagation of faith with the force of the sword and believe that sword also had a role in the rise of Islam. Some Muslims persist in

this grave error, either due to their ignorance or obstinacy, which unfortunately crept into Muslims due to their departure from the true Islamic teachings. As a consequence of actions based on this error, opponents of Islam get the opportunity to hold a pure and holy faith like Islam culpable. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has not only always expressed its disagreement to such beliefs and actions but has always rejected and condemned them in no uncertain terms. More than a century ago, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, peace be upon him (1835–1908) declared:

The Promised Messiah has come into the world so that he may repel the notion of taking up the sword in the name of religion, and that, through his reasoning and arguments, he may establish that Islam is a faith which does not at all need the help of the sword for the purpose of its propagation, but that the inherent qualities of its teachings and its verities, insights, reasons, proofs and the living support and signs of God Almighty, and its inherent attractions are the factors that have throughout its history contributed to its progress and its propagation. Let all those who proclaim that Islam had been spread by the sword take note that their claim is false. Islam is not in need of any coercion for its propagation. Should anyone doubt this, let him come to me and stay with me and observe for himself that Islam proves through reasoning and divine signs that it is a living faith. (*Malfūzāt*, vol. 3, p. 176, published 1984, London)

At the outset of this article, we deem it essential to remind the Pope of the teachings of his religion and his own holy scriptures in this regard so that he may refrain at least from those objections that apply, with much greater intensity, to his own scriptures and elders than Islam. This aspect will be discussed with greater detail in the third chapter of this book but at this point, it is briefly submitted that according to the New Testament, Jesus himself declares ‘Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword’ (Matthew, 10:34).

This is why, despite destitution, he regarded the sword to be very important for his religion; so much so that he exhorted his disciples, in clear terms, to buy swords even *if they had to sell their clothes* (Luke 22:36). The study of the Bible tells us that this attitude was due to his understanding that he was to establish the throne of David and was to become a ruler. In his life there was one specific occasion when he could sense a real opportunity and, at that occasion, he abandoned meekness and adopted a harsh attitude and instead of exhortation he opted for use of force (Matthew, 21:34). However it could not materialize in his lifetime, nor could his poor disciples implement these teachings. But the later generations of Christians took this one commandment as the true essence of Christian faith and, by acting upon it, used the sword with great fervour. The latter generations of Christianity may have strayed far from the real Christian teachings; they did show great obedience with regard to the injunction to buy swords and they did not leave any stone unturned in fulfilling the desire to re-establish the throne of David. In this pursuit, they caused rivers of blood to flow in fulfilment of words of the Bible (Matthew 5: 17–19).

It is clearly stated in the Torah:

When the Lord, your God, has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them...then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them and show them no mercy (Deuteronomy, 7:1-3).

It must be remembered that, according to the Christian faith, this exhortation to be merciless is from God. It is important to point out these issues particularly because the adversaries of Islam, despite these facts and incidents, insist in their writings that Islam is the religion of the sword and Christianity is the religion of peace. Although their allegations are answered repeatedly, they continue to persist in making these accusations. After this brief introduction, we now return to our main subject.

Literal Meaning of Jihad

The word jihad is derived from *jūhd* which means ‘to utilize one’s entire power and capacity to do something’ or ‘to use the tongue to its fullest’ or ‘to use any faculty one has to extreme limits’ (Lane). In the current times, the word jihad is taken to mean only and entirely war and bloodshed, whereas it is not so. Jihad as meaning only ‘bloodshed’ is not found in any authentic dictionary of Arabic language. Similarly, this word is not used anywhere in the Holy Quran to mean only war. However, this word is used for religious wars as its implied meaning. At the end of detailed discussion of this word, Lane translates *Jāhada fī sabīl Allāh* (performed

jihad in the way of Allah) as meaning fighting in the path of Allah, vis-à-vis, fighting for the cause of religion.

Jihad, an Islamic Term

In the religion of Islam, the word jihad is used as a term for the struggle for religious purposes. The study of the Quran, *Āḥādīth* [sayings of the Holy Prophet], and dictionary clearly show that in Islamic teachings and Islamic history, the term of jihad has been used, in different settings and circumstances, for different forms of service of faith, and these are the following:

1. Struggle against ego.
2. Struggle with Quran, that is, proclamation and dissemination of Quran.
3. Struggle with wealth, that is, spending in the path of Allah.
4. Struggle with sword, that is, warfare.

The details of these different forms of jihad are as follows:

Jihad as Striving Against the ‘Self’

The greatest nemesis of man is his own ego. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has repeatedly admonished to wage a lifelong jihad against it.

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

And whoso strives, strives only for his own soul; verily, Allah is Independent of the entire universe. (*Sūrah al-Ankabūt*, 29:7)

Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, says at another place, explaining the practical form of this jihad, as:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۗ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ
 آيَاتُكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۗ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ فِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَ
 تَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۗ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَ اعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ ۗ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ فَنِعْمَ
 الْمَوْلَىٰ وَ نِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

And strive in the cause of Allah as it behoves you to strive for it. He has chosen you and has laid no hardship upon you in religion; *so follow* the faith of your father Abraham; He has named you Muslims *both* before and in this *Book*, so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and you may be witnesses over mankind. Therefore observe Prayer and pay Zakāt, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector and an Excellent Protector and an Excellent Helper! (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:79)

In these noble verses, Allah, the Exalted, has enjoined jihad, and, in its explication, says, ‘Establish prayer and give *Zakāt* and hold fast to Allah.’ Moreover, He has mentioned adoption of righteousness and access to God through the mediation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Thus indeed, reformation of self and observance of worship is the most important form of jihad because the jihad against self, as is mentioned in these noble verses, is also

acknowledged by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} as the most important jihad as is evident when, on one occasion, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} said, while defining a *mujāhid*:

The true *mujāhid* (warrior) or the best *mujāhid* (warrior) is the one who fights against his own ego. (*Tirmidhī, Kitāb Faḍāil-ul Jihād*; Chapter: What has been related about the virtue of the one who dies guarding the frontier from the enemy)

This *ḥadīth* not only reflects the importance and excellence of self-reformation, but it also recognizes it as the most important form of jihad.

*Jihad/Striving with Quran,
that is, Proclamation and Dissemination of Quran*

Next to the great jihad, that is, struggle against self, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the propagation and dissemination of Quran, and it is declared as jihad *kabīr* (great struggle) in the Holy Quran. In this context, Allah, the Exalted, says:

وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

... and strive against them with it (the Quran) a great striving (*Sūrah al-Furqān*, 25:53).

This is called ‘struggle with pen and speech’. Imam ibn Qayyim

Jauzi (died A.H. 751 / A.D. 1350) writes in the commentary of this verse:

Strive mightily with Quran. This chapter belongs to Meccan period and in it, jihad means striving by propagation and argumentation. (*Tafsir ibn Qayyim*, vol. 3, p. 212)

In the Holy Quran, the injunction to convey [the message] is found repeatedly and with great emphasis. The purpose is to deliver mankind from darkness and error by carrying the light of Islamic teachings to it. Therefore, there is this injunction from the Lord, in the Holy Quran:

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۗ

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them in a way that is best. (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:126)

That is, to invite the wise from among the opponents to the path of your Lord with such convincing arguments that their doubts are removed, and for the ordinary people from among the opponents, put forth easy-to-understand arguments because they are not capable of discerning subtleties, and with the stubborn among the opponents, argue gently so that they do not recoil further away from Islam in their antagonism.

*Jihad as Striving with Wealth,
that is, Spending in the Path of God*

This is how the Holy Quran ordains about this form of jihad:

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

Go forth, light and heavy, and strive with your property and your persons in the cause of Allah. That is better for you, if only you knew. (*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:41)

Striving with wealth is mentioned in the Holy Quran in different forms and repeatedly. In this context. It is particularly important to bear in mind that in every instance, striving with wealth is mentioned first and the striving with life later. Thus Allah, the Exalted, clarifies the significance of striving with wealth and also defines the relative importance of striving with sword. This subject is mentioned at following places as well: (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:95, *Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:20, *Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:88, *Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaff*, 61:12, *Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, 49:16, *Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:73).

*Jihad as Striving with Sword,
that is, Armed Engagement*

In the broader application of the term jihad, religious wars are also included by extension. But, alas in this age, it has been restricted to military conflict only. Yet, it is absolutely wrong because wherever only war is mentioned in the Holy Quran, the word 'to kill'

is employed and this is but one among many forms of jihad. It means to defend oneself and to restore the freedom that has been usurped by oppression and persecution as is said:

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ۚ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ
 دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ

Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allah, indeed, has power to help them—Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly, only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah...’ (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:40–41)

Term ‘Holy War’ for Jihad

In the criticism of Islam, with respect to jihad, it is said in the Western world these days that Muslims consider jihad as Holy War, and because of it they jump into it under the influence of emotions without reflection and as a result the society becomes insecure.

It has been observed that certain terms that originally belonged to the Western Christian world have been imputed to Islam deliberately. One of these terms is ‘Holy War’. In the original sources of Islam (Quran and *hadith*), one does not find any use of the term ‘Holy War’ for jihad. This term belongs to Christians indeed. It is substantiated by the fact that, not only the Bible is its original source; its holiness has been invoked by the Church to thrust its followers into wars for centuries. It is mentioned in the book of Joel in the Old Testament:

Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for holy war; rouse out the warriors; let all the men of war advance and attack! Hammer your ploughshares into swords and your pruning knives into spears. Let even weakling say: I am a warrior. (Joel 3: 9–10, Holy Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible) (Note: In Urdu translations of the Bible, the translation of Holy War has been changed.)

Thus, the term of ‘Holy War’ has been mentioned in the Bible for hundreds of years before the advent of Islam. It has indeed been used for ‘Religious War’. Moreover, a predecessor of the current Pope, Benedict XVI, Pope Urban II (1088-1099) used this term for the first crusade in 1095. (*The First Crusade*, by August. C. Krey, pp. 36–40, published in 1921, Princeton)

Usage of the Term Jihad in Early Islam

As far as the original and primary meaning of the term jihad is concerned, it has been present and used in Islamic teachings from its early days. In support of this claim, some Quranic verses are presented from which the concept of jihad in Islam is elicited on one hand, and on the other, it refutes this allegation of the opponents that Muslims maintained a conciliatory posture in their weakness but raised the war flag on gaining strength, because the verses that are presented next are all of Meccan period when Muslims were weak and ‘jihad (*defence*) with sword,’ that is, active fighting, had not yet begun. Instead, these verses clearly show that jihad was being waged even then, that is, during the ‘period of weakness’.

It is said:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And *as for* those who strive in our path—We will, surely, guide them in Our ways. And, verily, Allah is with those who do good. (*Sūrah al-Ankabūt*, 29:70)

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

And whoso strives, strives only for his own soul; verily Allah is Independent of the entire universe. (*Sūrah al-Ankabūt*, 29:7)

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قُتِلُوا لَكُمْ جِهَادًا وَصَبَرُوا إِذْ رَّبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Then, surely thy Lord—to those who fled *their homes* after they had been persecuted and then struggled hard *in the cause of Allah* and remained steadfast—*aye*, surely, after that thy Lord is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:111)

(Note: This verse is from the chapter *Al-Nahl*, which is a Meccan chapter.)

Upon reflection on these verses, it becomes clear that in Islamic terminology, jihad is the phrase for effective application of extreme effort and perfect means for a noble purpose in the path of God. As all the aforementioned verses are Meccan, it is self-evident that the adversaries of Islam have always given a wrong connotation to the word and term of jihad, as jihad was being practiced even in Meccan life when there was no war and no armed conflict. This

also shows that this jihad was the striving against the self and striving with Quran, that is, the propagation and dissemination of teachings brought by the Quran, which was ongoing with utmost zeal and passion in spite of every kind of oppression and persecution, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} was receiving such verses in which the infidels were being challenged boldly and this grand proclamation was being blazoned:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مِمَّا عَبَدْتُمْ
وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مِمَّا أَعْبُدُ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

Say, ‘O ye disbelievers! ‘I worship not that which you worship, ‘Nor worship you what I worship. ‘And I am not going to worship that which you worship, ‘Nor will you worship what I worship. ‘For you your religion, and for me my religion.’ (*Sūrah al-Kāfirūn*, 109:1–7)

From the above mentioned verses, it is quite evident that Pope’s assertion is totally false because the jihad was ongoing in the period of weakness too and it was jihad of propagation and proclamation of the faith. Moreover, it also proves that Islam has never considered war as the primary form of jihad. On the contrary, it was the jihad of propagation and proclamation of faith that was foremost for it; about which there is the permanent injunction of Islam in emphatic words that coercion is not justified in any circumstance, Quran says:

فَإِنْ حَاجَّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ ۗ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ
ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ ۗ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۗ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْعُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِبَصِيرٍ بِالْجِبَادِ

But if they dispute with thee, say, ‘I have submitted myself

to Allah, and *also* those who follow me'. And say to those who have been given the Book and to the unlearned, 'Have you submitted?' If they submit, then they will surely be guided; but if they turn back, then thy duty is only to convey the message. And Allah is Watchful of *His* servants. (*Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:21)

By declaring in one of the verses quoted above, 'strive and be steadfast,' it is emphasized that 'steadfastness' is also a great form of jihad. Therefore, in that Meccan period even when such influential, brave, and strong companions like 'Umar bin Al-Khaṭṭāb, Ḥamza, and 'Abdur-Raḥmān bin 'Auf sought permission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} to respond to the tyranny of the opponents, they were advised to be patient (*Sunan Nasā'i, Kitābul Jihād*, Chapter Requisites for Jihad). In other words, steadfastness was the jihad at that time.

Is Coercion-in-Faith Sanctioned by Islam?

In a comprehensive response to the allegations made against Islam by the Pope, it is essential to review what Islam does teach about coercion in religious matters, that is, is it permissible, according to Islamic teachings, that people be forced to accept Islam and to spread Islam by the sword? If Islam permits coercion, the matter will certainly become suspect and it would open the possibility that perhaps Islamic wars were waged to force people into Islam. But if it is proven that such is prohibited in Islamic teachings, it would be a strong argument to support the contention that there

were other reasons for those wars which are ignored to be able to accuse Islam of coercion. No sane person can accept that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} and his companions acted in such a blatantly contrary manner to the very teachings that they proclaimed to people as being from God and which constituted the basis for their national identity. Besides, if their conduct belied those teachings, people of that time would most certainly have objected; and yet we find no such mention in history. When we look at the Holy Quran, we find injunctions against coercive conversion right from the outset. It is said:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۗ

And say, 'It is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him, who will, disbelieve'. ...

(*Sūrah al-Kahf*, 18:30)

Then it is said:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِكَيِّلٍ ۗ

Say, 'O ye men, now has the truth come to you from your Lord. So whosoever follows the guidance, follows it only for the good of his own soul, and whoever errs, errs only against it. And I am not a keeper over you'. (*Sūrah Yūnus*, 10:109)

Then Allah, the Exalted, declares categorically in this regard:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, has surely grasped a strong handle which knows no breaking. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257)

God provided the rationale for not allowing coercion in faith in this very verse by saying that it is not needed because the difference between guidance and error has been made clear. God has declared Himself to be the Guardian in this matter by virtue of Him being All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Coercion is not even imaginable as it is enjoined to overlook and even pray for the well being of those who do not believe:

وَقِيلَ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

I swear by his repeated cry 'O my Lord!' that these are a people who will not believe. Therefore turn aside from them, and say, 'Peace'; and soon shall they know.

(*Sūrah az-Zukhruf*, 43:89–90)

Similarly at another place, Allah, the Exalted, rejects the notion of aggressive wars by not only permitting friendship with such opponents but even advising kind treatment of those who do not fight

against Muslims and do not expel them from their homes on the basis of religious differences.

لَا يَنْهَى اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُواكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَ
تُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

Allah forbids you not respecting those who have not fought against you on account of *your* religion, and who have not driven you forth from your homes, that you be kind to them and act equitably towards them; surely, Allah loves those who are equitable. (*Sūrah al-Mumtahinah*, 60:9)

Timing of the Revelation of the Verse 'There is no Coercion in Faith'

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ¹

About the revelation of this Quranic verse, the Pope said, in his aforementioned speech based on undisclosed reasons, that this injunction was revealed when Muslims were weak and did not have the power to fight. Thereby he has tried to create the impression that Muslims started to plunder and pillage to force people into Islam when they gained power.

This assertion of the Pope is totally contrary to fact and reflects his ignorance of history. It also shows that he has donned

1. There should be no compulsion in religion. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257)
[Publishers]

the goggles of prejudice that permit him to see only the baseless assertions of the adversaries of Islam. What he said about this holy verse also shows the same because this verse was revealed not in the thirteen years of Meccan period but even four years after migration; in Rabī al-Awwal A.H. 4, when Muslims had already gained clear dominance over the infidels of Makkah at the Battle of Badr and the Battle of Uhud had already been fought. It was the time when Muslims were rapidly gaining in power and one could fear the coercion of people into Islam in the arrogance of power. (Abū Dāwūd, *Kitābul Jihād*, Chapter Regarding Compelling a Captive to Accept Islam, part 3, hadith number 2682. *Ibn Hishām*, vol. 4, Chapter on the Expulsion of Banī Naḍir)

In this regard, one should keep in mind that when Muslims received the permission for defensive war, they were still extremely weak (*Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān*, 3:124). Similarly, cursory view of history tells us that most of the expeditions under the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} took place before the conquest of Makkah while they were still weak and their dominance, victory, and power were still unrealized. This fact on one hand disproves the assertion of the Pope that Muslims fought wars after acquiring power and on the other it proves that these wars of Muslims were indeed defensive and were the wars for their survival.

General Condition of Muslims at the Outset of Defensive Wars

It is also pertinent to analyse the allegation of the Pope from the perspective of the general state of Muslims when the defensive

wars began. We see that the condition they were in also rejects the charge of coercion. Allah, the Exalted, has described it in this way:

كُنِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا
شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Fighting is ordained for you, though it is repugnant to you; but it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you like a thing while it is bad for you. Allah knows *all things*, and you know not. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:217)

When Muslims, after being subjected to oppression and tyranny for a prolonged period, were ejected from the land of their forefathers and many Muslims men and women were killed for no crime; the oppressors did not stop tyranny and continued to obstruct the message of Islam, God's law of preservation wished to prevent the extermination of the oppressed. Permission was granted to resist with sword those who had raised the sword; and they were enjoined to enter the battlefield to confront the evil of those who had killed in an attempt to restrain the evil. And yet it was a difficult choice for them because, by virtue of being believers, they were intrinsically reconciliatory. Besides, these Muslims were just a few in number and against them as if the whole country was aligned. Their state was such that, due to the fear for their safety, they could not even sleep at night. How could have they started the war with the idea of coercion? The state of Muslims at that time, as depicted by the Quran, argues that those battles of Muslims were for self-defence and self-preservation and not for

coercion or terrorism. Because of this state of Muslims, Allah, the Exalted, exhorts them at another place saying:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا ۗ وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۗ وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا

And what is the matter with you *that* you fight not in the cause of Allah and of the weak—men, women and children—who say, ‘Our Lord, take us out of this town, whose people are oppressors, and make for us some friend from Thyself, and make for us from Thyself some helper?’
(*Sūrah an-Nisā’*, 4:76)

This way, the subject is expounded that ‘We are instructing you to fight them, not because you are dominant and strong and their fate is at your mercy. On the contrary your enemies are so strong and powerful that you are naturally scared that if you confront them you would be slaughtered. But, despite this, We command you not to hesitate or waver in confronting them because God is with you.’

Background of the Defensive Wars

Now the questions arise as to what were the circumstances under which, and who were the people against whom, Muslims were permitted to engage in defensive wars and what were the real reasons for it? In an answer to these questions, the Holy Quran has mentioned these matters at great length. Similarly, records of history are also quite clear by study of which a person of even

an average intelligence can reach correct conclusions provided he is not blinded by prejudice. In the next paragraphs, following aspects of this background are presented at length.

1. Extreme persecution
2. Instigation against Muslims
3. Restrain the mischief

EXTREME PERSECUTION

The primary and fundamental reason given in the Holy Quran vis-à-vis the sanction of war to a Muslim is *بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا* (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:40) that because they have been wronged, that is, their persecution has crossed limits. The details of this persecution are documented by history. The infidels of Makkah, besides extreme derisive ridicule and hurtful rebuke and abuse, forcibly prohibited Muslims from the worship of one God and the proclamation of His Oneness. (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, Chapter on Expression of Quraish's Hostility towards Muslims)

They were mercilessly beaten. The infidels overpowered even the Holy Prophet^{sas} in the Ka'aba and beat him extremely cruelly. They were about to kill him by strangulating him with a sheet roped round his neck when Abū Bakr^{ra} came there fortuitously. Allah, the Exalted, granted him an uncommon awe at that moment. He rebuked the infidels and said, 'Do you want to kill him simply because he says, 'Allah is my Lord'?' It made the infidels withdraw. (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, Chapter on the Account of Persecution of the Holy Prophet^{sas} by his Tribe)

Similarly, assets of Muslims were confiscated unlawfully. Their

estates were plundered in an attempt to cripple them financially. (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, Chapter on the Persecution of Muslims by Quraish)

They were persecuted socially as well to the extent that the Meccans agreed to boycott the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} and his followers. To this end, all the chiefs of Makkah jointly drew up an accord in which complete boycott of Muslims was pledged and the accord was put up for display in the Ka‘ba. As a result, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} and all his companions were incarcerated in a valley near Makkah called Shi‘b Abī Tālib. There, even if any tender hearted Meccan wanted to help him, he would be stopped. Once Ḥakīm bin Ḥizām, the nephew of Khadija^{ra}, was taking some food supplies for them. Abū Jahl saw it and blocked his way. Another kind hearted person, Abū’l-Bakhtri happened to pass by. When he learnt about the dispute, he tried to expostulate with Abū Jahl but when he would not yield, he dealt with him sternly to allow the passage of some nourishment to the innocent Muslims. (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, Chapter on the Conspiracy of the Quraish with the Messenger)

Some of the Muslims were brutally murdered. Some of their women were dishonoured. Ultimately many Muslims gave up because of these atrocities and left Makkah for Abyssinia. (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, Chapter on the Account of the First Migration to Abyssinia)

But the Quraish were not content even with this for they sent a delegation to Negus, King of Abyssinia, in an attempt to find some way to make these emigrants return to Makkah where the

Quraish could possibly succeed in having them renounce Islam or put an end to them.

Abū Jahl had declared, about the master and leader of Muslims whom they held dearer than their own lives, ‘If I found Muhammad offering a Prayer in the Ka’ba, I shall trample his neck under my feet,’ (God-forbid). (*Bukhārī*, Book on Commentary, Chapter on *Sūrah al-‘Alaq*, 96:16). They attempted to carry it out on several occasions. He was severely tortured and subjected to all kinds of hardships. The brethren of Quraish pelted stones at him in Ta’if for mentioning the name of God to the extent that his entire body was drenched with blood. Ultimately the representatives of all tribes of Quraish of Makkah agreed to the resolution to kill Muhammad^{sas}, the Messenger of Allah, so as to stamp out the name of Islam and put an end to the concept of Unity of God once and for all. To implement this murderous resolution, young men of Makkah who belonged to different tribes of Quraish entered his house one night jointly. But God protected him and the Holy Prophet^{sas} left his house before that thus frustrating their designs. He took shelter in the cave of *Thaur*. (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, Chapter on What Befell the Messenger of Allah, vol. 3, and Chapter on Migration of the Messenger of Allah)

These were the atrocities committed by Quraish on the basis of which Quran gave Muslims the permission to wage a war against the tyrants. In backdrop of these incidents, who can doubt that the Quraish of Makkah were not at war with Islam and Muslims? Would these atrocities of the Quraish against the Muslims not constitute sufficient grounds for the defensive wars of Muslims? Of course, yes! If there were any other nation instead of Muslims, it would have confronted the Quraish a lot sooner.

But the Muslims were enjoined by their master to be patient and forgiving. (*Sunan Nasā'i, Kitābul Jihād*, Chapter on Reasons for Jihad, part 6, p. 3)

INSTIGATIONS AGAINST MUSLIMS

While the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} was in Makkah, he persevered with all kinds of atrocities. Ultimately, however, he was forced to migrate from there. But, alas, the tyrants did not give up the chase and further advanced in hostility. They became more invigorated and charged to annihilate Islam. Initially, they asked the Aus and Khazraj, the Medinite tribes, to withdraw their shelter of Muslims. (*Abū Dāwūd, Kitābul Kharāj*, Chapter on the News about Naḍīr)

Having failed in this effort, the infidels visited other tribes of Arabia and started instigating them against Islam. Because of the custodianship of the House of Ka'bah, the Quraish had a certain clout with all tribes of Arabia. Many tribes became bitter enemies of Muslims due to this instigation. Madinah was engulfed with fire all around it. An explicit account is provided in many narrations. In one narration, Ubayy bin Ka'b, who was a stalwart companion, says:

When the Messenger of Allah and his companions came to Madinah and their hosts gave them shelter, the whole of Arabia stood up against them united. In those days, Muslims even slept armed because of the fear at night and moved about carrying their weapons during the day, lest there be a surprise invasion. They used to say to each other

‘It remains to be seen whether we shall live long enough to see peaceful nights and times when we would not be scared of anyone besides God. (*Mustadrak of Hākim*, Book of Commentary, vol. 2, Chapter: The Occasion of Revelation of *Sūrah an-Nūr*, 24:57)

It is about this period that the Holy Quran says:

وَإِذْ لَرَوَّا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَفَّكُمْ النَّاسُ فَأَوَكُمُ وَ
 آيَاتِكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقِكُمْ مِنَ الظَّيْبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

And remember *the time* when you were few *and* deemed weak in the land, *and* were in fear lest people should snatch you away, but He sheltered you and strengthened you with His help, and provided you with good things that you might be thankful. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:27)

RESTRAIN THE MISCHIEF

Everyone knows that oppression is detrimental to societal peace. This ‘oppression’ is defined in the Holy Quran at multiple places. At one place, Allah, the Exalted, has depicted the heinous form of oppression as:

وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا يذَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِن
 اسْتَطَاعُوا ۗ

...and persecution is worse than killing. And they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith, if they can. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:218)

At another place, this subject is described with further detail:

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُوا سَوَاءً

They wish that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you may become alike. (*Sūrah an-Nisā*, 4:90)

Ibn ‘Umar^{ra} has elaborated this subject, presented by the Holy Quran, by saying:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَمَرَ (رضي الله عنه) أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ وَ قَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً، قَالَ ابْنُ عَمَرَ قَدْ فَعَلْنَا عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذْ كَانَ الْإِسْلَامُ قَلِيلًا فَكَانَ الرَّجُلُ يُفْتَنُ فِي دِينِهِ، إِمَّا يَقْتُلُونَهُ وَ إِمَّا يُوثِقُونَهُ حَتَّى كَثُرَ الْإِسْلَامُ فَلَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةً

Allah, the Exalted, says, ‘Fight these infidels who fight with you until there is no oppression left in the land. About it, Ibn ‘Umar says, We implemented this commandment of God in this way that in the times of the Messenger of Allah, when Muslims were very few and anyone who accepted Islam was persecuted, in the path of faith, by the infidels; Some were killed and some were incarcerated. But when Muslims gained in number, new converts faced no persecution. (*Bukhārī*, Book of Commentary, on *Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:40)

Sanction of War of Self-Defence

These were the adversities Muslims faced and they tolerated them with remarkable patience and fortitude for almost fifteen years

until when the infidels of Makkah came several hundred miles to mount an attack on them. Under these circumstances, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} ultimately had to fight different battles having no other choice. On account of these circumstances, he received the revelation from God that he should defend against these infidels who have come into the battlefield with the sword entirely in transgression and belligerence.

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ۗ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ
 دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ

Permission to *fight* is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allah indeed has power to help them— Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’. (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:40–41)

And this way, striving with the sword had its beginning. If even at that time, and under those circumstances, its permission had not been granted, social and religious peace would have been utterly destroyed, as is clearly stated by Allah, the Exalted.

وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفُتِنَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَبُيِّنَتْ لِلنَّاسِ صَوَابُ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَكَرِهُوا لَهُمْ وَيَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهَا سَمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty. (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:41)

ORDINANCES ABOUT THE WARS IN SELF DEFENCE

After a detailed review of the background of jihad *bis-saif* (striving with the sword), now we shall look at, in the light of the Holy Quran, what was the scope of this permission and what were its limits, as set by Islam. When we look at the Holy Quran from this angle, we learn that Islam did sanction defensive wars under the circumstances mentioned above, but it also imposed many stringent conditions concerning them. Many ordinances were promulgated and much etiquette was taught. All these caveats prove that Islam sanctions defensive wars only as the last resort.

The first consideration in this respect is that defensive war was permitted but only against those who initiated the hostilities and engaged in war. It was said:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ

And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you... (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191)

How to treat the aggressor during the war and afterwards; in this regard too, Islam has given very reasonable guidance. Thus, when we study the Holy Quran, following issues are brought out clearly.

1. War is permitted but it is admonished at the same time that transgression in any form is not allowable. The Holy Quran goes even further and warns the transgressor that he shall not receive Allah's pleasure.

وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

... but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191)

2. Similarly, in the context of avoiding war as far as possible, instruction is given that if the enemy is inclined to truce, accept the offer without hesitation.

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْتَنِحْ لَهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:62)

3. Obligation to keep pacts

Islam has put extraordinary emphasis on the principle that an agreement or a treaty with anybody is not to be violated under any circumstance. If an agreement stands in the way of a gain even in the course of a battle, the agreement must be upheld even if it results in the sacrifice of all benefits.

It is stated:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants...
(*Sūrah al-Mu'minūn*, 23:9)

The life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} is a testimonial that he always observed this injunction. Hudhaifah bin Al-Yaman^{ra} states,

‘I was precluded from joining the battle of Badr because I and Abū Sahl left our homes at the occasion of Badr. On the way we were apprehended by Quraish, they asked, ‘Do you intend to join Muhammad^{sas}?’ We said, ‘No, we are only going to Madinah. They made us make the pledge that we would not join Muhammad^{sas} in the battle but instead would go straight to Madinah. We appeared before the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} and gave him the full account of the incident. He said, ‘Go on and keep your promise. We shall seek help against the enemy with prayer.’ (*Muslim, Kitābul Jihād* Chapter: Fulfilment of Pledge)

Similarly, it is also enjoined that even if an idolater seeks protection, grant him protection immediately and do not look for excuses; and do recite the Word of God to him but coercion is not permitted. On the contrary, it is said that safe passage be provided him to the place of his choice. It is said:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ ابْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَٰلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who have no knowledge. (*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:6)

4. Justice is not to be abandoned under any condition

It is the usual practice that when a people gain supremacy over another, they abandon all moral norms and allow every kind of

abomination, persecution and oppression. But the Holy Quran strictly prohibits such behaviour and enjoins equity even in the face of extreme enmity. It says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَتَانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ الْآلَا
تَعَدُّوا ۗ اِعْدِلُوا ۗ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O ye who believe! be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just. That is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Aware of what you do. (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:9)

That is, the hostility of your enemies should not interfere with justice. Adhere to justice as righteousness lies in it. Just imagine how hard it would be to be equitable in dealing with those who have persecuted unjustifiably and have caused grief and bloodshed and had hounded and killed children and women, like the infidels of Makkah had done; and, moreover, they did not desist from wars! The Quranic precept does not abandon the rights of even such lethal enemies; and has enjoined equity and justice even for them. It is quite obvious that it is easier to treat the enemy with hospitality but it is very difficult to safeguard the rights of the enemy and not to abandon equity and justice in litigation with them while having gained control over them.

Discussion of the Verses Pertaining to Warfare

Opponents of Islam criticize the Holy Quran that it contains

such verses in which Muslims are encouraged to militancy. In the discussion about the above mentioned verses, it is quite evident that whenever fighting is mentioned in the Holy Quran, it is only the fighting in self-defence that is sanctioned. This fundamental right of every human and every nation is recognized internationally even to this day. Even in the charter of United Nations Organization, defensive war is justified.

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security. (UNO Charter, Article 51)

A detailed account of the teachings in Quran pertaining to jihad has been given previously. Now we record relevant verses of the Holy Quran and present the answers to objections concerning them. A collective study of these verses clearly shows that the Holy Quran does not give license to aggressive wars at any point.

We present different verses of the chapter *al-Baqarah* in which the subject matter of fighting is mentioned. The collective

study of this subject makes it obvious that permission is given to Muslims to defend themselves when war is imposed on them.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191)

That is, fight with those who fight you but do not initiate the fighting. Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Nūrud-Dīn, Khalifatul-Masīḥ I^{ra} says:

The Holy Prophet^{sas} and his first successor interpreted it to mean that children, women, elderly, and all peaceful should not be killed. (*Nūrud-Dīn*, p. 103)

Similarly it is stated:

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَادْرَأُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوهُمْ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُشْرِكُوا مِنْكُمْ هُمْ مَوَدَّةٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

And kill them wherever you meet them and drive them out from where they have driven you out; for persecution is worse than killing. And fight them not *in, and* near, the Sacred Mosque until they fight you therein. But if they fight you, then fight them: such is the requital for the disbelievers. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:192)

Only those infidels come under the command, وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ, who are mentioned in the preceding verse; who had effectively

started the war against Muslims. It cannot be objectionable at all to continue the fight against such people. The emphasis in *حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ* is to fight them wherever you encounter them in a battle. It is not implied that you should kill them when you encounter them individually. Instead, your fight should only be with regular army. It goes on to say:

فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

But if they desist, then surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:193).

It implies that even for those who raised the sword against Muslims, Allah, the Exalted, says that if they stop terrorism and persecution, God guarantees them unconditional amnesty and forgiveness.

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَ يَبُوءَ الَّذِينَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is *freely professed* for Allah. But if they desist, then *remember* that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:194).

It is quite evident from these quotations that disorder is pernicious for any society or system. That is why it is commanded that it should be crushed. But along with it, He commands that as the fear of being compelled to renounce the faith is eliminated and such conditions prevail where everyone is able to follow any faith that he desires on his own volition without any fear or coercion and as instigators abandon coercion and are no longer able to

cause disorder and turmoil, Muslims should stop the campaign against them forthwith. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:194)

Detailed explanation of ‘disorder’ has been mentioned earlier. As far as the words *يَكُونُ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ* are concerned, it does not mean at all that people should be coerced in accepting the religion of God as is obvious from the word, *فَإِنْ اتَّهَوُا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ* in the same verse, that if they desist, you should not pressure them. It is plainly evident from it that it only means that everyone should become free to adopt the religion of his choice.

His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

That is, kill those idolaters of Arabia till there is no sedition left and ‘Deen,’ that is, sovereignty becomes that for Allah, the Exalted. How does it imply coercion? It means only this much that fight with them till their strength is broken and mischief and turmoil is eliminated and some people who have accepted Islam covertly may be able to discharge Islamic obligations openly. If Allah’s intent was faith by force, why were the *jizya* [tax of expiation] and truce and treaties allowed and what was the reason that the Jews and Christians were permitted to enter safety by paying *jizya* and live peacefully under the shelter of Muslims? (*Jang-e-Muqaddas*, Rūḥānī Khaz’āin, vol. 6. p. 263)

The Meaning of ‘Fight in the Path of Allah’: The term ‘fight in the path of Allah’ is used at several places in the Holy Quran. In principle, the connotation of this term becomes quite evident when one considers *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191 as recorded above.

It is mentioned in this verse that you fight in the path of Allah with those who fight with you, showing that ‘fight in the path of Allah’ only means self-defence. Indeed, wherever the term ‘fight in the path of Allah’ is used, it means fighting according to the intent and injunctions of God; not for any selfish reason or personal ambition. In the specific noble verse, it is mentioned that no excess is to be permitted as God Almighty does not like transgressors. In other words, ‘fighting in the path of Allah’ also implies that even in self-defence, one should observe the limits and avoid any cruelty or transgression. There is no other meaning possible for the term ‘fighting in the path of Allah.’ Now we record such verses in which ‘fight in the path of Allah’ is mentioned.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And fight in the cause of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:245)

فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتُتَلَّ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۖ وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا ۗ وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۗ وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا ۗ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا ۝

Let those then fight in the cause of Allah who would sell the present life for the Hereafter. And whoso fights in the cause of Allah, be he slain or be he victorious, We shall soon give him a great reward. And what is the matter with you *that* you fight not in the cause of Allah and of the weak—men, women and children—who say, ‘Our Lord,

take us out of this town, whose people are oppressors, and make for us some friend from Thyself, and make for us from Thyself some helper?’ Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of the Evil One. Fight ye, therefore, against the friends of Satan; surely, Satan’s strategy is weak. (*Sūrah an-Nisā’*, 4:75-77)

Explanation: In these verses, Muslims are being commanded to fight in the path of Allah against oppressors. It means that those who have imposed war upon Muslims and who are determined to attack them are so cruel that they tyrannize the weak, the women, and the children of their own community. It means that these aggressors are not only fighting against Muslims, but aggression, obstinacy, and belligerence have become their second nature and they persecute even the weak of their own land. On this account, Muslims must fight this aggression so as not only to defend themselves, but also to deliver other weak and helpless subjects from the grip of such tyrants.

إِذْ يُوحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبَّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ سَأَلْتُمْنِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
الرُّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ۗ

When thy Lord revealed to the angels, *saying*, ‘I am with you; so give firmness to those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Smite, then, the upper part of *their* necks, and smite off all fingertips’. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:13)

Explanation: The reference in this verse is to the infidels who

had attacked Muslims at the Battle of Badr. Therefore Muslims were permitted to defend against them because the safety of Muslims was not possible without effective action against them. In *سَأَلْتَنِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ* Allah, the Exalted, has expressed the fact that He would strike awe and fear in the hearts of the Infidels in spite of the apparent weakness and deficiencies of Muslims.

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ
وَالْآخَرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
يُوفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

And make ready for them whatever you can of *armed* force and of mounted pickets at the frontier, whereby you may frighten the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you know not, *but* Allah knows them. And whatever you spend in the way of Allah, it shall be repaid to you in full and you shall not be wronged. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:61)

Explanation: The critics of Islam criticize this verse that Muslims are enjoined not only to make war preparation but also to terrorize. This objection is not justified. Indeed this noble verse contains a grand message. Commenting on this verse, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^{as}, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, explains this wisdom:

Ribāṭ are the steeds that are kept at the frontiers. Allah, the Exalted, enjoins the Companions to be vigilant to combat the enemies and by this word Ribāṭ directs their attention to the comprehensive and meaningful preparedness. Two

tasks were entrusted to them. One, they battled the overt enemies and the other, they battled spiritually. In lexicon, the ego and human heart is also called Ribāṭ. It is a fine point that only such horses are useful that are trained and disciplined. These days the same pattern is followed in the training and disciplining of horses and they are trained and tamed on much the same lines as the children are educated in schools with particular care and effort. If they are not educated and trained, they will be utterly useless and will prove deleterious and harmful instead of being beneficial.

This hint is also to the point that souls of men—that is, Ribāṭ—should be disciplined and their faculties and strengths should be such that they should tread within the limits of God. Because, if it is not so, they shall not be useful in the fight and struggle that is ongoing serendipitously between man and his fearsome enemy, namely, Satan, every second and every moment. Just as in war and battlefield, in addition to physical prowess, training is necessary, for this internal battle and struggle (jihad) training and proper grooming of the human souls is a requisite. And if it is not so, Satan will overpower him as a consequence and he will be badly humiliated and disgraced. For example, if one possesses a cannon and gun, arms and musket, etc., but he is utterly unaware of how to use them, he can never succeed in the face of the enemy. And if one has the arrow and the gun and armament and knows how to use them but has no strength in his arms, he cannot succeed either. This shows that mere learning how

to use the weapons cannot be useful or beneficial either until energy and strength is produced in the limbs by exercise and training. If someone knows how to use the sword but does not have the stamina and training, his arms will become useless after a few movements and strokes of the sword and he will become totally useless with exhaustion and will succumb to the enemy in the end.

Therefore, understand it and understand it well that mere knowledge and skill and cynic learning cannot be of much avail until there is action, practice and training. Note that even the government does not leave the armies idle due to the same concern. Even in peace times, it uses war games to prevent the armies from becoming rusted and, of course, the routine target practice and parades are norms anyway. (Report Jalsa Sālāna 1897, pp. 65–69, Commentary of the Holy Quran by the Promised Messiah^{as} vol. 2, pp. 236-237)

Another aspect of the subject presented in this verse is that Muslims are, in fact, exhorted to make preparations against the opponents to the best of their ability, *مِّن قُوَّةٍ* by enhancing their strength and by *رَبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ*. As a consequence *تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ* they would frighten the enemy and also *وَأَخْرِيْنَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ* others who are beyond them. What is implied is that you are dealing with such people who are dishonest and untrustworthy. Therefore, you should not become complacent about the precautions by trusting the agreement with them. Instead you should fortify your defences to the point that the enemies are forced to abide by their agreements. They should be afraid of you. They should realize that

you are strong and that you have taken all precautions. Thereby the enemy would not dare break the agreement and exploit your civility. They should not be able to take undue advantage of your sincerity to those pacts and your faithfulness to agreements.

Thus treaties have their place and the preparedness for war has its own place. The readiness for the war should be to the extent of stationing cavalry at the borders. This is implicit in *رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ* (mounted pickets). Where there is danger, the enemies should see your defensive preparations. They should realize that there is no frontier which is vulnerable where you have not put up adequate defences so as to discourage their evil designs. They should not even dream that they can gain some advantage by surprise attack. This is one objective. The other relates to the preceding verse in which it was said: *فَشَرِّدْ بِهِم مِّنْ خَلْفَهُمْ* inflict such a blow that others might get the message. The motivation in inflicting the blow is not callousness or cruelty but it is to save others from unnecessary hardships. The objective is totally different from what the critics surmise. If some are punished harshly but, due to it, others are spared, it would be kindness not cruelty. It is advised that this strategy should not only be employed during the battle but it should be used in defence also. That is, if you guard the frontiers and take strong defensive measures that are manifest to all, the report will reach others who are beyond and as a result they will not even think of attacking you. Therefore you ought to adopt this defensive strategy to establish lasting peace and adopt it in such a fashion that the enemy could see it. (From the Class on the Commentary of the Holy Quran by Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV^{ra} November 30, 1995)

فَأَمَّا اتَّقَاتُفُّنَهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَّنْ خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَلْذَكَّرُونَ

So, if thou catches them in war, then by *routing* them strike fear in those that are behind them, that they may be admonished. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:58)

Explanation: The word فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَّنْ خَلْفَهُمْ in this noble verse is defined in lexicon as, Allah's word فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَّنْ خَلْفَهُمْ means scatter their coalition and scatter them. The true meaning of *tasbrīd* is *taṭrīd*, that is, to repulse or rebuff. It is also said that it means inform their posterity of their errors or by their means frighten and scare others who are behind them. (*Lisān al-Arab*)

In this verse too that state is referred to when war has been imposed on Muslims and they are facing the enemy in a battle-field. In the word فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَّنْ خَلْفَهُمْ, Muslims are admonished that they are not to show any cowardice at such occasions. Instead, they will have to deal with enemy with such firmness by displaying bravery and gallantry that other supporters and allies of the enemy would not dare attack; and the danger of further warfare would be reduced to the fullest possible extent because the religion of Islam desires to establish peace at every opportunity and instructs that if the enemy is inclined to make peace, you must stop hostilities (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:62) because the ultimate objective is restoration of peace.

In *Sūrah at-Tauba*, 9:1–6, there is a detailed account of the conquest of Makkah and succeeding conditions. In the context of those special circumstances, there are some injunctions pertaining to war that appear objectionable to adversaries. We shall now present those verses and their background and, moreover, how the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his companions implemented them.

بِرَاءَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ فَسَبِّحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ
 وَعَلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ^١ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُحْزِي الْكٰفِرِينَ وَأَذَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى
 النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ^٢ وَرَسُولُهُ^٣ فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
 لَكُمْ^٤ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ^٥ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ إِنْ
 الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوا شَيْئًا وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتِمُوا
 لِيهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مَدَّتِهِمْ^٦ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فَإِذَا اسْتَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخَذُوهُمْ وَاصْرُوهُمْ^٧ وَأَقْدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ^٨ فَإِنْ تَابُوا
 وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ^٩ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
 اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ ابْلِغْهُ مَا مَنَّهُ^{١٠} ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

This is a declaration of complete absolution on the part of Allah and His Messenger from all obligation to the idolaters with whom you had made promises.

So go about in the land for four months, and know that you cannot frustrate *the plan of Allah* and that Allah will humiliate the disbelievers.

And *this is* a proclamation from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage, that Allah is absolved of the idolaters, and so is His Messenger. So if you repent, it will be better for you; but if you turn away, then know that you cannot frustrate *the plan of Allah*. And give tidings of a painful punishment to those who disbelieve,

Excepting those of the idolaters with whom you have entered into a treaty and who have not fallen short of fulfilling their obligations to you nor aided anyone against you. So fulfil to these the treaty you have made with them till their term. Surely Allah loves those that are righteous.

And when the consecrated months have passed, kill

the idolaters wherever you find them and take them *prisoners*, and beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent and observe Prayer and pay the *Zakāt*, then leave their way *free*. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who have no knowledge (*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:1–6).

Explanation: In these verses of *Sūrah at-Taubah*, command is given to fight against the idolaters. However, there is no undue harshness in it because those were the idolaters who had violated the treaties of peace and armistice. Due to this reason, it is enjoined to continue the fight against them until they renounce war and surrender their weapons. This principle is universally acknowledged. As for those who abided by the treaties, no hostility is permitted against them as is mentioned in verse 4.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوا شَيْئًا وَ لَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتِمُوا
إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ ۗ

Excepting those of the idolaters with whom you have entered into a treaty and who have not fallen short of fulfilling their obligations to you nor aided anyone against you. So fulfil to these the treaty you have made with them till their term (*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:4).

Therefore, when it is enjoined to fight against idolaters who violated the treaty, it is fully justified and it is not transgression.

Besides, such idolaters are given an ultimatum of four months in which they should decide about their future. If they do not take advantage of this respite and continue their war against Muslims, God Almighty instructs Muslims to fight them and lay siege to them.

Even during the siege, God has enjoined humane treatment for them by offering two options:

1. They repent and accept Islam.
2. If they seek shelter, not only provide them protection but also transport them to safety. Thus, even for such idolaters who ask for shelter, extremely humane treatment is accorded.

In the first option, obviously they would become part of Islamic society and will continue to dwell there like other Muslims. Whereas in the second option, Allah, the Exalted, has committed Muslims to not only offer them safety as soon as they seek shelter, but also to transport them safely to the place of their choice. During this time they are to be exposed to the Word of God but it is not permitted that they be coerced to become Muslim. In the first option, they are given freedom. They could accept Islam if they so choose. The personal conduct of the Holy Prophet^{sas} also testifies to this Islamic principle because he never linked such surrender with forcible conversion to faith. Whenever he gave amnesty, he gave it unconditionally. The most magnificent example of it was witnessed at the conquest of Makkah when he

declared pardon for thousands of extremely brutal and malicious people and they were given full amnesty. He surprised everyone by giving unconditional amnesty to Ikrima who was the son of Abū Jahl, the leader of idolaters and the most nefarious enemy of Islam. (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, Chapter on Death Sentence by the Prophet and Its Reason)

Thus, firstly the words of the Quran, and secondly the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, prove that in this Chapter there is no instruction to forcibly evict the infidels. At the most, there is the injunction to expel only such people who create disorder and are likely to persist in sedition. Such individuals are expelled by every government in the world and such action is not considered unreasonable. It is the retribution for their actions and everyone is held accountable for his deeds.

وَأِنْ كَذَّبُوا أَيُّبَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعْنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَلِيَّةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَا
 أَيُّبَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَنَهُمْ يَدِئْتَهُمْ إِلَّا تَقَاتِلُوا فَيُكْفَرُوا أَيُّبَانَ لَهُمْ وَهُمْ بَاخِرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ
 وَهُمْ بَدَاءُكُمْ أَوْلَ مَرَّةٍ اتَّخَشَوْهُمْ قَالَهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

And if they break their oaths after their covenant, and revile your religion, then fight *these* leaders of disbelief—surely, they have no regard for their oaths—that they may desist.

Will you not fight a people who have broken their oaths, and who plotted to turn out the Messenger, and they were the first to commence *hostilities* against you? Do you fear them? Nay, Allah is most worthy that you should fear Him, if you are believers.

Fight them, that Allah may punish them at your hands, and humiliate them, and help you *to victory* over

them, and relieve the minds of a people who believe...

(*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:12–14)

Explanation: In these verses permission is granted to confront those people who blatantly violate the peace treaties and state laws. It should be borne in mind that one connotation of دين (Faith) is governance and law and طعن means inflict a wound with a spear. (Lisān al-‘Arab)

Thus, وَطَعْنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ would mean breaking the law. Besides, with regard to non-Muslims, it could very well mean state law because they are not liable under the ‘Shariah’ (Divine Law). At the end of the verse it is said, لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُوْنَ, that they may desist, is to express the hope that, as a consequence of it, they may withdraw from their attitude and, by renouncing war, may start a peaceful and reconciled coexistence.

In the succeeding two verses, while enumerating further reasons to fight against such infidels, it is clearly stated that وَهُمْ بَدُّوْكُمْ وَأَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ that is, every mischief and trouble has had its origin in the infidels. This is confirmed by the tense used in the very verse. The tense أَلَّا تَقَاتِلُوْنَ tells that the ordinance is to fight someone who is at war because تَقَاتِلُوْنَ is tense of ‘Mufa‘ilah’ then وَهُمْ بَدُّوْكُمْ وَأَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ explicates itself that they have already raised sword against you and are belligerent, untrustworthy, and seditious. They are plotting to expel the Prophet from Madinah.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as} says,

With a thoughtful look at all these verses, a sensible person can understand that coercion has nothing to do with this site. In fact the idolaters of Arabia had carried

their tyranny and bloodshed to the extent that they had earned—because they had slaughtered Muslim men and mercilessly killed their women and murdered their children—to have their women killed and their children killed and their old and young slaughtered; and to have them expelled from their land; and to have their towns and villages burnt to ashes. But our Prophet^{sas} did not do any of this. Instead he gave them every relief even to the extent that, though they deserved to be put to death due to their bloodshed, he gave them the option that if anyone of them adopted Islam of his free will, he could come into security.

Now, this gentle and merciful conduct is criticized and the battles of Moses^{as} are sanctified. Alas and alas a thousand times. If justice was employed, this difference was not difficult to discern. It is strange that the God who commanded Moses to borrow the utensils and ornaments and, after taking possession of these things on false pretext, claim them as your own (Exodus, Chapter 12); and show such cruelty towards the enemies that you should kill hundreds of thousands of their children; and take the booty; and take out a portion for God from it; and Moses could choose any woman he desired, and in some cases take expiation money; and the towns and villages of the adversaries be burnt: and yet the same God ordains such acts of kindness in the time of our Prophet^{sas} that do not kill children; do not kill women; do not disturb the hermits; do not destroy crops; do not demolish churches; and fight only those who have advanced first to kill you; and

if they give expiation tax (*jizya*) or even if they belong to the faction of Arabs who deserve to die because of their previous bloodshed, release them if they convert; and if anyone wishes to hear the word of God, take him into your protection and convey him to his place of safety after he has heard it. It is regrettable that the same God has been assailed. It is regrettable that those people who impugn such sublime and refined teachings, consider the bloodshed of Torah, which did not even spare children, to be sanctioned by God, the Exalted (*Jang-e-Muqaddas*, Rūhānī Khaz'āin, vol. 6. p. 264–266).

Thus, after considering all these factors, it can be easily understood that there are no coercive teachings here and there is no justification for any criticism. Think and ponder, O wise ones!

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا
يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ ذَاكِرُونَ

Fight those from among the people of the Book, who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor hold as unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have declared to be unlawful, nor follow the true religion, until they pay the tax with *their own* hand submissively and acknowledge their subjection (*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:29).

Explanation: This verse does not imply that fighting with the People of the Book without a valid justification is permitted because the prerequisites for a war have been outlined in detail elsewhere in the Holy Quran. Those will have to be respected in

this setting. One cardinal condition is the blatant aggression by the enemy. Therefore, what is being said here is that even if the People of the Book committed aggression, it would be justified to fight them. If they are vanquished and agree to pay *jizya* [expiation tax], war should not be prolonged. In fact, even their earlier transgression should be forgiven. Thus, in these verses, there is no injunction to forcibly convert people to Islam.

عَنْ يَدٍ means voluntary payment of *jizya* (Tāj al-‘Arūs). It means they agree to pay *jizya* and live in the country abiding by its laws. There should be no coercion. وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ means the people who were responsible for fighting and disorder should lay down their arms and surrender to the current government.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

It is evident from all these verses that the Jews and Christians of Arabia had become so corrupt and had become devious to such an extent that everything that was prohibited by God in their scriptures—namely, not to steal, not to consume the wealth of others wrongfully, not to shed blood unjustly, not to give false testimony, not to associate anything with God—they carried out all these unlawful acts with such eagerness as if they had taken these evil deeds to be their religion... Their presence was dangerous for the state and their mischief had exceeded all bounds. Therefore, a sane person can appreciate that chastisement of such criminals was necessary to establish general peace. The Holy Prophet^{sas} not only had the station of the Prophet, he was also made responsible for conducting the affairs of the state like an effective ruler. As

such, it was his responsibility, in his capacity as a king and a ruler of the land, to effectively deal with the hooligans and the miscreants of the land and to rescue the oppressed that had been devastated by their mischief. Thus it should be understood that he had two offices. One the office of prophethood that he would convey to people whatever commands he received from God, the Exalted. And the second was the office of the ruler and vicegerent by virtue of which he would punish every miscreant and troublemaker and restore general peace in the land. In those days the condition of the land of Arabia was such that, on one hand, majority of the Arabs were robbers and gangsters and criminals of all kinds; and, on the other, those who were called ‘People of the Book’ were also extremely evil and devoured the wealth of others by unlawful means. If Arabs robbed at night, these people would slaughter the poor in broad daylight. Thus, when God gave the Holy Prophet^{sas} the sovereignty of the land of Arabia, it was undoubtedly his responsibility to deal with the felons, the criminals, the thieves, the gangsters and the miscreants and punish those who did not desist from crimes. And everyone can appreciate that it is necessary for a ruler to do so. For instance if people rob the subjects of a king and plunder or steal their belongings or kill people with selfish motives, would it not be the responsibility of that king to attack such noxious people and, by duly punishing them, restore peace in the land. Thus the battle with the ‘People of the Book’ was not to convert them to Islam but was for

saving the land from their mischief. (*Chashma-i-Ma'rifat*, pp. 229–231)

فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فَعْتَبِينَ وَاللَّهُ أَدْرَكُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا ۗ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ تَهْدُوا مِنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ۚ وَذُو لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَنَلُونَهُمْ سَوَاءٌ لَوْ تَتَّخِذُوا
مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ
وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاٰلِيَّآءَ وَلَا نَصِيْرًا اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ يَصِلُوْنَ اِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ بَيْنَهُمْ مِّثَاقٌ
اَوْ جَاءُوْكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُوْرُهُمْ اَنْ يُقَاتِلُوْكُمْ اَوْ يُقَاتِلُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ ۗ وَ لَوْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ لَسَلَطَهُمْ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَفَقَتُوْكُمْ ۚ اِنْ اَعْتَزَلُوْكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَاتِلُوْكُمْ وَالْقَوَا اِلَيْكُمْ السَّلْمَ ۗ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ
عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيْلًا سَتَجِدُوْنَ اٰخِرِيْنَ يَّرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يَّآمَنُوْكُمْ وَيَآمِنُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ ۗ كُلَّمَا رَدَّوْا اِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ
اُرْسِلُوْا فِيْهَا ۗ اِنْ لَمْ يَعْزُبُوْكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا اِلَيْكُمْ السَّلْمَ وَيَكْفُوْا اَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوْهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوْهُمْ
حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوْهُمْ ۗ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا مَّبِيْنًا

What has happened to you that you are divided into two parties regarding the hypocrites? And Allah has overthrown them because of what they earned. Desire ye to guide him whom Allah has caused to perish? And for him whom Allah causes to perish thou shalt not find a way.

They wish that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you may become alike. Take not, therefore, friends from among them, until they emigrate in the way of Allah. And if they turn away, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them; and take no friend nor helper from among them;

Except those who are connected with a people between whom and you there is a pact, or those who come to you, while their hearts shrink from fighting you or fighting their own people. And if Allah had so pleased, He could have given them power against you, then they would have surely fought you. So, if they keep aloof from you and fight

you not, and make you an offer of peace, then *remember that* Allah has allowed you no way of *aggression* against them.

You will find others who desire to be secure from you and to be secure from their own people. Whenever they are made to revert to hostility, they fall headlong into it. Therefore, if they do not keep aloof from you nor offer you peace nor restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them, wherever you find them. Against these We have given you clear authority (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:89–92).

Explanation: In verse 90 of the aforementioned verses, the words *فَاَقْتُلُوهُمْ* [seize them and kill them] are targeted for criticism that here Muslims are being exhorted to kill and plunder. Such critics present only this verse, but if it is read with reference to context, no room for any objection is left. A study of these verses collectively shows that here hypocrites are being mentioned and it is said with reference to them that *وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ* it is their deep desire that the faithful should become disbelievers even as they are. Allah, the Exalted, cautions Muslims here not to make such hypocrites their helpers because they are not sincere with them and, by so doing, they would jeopardize national interests.

حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ—That is, continue to deal with them in this manner until they renounce such efforts and become sincere comrades of Muslims. *فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا* -But if they turn their backs, that is, they rebel and openly side with enemies and wage war with you, you ought to deal with them as other invaders are to be dealt with. *وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ* That is, in the course of the war do not show any leniency wherever you encounter them. Clearly it concerns

those who rebel and join the enemy. However, it is said in the very next verse that if these adversaries belong to such people who have a treaty with you, they are not to be killed; and also if they have reservations about fighting with you. At the end of the next verse, it is categorically stated:

فَإِنْ عَازَبْتُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَاتِبْكُمْ وَ أَلْفَوْا إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا

... So, if they keep aloof from you and fight you not, and make you an offer of peace, then *remember that* Allah has allowed you no way of aggression against them (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:91).

That is, Muslims are advised vis-à-vis these people that if they stay away from you and do not engage in fighting but instead seek peace, you do not have any sanction from Allah to take any action against them. From the referenced section of this verse, it is quite evident that war against the hypocrites is not sanctioned under all circumstances. Permission is only given for defensive measures when they are involved in armed aggression. If they abstain from military action, all counter measures are forbidden. (Deduced from *The Holy Quran, Five Volume Commentary*, by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad; published by Islam International Publication Limited, and Translation Quran Class by Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV^{ra})

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلظَةً ۗ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

O ye who believe! fight such of the disbelievers as are near to you and let them find uncompromising firmness

in you; and know that Allah is with the righteous (*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:123).

Explanation: From the word *يَلُونَكُمْ* in this verse, the critics argue that Muslims have been enjoined to first kill the infidels around them and then keep widening this circle of carnage. *يَلُونَكُمْ*—means near ones. In this verse, it is explained that during war, no leniency can be permitted to the adversary just because of kinship. As far as *عِظَّةٌ* (hardness) is concerned, it means imperviousness of any object due to which nothing could penetrate it. Thus this verse admonishes not to be influenced by non-believers. (Deduced from ‘*Haqa’iq al-Furqān*’ by Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I^{ra} and the Translation Quran Class of Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV^{ra}, dated January 4, 1996)

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يُثْبِتَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا كَانَتْ لَكَ أَنْ تُثْبِتَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا كَانَتْ لَكَ أَنْ تُثْبِتَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا كَانَتْ لَكَ أَنْ تُثْبِتَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
يُرِيدُ الْأُخْرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

It does not behove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in regular fighting in the land. You desire the goods of the world, while Allah desires *for you* the Hereafter. And Allah is Mighty, Wise (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:68).

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَخْتَنُوا بِكُمْ فَقُشِدُوا الْوُقُوفَ فَإِمَّا مَثًّا بَعْدَ
وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّى تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ذَلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَانتَصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَ
بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

And when you meet *in regular battle* those who disbelieve, smite *their* necks; and, when you have overcome them, bind fast the fetters—then afterwards either *release them as a favour* or *by taking* ransom—until the war lays

down its burdens. That *is the ordinance*. And if Allah had so decided, He could have Himself exacted retribution from them, but He puts some of you to trial at the hands of some others. And those who are killed in the way of Allah—He will never render their works vain (*Sūrah Muḥammad*, 47:5).

Some object to these verses that here bloodshed is being encouraged, whereas the message is just the opposite. Here, the subject is not that of warfare. It is the Islamic teaching regarding prisoners of war that is being detailed. It is being defined for the Muslims as to when they are allowed to capture the enemy as prisoner of war. Until regular warfare starts, the enemy cannot be taken as a prisoner. Even if there is hostility towards a people, it is not allowed to deprive them of their freedom simply on that basis; and take them prisoners. In these verses, value of human freedom is highlighted and it has been instructed that the prisoners of war will have to be released when the fighting comes to an end, either as an act of benevolence or in exchange for ransom.

It is not implied that a prophet must shed blood because there is an exhortation in the Holy Quran to the contrary. This verse only purports that if he is forced into warfare due to the attacks of the enemy, he may take prisoners only then and not otherwise. Thus the emphasis is on the principle that without a full-fledged war, taking prisoners is unjustified. If there is a fierce battle between two nations, taking prisoners can then be justified. (Deduced from '*Haqā'iq al-Furqān*,' Short Commentary and Quran Translation classes of Khalifatul-Masīḥ IV^{rta}, dated Nov. 30, 1995 and July 17, 1998)

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُنَقَّضَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

The reward of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive to create disorder in the land is *only this* that they be slain or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off on alternate sides, or they be expelled from the land. That shall be a disgrace for them in this world, and in the Hereafter they shall have a great punishment (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:34).

The objection made on this verse is that Muslims have been enjoined to treat all their opponents extremely harshly and with cruel punishments. The first point that needs to be made clear is that here only those people are meant who are responsible for creating unrest and chaos in society by violating rule of law.

As far as the harsh penalties in this verse are concerned, one has to consider whether the only objective of the Holy Quran is to castigate the opposition. Did the Holy Prophet^{sas} treat his opponents with such harshness? If he did, who were the subjects? Except for those who were guilty of such deeds, no one was treated in this manner. The hypocrites dwelled in Madinah all around. How many of them had their hands cut off on opposite sides? How many were crucified? Not even one. In fact, in this verse, the penalties for those who create disorder, chaos and turmoil are spelled out. It is affirmed in it that anyone who commits a crime and creates disorder in society will be punished accordingly. In the preceding verse, 'for killing a person or for creating disorder,' it has been mentioned that, in the estimation of God, killing is

unjustified and prohibited if it is not for retribution for murder or disorder. If there is sedition, then the retaliation that is sanctioned is only in proportion to its kind and the extent. This is the fundamental principle in the subordination of which the purport of this verse will be understood. After this, Allah, the Exalted, says:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِن قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Except those who repent before you have them in your power. So know that Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:35).

Allah, the Exalted, says that even if these offenders have committed such crimes, whether they are murderers or tyrants, you have no recourse against them if they have repented and reformed before you gain power over them. Give them another chance. This is an extremely important point that is mentioned in the last part of this verse, ignoring which, the purport of the earlier verse can and is distorted. فَاعْلَمُوا Then know that one who is imparting these teachings is غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ [Forgiving and Merciful]. These teachings are not a manifestation of God's wrath but are the teachings of an extremely Forgiving and repeatedly Merciful God because in this revenge lays the good of mankind and it is to safeguard them against many dangers. (Deduced from the Quran Translation Class of Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masīh IV^{ra}, July 5, 1995)

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it becomes quite evident from all this discussion

that there is a very clear directive in the Holy Quran not to use sword to spread faith; instead, present the intrinsic qualities of the faith and attract people towards it by goodly example. It is wrong to argue, from the wars that took place in the early days, that Islam endorses use of sword because that sword was not to spread the faith but was to protect the faith from the attacks of the enemy; or to establish peace; and coercion for the faith was never the motive. As far as the 'striving with the sword' in our times is concerned, the great spiritual son of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his Caliph, the adjudicator, the arbitrator, Imam Mahdi^{as} gave his verdict in these words:

I have brought you a commandment which is that jihad with the sword has been ended but the jihad of the purification of your spirits must continue to be waged. I say this not on my own but in order to proclaim the design of God. Reflect on the *hadith* of Bukhārī wherein it is stated that the Promised Messiah would put an end to fighting for the faith. Accordingly I command those who have joined my ranks that they should discard all such notions. They should purify their hearts and enhance their mercy and should have sympathy for the afflicted. They should spread peace on earth, for this would cause their faith to spread. They should not wonder how this would come about. As God Almighty has utilized the elements and all earthly means for the purpose of bringing about new inventions to serve human needs like mechanical locomotion, etc., in the same way He will put His angels to work for the fulfillment of spiritual needs through heavenly

signs, without the intervention of human agencies, and there will appear many flashes of light whereby the eyes of multitudes will be opened. (*The British Government and Jihad*, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, 2008 edition. Islam International Publications Ltd.)

CHAPTER 3

Holy Prophet and Wars

by Dr. Mohammad Daud Majoka

The verses of the Holy Quran that refer to wars have been discussed in detail in the second chapter. Here a review of the usual objections raised against the Holy Prophet^{sas} with reference to the wars is intended. The adversaries have to criticize everything because of their prejudice and parochialism. It is not possible to enumerate all those objections and to give detailed replies here in this limited space. Therefore, we would group them into different categories according to their logic and respond to them in principle in the light of authentic history books and narrations. The majority of these objections belong to three categories:

FIRST: Objections saying that war is undesirable under any condition and Muslims have been embroiled in them. This covers all objections in which the essential argument is that the Holy Prophet^{sas} engaged in wars whereas Jesus did not, and this is one distinction and superiority that Jesus has. (*Al-Kindy*, *The Apology*, translated by W. Muir, Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, Second edition, London, UK, 1887, p. 100)

SECOND: Second category is of objections that allege that the wars that the Holy Prophet^{sas} fought were not defensive but

were intended to conquer land and amass wealth. (*Al-Kindy*, The Apology, Translated by W. Muir, Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, Second Edition, London, UK, 1887, p. 46. CG Pfander: Mizan al-Haqq. Religious Tract Society, London, UK, 1910, p. 353)

THIRD: The third category of objections goes even beyond. It alleges that the Holy Prophet^{sas} fought wars to eliminate his religious opposition and to force people into accepting his faith. In this vein, it is alleged that as long as Muslims remained weak, they preached peace but no sooner did they gain power, they started wars, rampage and pillage, and Islam spread due to coercion and sword. This is the objection that the Pope, while quoting an excerpt from the dialogue of the Emperor Manuel and adding his own remarks which are false anyway, has put forward. (CG Pfander: Mizan ul Haqq. Religious Tract Society, London, UK, 1910, p. 354. Al-Kindy, The Apology, Translated by W Muir, Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, Second Edition, London, UK, 1887, p. 100. EM Wherry: The Quran, London, Trübner & Co, 1882, vol. 1, p. 84. E Gibbon: Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edited by JB Bury, New York, Frank De Fau & Company, 1906, vol. 9, Chapter 50, p. 65.)

In the following, all three categories of objections shall be answered from the authentic books and Islamic sources. In this context, we shall first present the Holy Quran, which is arguably the most authentic and contemporary document about the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his life. It will show the attitude of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his followers in his time vis-à-vis the wars. Moreover, it tells us the historic backdrop of that time.

Knowledge of this historic background, by itself, removes all such objections. Besides, we shall present the pronouncements of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that illustrate what he really preached. We shall make use of the authentic books on his biography, with the ability that Allah grants.

What are the Teachings of Islam about Warfare?

Does Islam prefer war? Does human blood have no value in Islam? An understanding of teachings of Islam pertaining to these issues shall illuminate the attitude of Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sas} about warfare. It should be understood that the Holy Quran presents the following fundamental precepts about war, pillage and plunder:

مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا
فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

... whosoever killed a person—unless it be for *killing* a person or for creating disorder in the land—it shall be as if he killed all mankind... (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:33)

كُنِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ

Fighting is ordained for you, though it is repugnant to you... (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:217)

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْفَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا

... and say not to anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, 'Thou art not a believer'... (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:95)

The Holy Prophet^{sas} did not want war nor did he like carnage and plunder. In fact, Islam even equates the murder of one man with the murder of the entire human race. As Islam is a realistic religion that looks at all issues of human society in a matter-of-fact way and offers their solutions instead of ignoring them; therefore, man is permitted to defend himself instead of succumbing to a collective suicide when confronted with such a calamity where there is choice to be made between annihilation of himself, his friends and family, or to pick up arms and fight for himself.

Even today, as has always been in every age, all civilized nations have endorsed this principle. In our times, the UN, as the representative body of the entire world, endorses this principle even to the extent that the proponents of the unnatural and arbitrary teachings of Christ, according to which Christians were enjoined to offer the other cheek when hit on one, are forced to accept the principle put forth by Islam to fight to defend themselves. Therefore, no matter how much clichés the Christians use, the conduct of the Christian nations of the entire world over the last two thousand years refutes their imaginary and fictitious teachings and validates Islamic precept—this includes many vicegerents of Jesus, many a predecessor of the Pope. In fact, the truth is that perhaps all nations of the world combined have not shed quite as much blood as the Christians. For Muslims, despite the being given the right to defend, they have been enjoined to make tireless efforts to call the enemies to peace, even after the hostilities have broken out. The aforementioned verses reflect the historic fact that when Muslims had to engage in defensive wars, they did so, not because of any base desires but despite their wishes being otherwise and their aversion to war.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} spent thirteen long years in Makkah after the Call. During this entire period, he and his companions were subjected to all kinds of atrocities and persecution so as to compel them to renounce their faith. For instance, one companion by the name of Khabbāb^{ra} was laid on burning coal because of his acceptance of Islam and it left permanent scars on his back. (*Ibn Mājah, Kitāb al-Muqaddamah*, Chapter on the Merits of Khabbab, Number 150)¹

These atrocities are even acknowledged by Western scholars. For instance, Karen Armstrong writes in her book, *Muhammad*, while mentioning the atrocities against Bilal^{ra} and ‘Ammār bin Yāsir^{ra}:

Umayyah, chief of the Jumah, used to take his Abyssinian Muslim slave Bilal outside in the hottest part of the day, tie him up and leave him exposed to the sun with a great stone on his chest. The clan of Makhzūm treated the family of the freedman ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir so badly that his mother eventually died. (*Muhammad*, Karen Armstrong 1992, pp. 121–122)

The Holy Prophet^{sas} and his companions were confined for a long period of three years in a valley and all Meccans were admonished not to sell anything edible to them under any circumstance. (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*).

1. The numbers used in references to the Books of *aḥādīth* are according to *Tarqīm ul-‘Ālamīyya*.

Gibbon writes about it:

As he was still supported by his family, the rest of the tribe of Koreish engaged themselves to renounce all intercourse with the children of Hashem, neither to buy nor sell, neither to marry nor to give in marriage, but to pursue them with implacable enmity, till they should deliver the person of Mahomet to the justice of the gods. The decree was suspended in the Caaba before the eyes of the nation; the messengers of the Koreish pursued the Mussulman exiles in the heart of Africa: they besieged the prophet and his most faithful followers, intercepted their water, and inflamed their mutual animosity by the retaliation of injuries and insult. (Gibbon: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 50)

In spite of all these atrocities, the Holy Prophet^{sas} did not declare any war; instead, he advised his companions to migrate to Abyssinia where no one would persecute them for practicing Islam. The Meccans even went there to get them repatriated (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*). This is mentioned by Gibbon too in the above quotation.

Ultimately, the Meccans conspired to kill the very person of Muhammad^{sas}. They besieged his house. At that point, the Holy Prophet^{sas} left Makkah and, after spending three days in a cave with a lone companion, migrated to Madinah that is about 430 km from Makkah. The Meccans did not leave him alone even there and threatened Medinites that if they did not expel him, Madinah would be invaded (Sunan Abū Dāwūd: *Kitābul Kharāj*, Spoils,

and Rulership; Chapter: Regarding the Incidents with Al-Naḍīr. Tradition No. 2610). They followed through with this ultimatum and attacked Madinah despite the harsh travel conditions of that time (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*). These historical facts debunk the notion that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was eager to fight. Besides, at every juncture, as has been mentioned in the Islamic teachings recoded in detail in other chapters, Muslims have been enjoined to make peace. Thus, when these wars were imposed on him, he was left with no choice but to defend himself. The first verse that appears in the Holy Quran in this context (Sunan Nasā'ī: *Kitābul Jihad*, Chapter on Obligation of Jihad, Tradition No. 3035; and *Sīrat Ibn Hishām*) is the following:

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ۚ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا
 مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ
 بِبَعْضٍ لَهَدَّ مَتَّصُوا مَعَ وَبَيْعٌ وَصَلَاتٌ وَمَسْجِدٌ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ

Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged— and Allah, indeed, has power to help them. Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’—And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated... (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:40–41)

Along with it, these instructions were also given:

فَإِنِ اعْتَرَفْتُمْ لَكُمْ قُلُوبًا فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا

... So, if they keep aloof from you and fight you not, and make you an offer of peace, then *remember that* Allah has allowed you no way of aggression against them (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:91).

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِبُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191).

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْتِنِحْهَا

And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it... (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:62)

All these verses substantiate that the Holy Prophet^{sas} fought when the war against him had already been launched and he was forced into it. It was not that he had harmed anyone or had usurped anyone's rights; it was only because he worshipped one God and invited others to the same. He had to undertake it only in self-defence and having being forced into it. Even in this defensive war, directive is recorded above to simultaneously pursue peace. Even after initiating the war, if the enemy wishes to make peace at any stage, hostilities have to cease.

The Holy Quran also enjoins that no excess should be committed even in wartime and peace must be made if the enemy wishes it (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:91). It was, therefore, in compliance to these teachings that the Holy Prophet^{sas} preferred making truce even under unfair stipulations at the occasion of Hudaibiyah

when most of the companions did not like the stipulations and considered them humiliating. (*Sīrat ibn Hishām*)

When wars were forced upon, it was instructed not to harm children and women (*Bukhārī, Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Killing women in war. Tradition No. 2792 and Abū Dāwūd, *Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Killing women in war. Tradition No. 2294), and elderly (Abū Dāwūd, *Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Regarding Calling Idolators to Islam. Tradition No. 2247), and the hermits (Musnad Ahmad, Musnad Banī Hishām, Musnad ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās. Tradition No. 2592); no one should be burnt in fire (Abū Dāwūd, *Kitābul Jihād*, Chapter: Regarding The Abhorrence Of Burning The Enemy With Fire. Tradition No. 2299); not to double cross the enemy (*Muslim, Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter on Appointment of the Leaders of Expeditions. Tradition No. 3261); not to burn any orchard or fruit-bearing tree (Musnad Ahmad, Musnad al-Anṣār, Tradition No. 21334).

All this was done because war in itself was not the objective of Islam or the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The objective was self preservation. Therefore, many a time, enemies who had been captured by Muslims were freed simply on the pledge that they would not fight against Muslims anymore. (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*)

In contrast, the prophets of the Bible, as recorded by the Bible, incessantly engaged in wars and employed very cruel means in those wars. The book *Wars of Bible* by the ex-president of Israel, Chaim Herzog (Chaim Herzog, Moredechai Gichon: Die biblischen Kriege. Bechtermunz 2001) is enough to underscore this point. One is ashamed to note the teachings about war as contained in the Bible that how can such a cruel and inhuman teachings be ascribed to God? According to Numbers 31, Moses

ordered that, besides the men of Midian, all their women were to be killed also; but the virgins were spared. All their towns were set on fire. But these were the events at the beginning. When this nation gained power, it assassinated all men, women, and children of sixty towns of one nation. Their towns were burnt but the booty was kept for themselves (Deuteronomy 3). Their thirst was not satisfied even with that. Therefore, the Bible commanded that in all the land that was their inheritance, they should not leave anything alive (Deuteronomy 20:16). Even the animals were to be killed. And if the inhabitants of any city renounced the faith of the Bible and adopted another religion, not only all people of that city and their animals were to be killed, all their belongings were to be torched as well (Deuteronomy 13).

Islam declares that if someone seeks peace, you cannot reject his overture just because he is not a believer (ch. 4: v. 95). And, if someone renounces Islam and adopts another faith, he is fully entitled to do so. No one has the right to punish him. His fate is with Allah (ch. 4: v. 138). Islam says that you should defend yourself lest the houses of worship of other faiths and your own mosques are destroyed. But the Bible says that when you conquer other nations in the Holy Land, do not make any accord of peace with them, do not leave anyone of them alive and even raze their temples (Deuteronomy 7).

If someone thinks that these ordinances were in the Torah and were abrogated subsequently, he should consider that these teachings were reiterated in Samuel 15:3 and then in Ezekiel 9:5-7, and, it is specifically stated that elderly, young girls, women and babies, all should be slaughtered and no mercy should be shown to them. Even the livestock was to be put to death. The Pope might say that

Jesus Christ abolished these commandments and the Christians do not subscribe to them but how can one reconcile with the fact that there has been no other nation equal to Christians in cruelty and in barbaric treatment of its vanquished adversaries. Whenever Christians have had the opportunity to conquer a land, they have always shown this real characteristic of theirs.

Here, a comparison of conducts of the vicegerents of Muhammad^{sas} and Jesus Christ from the Islamic and Christian history seems quite relevant. The Holy War that a predecessor of the Pope, Pope Urban the Second, started against the Muslims in the name of the God of Christianity in which, according to their records, when Jerusalem was conquered, one Christian Historian describes his own eyewitness account of its carnage:

Some of our men (and this was more merciful) cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into the flames. Piles of heads, hands, and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city. It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses. But these were small matters compared to what happened at the Temple of Solomon, a place where religious services are ordinarily chanted. What happened there? If I tell the truth, it will exceed your powers of belief. So let it suffice to say this much, at least, that in the Temple and porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies.

The city was filled with corpses and blood. (August C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, Princeton: 1921, p. 261)

Another eyewitness writes:

In this temple almost ten thousand were killed. Indeed, if you had been there you would have seen our feet coloured to our ankles with the blood of the slain. But what more shall I relate? None of them were left alive; neither women nor children were spared. (Frederick Duncan and August C. Krey, Eds., *Parallel Source Problems in Medieval History*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1912, p. 114)

This is not about a secular war or a war that was fought without the direct order and full support of the vicegerent of Jesus. Indeed this war was initiated by the vicegerent of Jesus himself and his representatives and great religious figures played pivotal roles in this war. The same Christian conduct we find in Andalusia where the Muslims were not only slaughtered or exiled, the Holy Spanish Inquisition was initiated at the behest of the Pope; with the history and accomplishment of which the Pope must be well aware because he is the past chairman of the supreme sacred congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition. If God is not pleased with bloodshed, and certainly God is not pleased with it, what does the Pope think of this part of the Christian History?

In contrast, when the Muslims conquered Jerusalem during the reign of the second Righteous Caliph of the Holy Prophet^{sas} in A.D. 637, they did not commit any massacre or plunder in honour

of the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and this is admitted even by Christians. Thus, ‘Umar^{ra} entered Jerusalem, after a peaceful treaty, without any bloodshed. According to this treaty, he had vouchsafed the sanctity of the temples and they were to remain with Christians. History has recorded it as:

... the simplicity of his journey is more illustrious than the royal pageants of vanity and oppression. The conqueror of Persia and Syria was mounted on a red camel, which carried, besides his person, a bag of corn, a bag of dates, a wooden dish, and a leathern bottle of water. Wherever he halted, the company, without distinction, was invited to partake of his homely fare, and the repast was consecrated by the prayer and exhortation of the commander of the faithful.... After signing the capitulation, he entered the city without fear or precaution; and courteously discoursed with the patriarch concerning its religious antiquities... At the hour of prayer they stood together in the church of the Resurrection; but the caliph refused to perform his devotions, and contented himself with praying on the steps of the church of Constantine. To the patriarch he disclosed his prudent and honourable motive. ‘Had I yielded,’ said Omar, ‘to your request, the Moslems of a future age would have infringed the treaty under colour of imitating my example. (Edward Gibbon: *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edited by JB Bury, 1906, New York, vol. 9, Frank De Fau & Company, Chapter 51)

The Catholic Encyclopedia also admits that Muslims did not shed any blood at the occasion of conquest of Jerusalem and did not damage the temples of Christians there. (The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 8, under Jerusalem, New York, 1910, Robert Appleton Company)

War for Spoils

With regard to the second category of objections, namely, the Holy Prophet^{sas} fought the wars for the spoils; it has already become evident from the earlier discussion that he did so entirely in self-defence and not for spoils, and only after a prolonged period of suffering from all kinds of hardships and atrocities, which encompassed most of his ministry. Only after this did he pick up arms as the last resort. Now, we shall also take up the objection as to whether these wars were for the spoils. The wars with the objective of plunder are conceivable only if the invaders are strong enough to take the wealth with force; or if they are weak, they may deceive and steal or attack when the opponents are unaware. It is not plausible that a party, despite being weak, would attack its enemy without any deception or after warning the enemy, to capture its wealth. What were the conditions when the Holy Prophet^{sas} fought those wars?

The plight of Muslims was such that in every battle they were inferior to their enemies both in number and equipment. Their condition in the first battle is recorded by the Quran as:

وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ ۖ

And Allah had *already* helped you at Badr when you were weak... (*Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān*, 3:124)

That is, in the battle of Badr Muslims were insignificant in comparison to the non-believers and,

وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَرِهُونَ^٤

... while a party of the believers were averse. (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:6)

Some among them were averse to fighting and then there were some hypocrites who were not sincere with Muslims.

إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ غَرَّ هَؤُلَاءِ دِينُهُمْ^٥

When the Hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease said, ‘Their religion has deluded these *men*’. ... (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:50)

The outward condition of Muslims was such that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was praying to Allah that if the Muslims are defeated that day, it would finish Islam, and no one would be left to worship God. (*Muslim, Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Help with Angels in Badr. Tradition No. 3309). The number and preparation was such that there were about 313 Muslims. (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*; Abū Dāwūd, *Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Regarding the Nafl in the Case of Detachment of the Army. Tradition No. 2367). They did not have adequate mounts or clothes or food. (Abū Dāwūd, *Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Regarding the Nafl in the Case of Detachment

of the Army. Tradition No. 2367) Whereas the enemy was 1,000 strong and was properly equipped (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*).

At the time of the second battle, Muslims were 700 in number (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*) whereas the Meccans were close to 3,000. In this battle, Muslims suffered much loss and even the Holy Prophet^{sas} was wounded (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*).

At the time of the third battle, Muslims did not even have the strength to defend themselves in the open. Therefore, a ditch was dug around Madinah to protect themselves from the enemy. Meccans were 10,000 strong in this battle whereas Muslims were 3,000 (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*). Madinah was in siege and the conditions had deteriorated to the point of

إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَ تَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونًا

When they came upon you from above you, and from below you, and when *your* eyes became distracted, and *your* hearts leapt to *your* throats and you entertained wayward thoughts about Allah (*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, 33:11).

Enemy had encircled from all sides from above Madinah and from beneath and Muslims were scared for their lives. Their eyes were bewildered and the hearts were sinking and some had begun entertaining doubts about God.

And, at the time of the last major encounter that was in 8 A.H., 2 years before his [the Holy Prophet] demise,

وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحَبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مَّدْيَنَ ۚ

... and the earth, with *all* its vastness, became straitened

for you, *and* then you turned back retreating (*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:25).

The earth had straitened for them despite its vastness and many could not withstand the forceful attack of the enemy and fled. In all battles, Muslims remained weaker than the enemy in their number and equipment. Thus, the history clearly shows that those battles could not have been for the spoils. What of spoils, it was hard for Muslims to protect themselves from plunder by the enemy.

Now, what remains to be seen is that whether they stole from the enemy by deception or deceit. We see in this context that Muslims were forbidden, even in the state of war, to commit any excesses against the enemy or to deceive the enemy.

وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

... but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191).

Also, see *Muslim, Kitābul Jihad*; Chapter on Appointment of the Leaders of Expeditions. Tradition No. 3261.

Moreover, the directive was not to attack the enemy in his sleep; instead they were always to fight in broad daylight. (*Bukhārī, Kitābul Adhān*; Chapter: To suspend fighting on hearing the Adhān. Tradition No. 675)

Additionally, they were instructed that they were not to attack without warning or with any deception. Instead a formal declaration and invitation to peace had to be made first. (*Muslim, Kitābul*

Jihad; Chapter on Appointment of the Leaders of Expeditions. Tradition No. 3261)

This is the evidence of history and the teachings that show that there was no possibility of plunder. In addition the Holy Prophet^{sas} had expressly forbidden looting and plunder. The Holy Quran had declared openly that war to collect booty is forbidden.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْفَىٰ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ
مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللَّهِ مَغَازِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ ۖ

O ye who believe! When you go forth to fight in the cause of Allah, make proper investigation and say not to anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, 'Thou art not a believer.' You seek the goods of this life, but with Allah are good things in plenty... (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:95)

Similarly it was said about the prisoners of war:

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يُكُونَ لَكُمْ أَسْرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يُنْخَنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ

It does not behove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in regular fighting in the land... (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:68)

And, it was decreed about the ones who are taken prisoners in the course of war that:

فَأَمَّا مِمَّا بَعْدُ وَإِنَّمَا فَدَاءٌ

... then afterwards either *release them as a favour* or *by taking ransom*... (*Sūrah Muḥammad*, 47:5)

That is, either, preferably, set them free as an act of benevolence or, if they can afford it, free them in exchange for war penalty.

Similarly, the Holy Prophet^{sas} made every possible effort to prevent Muslims from coveting bounty and spoils from war. He said that if a victor takes booty, he shall have only one-third reward in the hereafter, but he shall get full reward if he takes no booty. (*Muslim, Kitābul Amārah*; The Reward of One Who Fought and Got His Share of the Booty and of One {Who Fought} but did Not Get Any Booty. Tradition No. 3528) He also said that one who fights for wealth or fame, his fight shall not be deemed for God and he shall have no reward. (*Bukhārī, Kitāb Fardl Khams* Chapter: If somebody fights for the sake of booty. Tradition No. 2894) He further said that if one fights for the sake of Allah but had even a little desire for the spoils, he would not get any reward either. (*Abū Dāwūd, Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Regarding a Person Who Fights for Worldly Gain. Tradition No. 2155)

In fact, once during a journey, his companions ran out of food. Some of them captured some sheep from around, slaughtered them and starting cooking the meal. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} found out, he overturned the cooking pans and admonished that it was no better than a rotting corpse of an animal. (*Abū Dāwūd, Kitābul Jihād*; Chapter: Regarding the Prohibition of Plundering When Food is Scarce in the Land of the Enemy. Tradition No. 2330) Then he said, 'A plunderer is not from among us.' (*Tirmidhī, Book on Military Expeditions*; Chapter: Narrative About the Abhorrence of Looting. Tradition No. 1527)

Thus, in the light of the aforementioned history and authentic narrations, it becomes quite clear that neither the Muslims were strong enough to forcibly take something from others, nor were

they permitted to attack with deception or surprise or with the desire to get booty. They were not permitted to plunder at all. Muslims were so distanced from such activity that it was forbidden even to capture some animals for eating when their own food supply had been exhausted in the course of a war.

If someone still believes that slaughtering the men, women, elderly, girls, and infants of the vanquished and slaughter of its livestock and to set fire to its estate and city (Deuteronomy 20:16, 13) is better than these Islamic teachings and more in accord with human intellect and conscience, what else can we do but to lament at his judgment? We cannot see how any unbiased person can find these teachings or this conduct of the Holy Prophet^{sas} in any way objectionable.

War for Coercion in Faith

The third category of objections is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} fought these wars to force people to join his religion. This accusation is even more absurd and contrary to Islamic teachings and history. We have already outlined the circumstances in which the Holy Prophet was given the sanction for defensive wars. We have also described the actual condition of Muslims in those wars and how weak and ill-equipped they were compared to their adversaries. In those conditions it is inconceivable that he would fight a war to force others to become Muslim and coerce them into accepting his faith. But beyond these arguments, the teachings of the Holy Quran and the very practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas} reject the notion that anyone should be forced to

become a Muslim. The answer to the Papal accusation, that the teachings were different during the early period and they were changed later, is provided in the second chapter of this book. Therefore, we shall leave this part alone and only focus on the issue as to what did the Holy Prophet^{sas} teach regarding coercion in faith, and did he force anyone to become a Muslim? We will also look at what the historic facts tell us about the events of that time.

Islamic teachings about the freedom of faith are so well known that, despite his inadequate knowledge of Islamic teachings, the Pope must know that the Holy Quran has made the bold declaration of *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ* (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257), ‘There should be no compulsion in religion...’ Not only this, the Holy Quran has reiterated the same message over and over again. For instance:

فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمَرْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

... wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve... (*Sūrah al-Kahf*, 18:30)

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

‘For you your religion, and for me my religion’ (*Sūrah al-Kāfirūn*, 109:7).

Then, even beyond declaring the freedom of religion, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} further said that the followers of other religions shall also deserve reward and paradise.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ أَمْنٌ وَالدِّينَ هَادُوا وَ الصَّابِئُونَ وَ النَّصْرِيُّ مَنْ أَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ لَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Surely those who believed, and the Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians—whoso believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, on them *shall come* no fear, nor shall they grieve (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:70).

Here, glad tidings is given to those Jews, Christians and Sabians to whom the message of Islam has not reached or not reached properly that if they believe in God and the Day of Judgment, they would have no grief or fear. Given this, it is not only unfair but cruel to accuse that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had fought the wars to force people to become Muslims. Thus, this was the message and it was given to him at all phases of his life as has been elucidated in Chapter 2 of this book.

Now we shall look at the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. He spent better part of his life in Makkah where the use of force on his part was not even conceivable because Muslims were the victims of oppression at that time and all opponents admit that coercion was not possible during that period. After that, the Holy Prophet^{sas} moved to Madinah where infidels and Jews lived alongside the Muslims. The Holy Prophet^{sas} was recognized as the ruler of Madinah as soon as he arrived there. All accounts of history agree that not even one person from those two groups was forced to become a Muslim. With regard to the Jews, not even the fiercest of the opponents has ever accused that the Holy Prophet^{sas} forced any Jew to become a Muslim. Same was the case of the infidels of Madinah.

Thus, when the Holy Prophet^{sas} did not force any one to become a Muslim in Madinah where he had complete authority and absolute power, how could it be possible anywhere else?

Perhaps someone might think that he did so later when he gained control all over Arabia. But first of all, it is absurd to think that if he did not force anyone while he did not have complete dominance, why would he need to do it once he attained control and power?

Additionally, we have the example of conquest of Makkah before us. When he conquered Makkah, the central city of Arabia, less than two years before his demise, without any battle, in perfect peace, a proclamation had been made beforehand that everyone who stayed behind closed doors or disarmed shall be in peace. (*Muslim, Kitābul Jihād, The Victory of Mecca, Tradition No. 3332*) He did not tell even a single person to change his religion. On the contrary, he permitted even his enemies to stay in his territory while maintaining their religion.

It also is also worth noting that most of the battles Muslims fought were with Meccans who were their kin. Is it conceivable that Muslims fought their fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, etc., so as to force them into their own religion?

Similarly, the life histories of the companions bear witness to the fact that the way they sacrificed for Islam; the way they gave up their homes and migrated; and the way they became victims of the cruelty of their brethren—no one who had been coerced to become a Muslim would have behaved in that manner. Can human reason accept this possibility that a person who had been coerced to become Muslim would suffer such hardships for the sake of Islam and yet would not renounce it?

If one argues that perhaps earlier Muslims were sincere but later on people were forced to become Muslim, then the incident of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah refutes it. This truce, which took

place after the three major battles in the sixth year after Migration and nineteen years after his ministry, had this as one of its stipulations that if someone recants Islam and goes to Makkah, no one shall stop him, nor shall he be returned; whereas if anyone wants to become a Muslim and migrate from Makkah, he shall be returned to Makkah. (*Bukhārī*, Book of Military Expeditions led by the Prophet; Chapter on ‘Umrāh Qaḍā. Tradition No. 3920) Despite this, not even a single incident can be found where any Muslim deserted the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} and took refuge with his relatives in Makkah. So then where did those people go whom the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} had made Muslims forcibly? Bear in mind that this Treaty was signed nineteen years after the call to prophethood and took effect just four years before his demise, and it proves that no one had been made Muslim forcibly, at least till that time.

It is also very striking that Islam spread very little in the first nineteen years but no sooner was this treaty signed—that anyone who renounces Islam and goes to Makkah would be free to do so but if any Meccan becomes a Muslim, he shall have to return to Makkah and he shall be at the Mercy of Meccans—Islam made instantaneous progress.

At the occasion of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, Muslims were numbered at 1,400 (*Ibn Hishām*) and it was the outcome of nineteen years of labour; whereas just three years after this treaty, at the time of the conquest of Makkah, Muslims were 10,000 in number. This also clearly shows that the spread of Islam was not due to any war or coercion but was the result of preaching in the environment of peace. That is why Islam was preached extensively in the ensuing peace in the land and the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} sent delegations

to preach to different tribes and countries including Abyssinia, Egypt, Iran and Byzantine Rome (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*).

In contrast, there is no need to consider the first part of the Bible, that is, the Old Testament, because there it is ordained to eliminate not just the followers of other religions, but even their livestock and property, as we have recorded earlier in this article. However, the study of Christianity in this context is not without interest. One predecessor of the Pope, the vicegerent of Jesus on Earth, Honourable Pope Innocent III, not only initiated the Fourth crusade against Muslims, he also fought wars against Christians who opposed his viewpoint. The war against Albigenses is notorious for its barbarism. That Pope was of the view that coercion in faith is justified and if someone is made a Christian forcibly, even he

...does receive the impress of Christianity and may be forced to observe the Christian Faith as one who expressed a conditional willingness though, absolutely speaking, he was unwilling... (For) the grace of Baptism had been received, and they had been anointed with the sacred oil, and had participated in the body of the Lord, they might properly be forced to hold to the faith which they had accepted perforce, lest the name of the Lord be blasphemed, and lest they hold in contempt and consider vile the faith they had joined'. (Grayzel, Solomon, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, Rev. Ed., New York: Hermon, 1966, p. 103)

One must note that this statement is not of an ordinary Christian

or a Christian monarch. It is that of a vicegerent of Jesus on earth who is remembered by the Catholic Encyclopedia as the 'Great Pope'. Thus, if today the statement of Pope Benedict is at variance, it is against the wish and intent of the earlier Pope and we are compelled to assess that as long as Christianity had power, it had not only sanctioned forcible conversions, but the Popes exhorted Christians to do so. Although the Pope cannot dare to issue such an injunction in the present times, he has tried to attribute to Islam the unholy teachings that belong to himself and present himself as the self-acclaimed champion of 'Religious Freedom'.

In this regard, Kurt Flasch, who is a renowned German Philosopher, recently wrote, while commenting on the Papal speech:

Pope says that faith is a matter of soul; many Christian thinkers, from Augustine to those in the late nineteenth century, have repeatedly expressed this idea, and they have asserted that though belief is a result of man's free will, but he is also so completely lost in sins and bad habits, that he has to be liberated from his ill state by using physical and military force. Augustine reports joyfully that Christian heretics who were forcefully driven into the church by the soldiers he had called, were grateful to their fate ... they were educated by the terror in order to get rid of their errors. ... Thomas [Aquinas], for instance, preached: Whoever quits Christian belief deserves death penalty... since the church has no command over police and military forces today, it appears to be an advocate of religious freedom, something emphatically condemned by

the church even as late as in the nineteenth century. (Kurt Flasch: Berliner Zeitung 22.09.2006, Feuilleton, Seite 31)

To spread Christianity with the sword was not only done by the Popes, but those kings, who are known today as ‘Great Christian Emperors’ and are recognized as faithful and sincere servants of Christianity, constantly strived to spread Christianity with the use of the sword. The bloody wars that Charlemagne (A.D. 764–814) fought to conquer Germans for Christianity resulted in the massacre of thousands of Saxons and the treaty that was signed after the defeat of the Saxon tribes, had the condition inscribed in it that any pagan German who will retain his faith and refuse to be baptised shall be killed. (Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae, Condition 8)

Not only were people forced to accept Christianity, their faith even after their conversion was doubted. Pope Innocent IV issued ordinance while instructing the officers of inquisition in 1252 that heretics should be tortured to admit their guilt and to reveal the names of their associates. The extent of the barbaric and cruel treatment the Muslims and Jews in Spain, who had become Christians due to the cruelty of the Church, had to face can be imagined from the fact that just in the period of Torquemada, the chief officer of inquisition there (1478–1498), 8,800 people were burnt alive according to one estimate. This wave of barbarism was initiated by the November 1, 1478 declaration of Pope Sixtus IV and by his

clear sanction and it was supervised by the influential and leading priests. (P. Shaff: *History of the Christian Church*, 1882. vol. 4, p. 217)

With regard to the involvement of the Church in such atrocities, this author further says:

... the Roman church unfortunately gave the sanction of her highest authority to the use of the torture... The fourth Lateran Council (1215) inspired the horrible crusades against the Albigenses and Waldenses, and the establishment of the infamous ecclesiastico-political courts of Inquisition. These courts found the torture the most effective means of punishing and exterminating heresy, and invented new forms of refined cruelty worse than those of the persecutors of heathen Rome. (P. Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, 1882, vol. 4, p. 216)

What were these new forms of refined cruelty, and what was the invention that the Church produced in it, can be appreciated by noting how the Church authorities baptised the old European tribes by using their concepts from the age of ignorance. One of the two ways the Church used to decide was that the priest would put a piece of iron in fire after uttering some prayers and when it would get hot, he would adopt the following method:

Then the priest shall sprinkle holy water above the iron and shall say : ‘The blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost descend upon this iron for the

discerning of the right judgment of God.' And straight away the accused shall carry the iron to a distance of nine feet. Finally his hand shall be covered under seal for three days, and if festering blood be found in the track of the iron, he shall be judged guilty. But if, however, he shall go forth uninjured, praise shall be rendered to God. (*Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, p. 315, by Earnest F. Henderson; published by London, George Bell and Sons, 1905)

In contrast to this unholy role of the Church in the spread of Christianity, one strong proof that Islam spread peacefully is that the most populous Muslim country in the world today is Indonesia which was never invaded by Muslim armies. Similarly tens of millions of Muslims live in China whereas China was never attacked by Muslim armies either. (Thomas W. Arnold, *The Spread of Islam in the World*, Reprinted by Goodword Books; New Delhi, India, 2003. p. 294)

Muslims ruled India for centuries but even to this day the great majority in India is still Hindu. If Islam had taught to force followers of other religions to become Muslims, how did this happen? Egypt remained under the sway of Muslims from an early period and yet the Egyptian Coptic Christianity has always enjoyed a special significance in Christianity. If Islam forced people to change their faith, why did it not force them? Thus, history refutes false allegations that are prompted by religious prejudices.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani^{as}, the founder of Ahmadiyya

Muslim Community, who has been ordained to revive the true teachings of Islam in this age and to show its practical applications, states in this context:

I therefore admonish you: Refrain from evil and be truly compassionate towards mankind. Cleanse your hearts of malice and spite, for you will become like angels through this habit. It is a filthy and unholy religion that is devoid of sympathy for humanity, and polluted is the path riddled with the thorns of a rancour based on selfish desires. O those who are with me, do not become like such people...

I have come to you with an order: jihad with the sword has ended from this time forward, but the jihad of purifying your souls must continue. I do not say this of my own accord. This is indeed the will of God...

Accordingly, I command those who have joined my ranks to refrain from all such thoughts, to purify their hearts, to foster sympathy, and to be compassionate towards the suffering. They should spread peace on earth, because that will cause their faith to spread in return. (*The British Government and Jihad*, London 2006, pp. 16–17)

The Promised Messiah has come into the world to repel the notion of taking up sword in the name of religion, and to establish, through his reasoning and arguments, that Islam is a faith that does not at all need sword for its propagation, but that the inherent qualities of its teachings and its verities, insights, reasons, proofs and the living support and signs of God Almighty and its inherent attractions are the actors that have throughout

contributed to its progress and its propagation. Let all those who malign that Islam had been spread by the sword take note that their claim is false... God, the Almighty, now desires and has so determined that all such objections as have been raised against Islam by malicious people should be effectively repelled. Those who allege that Islam was spread by the sword will now be put to shame. (Translated from *Malfūzāt*, vol. 3, pp. 176, 1984, London)

CHAPTER 4

Interaction with non-Believers

by Dr. 'Abdur-Rahmān Bhutta

In his lecture, the honourable Pope, while referring to a dialogue by Manuel, has commented that Quran teaches differential treatment of People of the Book and idolaters; that is, there are teachings to treat the People of the Book with one standard and the idolaters with a different one. Although it was expected that Professor Ratzinger will provide a Quranic reference in support of his assertion, but he did not. In this article we shall examine what kind of treatment does the Holy Quran enjoin with regard to the People of the Book and idolaters; and how did the Holy Prophet^{sas}, on whom Quran was revealed, implemented it in his practice; and if there is a differential treatment of idolaters and the People of the Book, what is the reason for it.

Quranic Teachings of Kind Treatment of the People of the Book and Idolaters

Fundamentally, the Quran enjoins kind treatment of every one irrespective of his belief and does not discriminate against anyone

in general dealings and social conduct. Following are some highlights of Islamic teachings.

1. Holy Quran teaches fair and even benevolent treatment of people of every religion and ethnicity. Thus it says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۗ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

Verily, Allah requires you to abide by justice, and to treat with grace, and give like the giving of kin to kin; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and transgression. He admonished you that you may take heed. (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:91)

In this passage, God almighty has not made any discrimination that if they are People of the Book then treat them one way and if they are idolaters, treat them differently but in fact gives a general commandment to be fair to everyone; and not just be fair but be kind to them and even go beyond kindness and treat them like you treat your relatives and deal with them as if they were your kindred.

2. Advising fairness and kind treatment, He says:

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَ
تُقِرُّوهُمْ بِالْإِيمَانِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

Allah forbids you not respecting those who have not fought against you on account of your religion, and who

have not driven you out from your homes, that you be kind to them and deal equitably with them; surely, Allah loves those who are equitable. (*Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah*, 60:09)

That is, if you desire to find the love of Allah, you should deal with everyone with kindness and treat them with fairness if they do not persecute you or expels you from your homeland. This also refutes the erroneous inference that is made from some other verses that Muslims should not befriend non-Muslims. It enjoins not only friendship but even benevolent treatment for non-Muslims.

3. The Holy Quran instructs not to abuse the deities of anyone:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

And revile not those whom they call upon besides Allah,
... (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:109)

Here again there is no distinction being made between the People of the Book and the idolaters. Quran directs not to abuse their deities irrespective of what they consider their lord and regardless of what they take as their idol or who they associate with God; included in this are the idols of Hindus as well as the Trinity of Christians and their saints that they call upon in times of need.

4. Similarly, one standard is defined for all in the distribution of trades and professions, employments and offices. Thus it is written:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَبِيعًا بَصِيرًا

Verily, Allah commands you to give over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice. And surely, excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:59)

According to Islamic precepts, all citizens, be it Muslims or non-Muslims, are to be provided equal opportunities in business, industry, trade and employment. The distribution of offices is to be carried out purely on merit and not on the basis of religious beliefs, ethnic or national affiliation. The ruler of the time is instructed to observe fairness and equity in all his decisions in the course of governance.

It becomes quite evident from the above mentioned verses that, according to the Islamic precepts, fairness, equity, benevolence, empathy, graciousness and magnanimity are to be used in dealing with non-Muslims. In all these matters, no distinction is drawn between People of the Book and idolaters. This is what we find practiced in the life of the Holy Prophet^{sas} also.

Gracious Treatment of non-Muslims by the Holy Prophet^{sas}

The Holy Prophet^{sas} received the Holy Quran. How he implemented it and how he taught Muslims its precepts; that is the guiding light for us. He set very noble examples of kind treatment

of the non-Muslims and he showed, by his example, how to act upon the injunctions of the Holy Quran. In the following we set down a few incidents from the life of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Gracious Dealings with Meccan Idolaters

The idolaters of Makkah persecuted Muslims purely on religious basis; they forced them to leave their homeland. Some details of these atrocities can be found in chapter two and three of this book. One is appalled even by reading about them. Then the Meccans were not content with the Muslims leaving town and sent out armies against them repeatedly. In spite of all this the Holy Prophet always treated them kindly. One clear example of it is found in the gracious treatment of the idolaters at the time of the conquest of Makkah. When Muslims victoriously entered Makkah without any bloodshed, the Holy Prophet issued the instruction to make the announcement that anyone who closes his doors shall remain safe; anyone who enters the house of Abū Sufyān (who was the chief of Makkah and had accepted Islam by then) shall remain safe; anyone who enters the Holy Mosque shall remain safe. Upon entering Makkah, he came to the House of God and gave a sermon and asked: ‘O Quraish! How do you think I am going to treat you?’ Quraish replied, ‘Whatever you decide, it will be good. You are our noble brother and the son of our noble brother.’ He replied, ‘You are all free and there is no reckoning today.’ The Meccan idolaters had always shown hatred and hostility towards Muslims. They had persecuted them and caused pain and grief. They had imposed wars on them in which

dear and loyal companions of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} had been killed. Despite all their atrocities, the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} granted them amnesty even when he had complete control and command to punish them. (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*)

The Holy prophet showed, by his conduct, that people belonging to other religions should not only be treated fairly but, beyond it, they should be treated with forgiveness and benevolence.

Compassion for the Meccans during a Famine

In A.H. 4 Makkah suffered a famine. The infidels of Makkah were in dire straits during the famine. When the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} learnt about it, he, out of compassion, sent some silver for the poor (History of Al Khamīs) and provided a practical example that he had deep and sincere sympathy for even his arch enemies. It must be borne in mind that it was the time when the Meccans had already persecuted Muslims in every way and had attacked Madinah repeatedly to extirpate Islam. In spite of this, the Holy Prophet helped them during the famine. The infidels also knew about this aspect of his noble character. Therefore, despite being aware of their own callousness, they knew that he would help them in any hardship and would not hold back due to their excesses. Therefore, once during the famine, Abū Sufyān came to Madinah and requested the Holy Prophet to pray for the end of the famine. (*Bukhārī*, Chapter Istisqā)

Kind Treatment of the Christians from Najran

After the conquest of Makkah, a delegation of Christians of Najran came to the Holy Prophet^{sas} consisting of fourteen prominent delegates. They had come for a religious dialogue about the veracity of Islam. In the course of discussion, time for the worship came. When they wanted to worship according to the Christian custom, the Holy Prophet let them do so. The Christians performed their rituals facing west while still in the mosque of the Holy Prophet^{sas} (*Ibn Hishām*). This way the Holy Prophet^{sas} set a great example of religious tolerance, for the entire world in general and for Muslims in particular, the like of which is not to be found anywhere today.

The Issue of Jizya or Tax of Protection

Jizya is an important topic in connection with the treatment of the People of the Book and the infidels by Muslim. Having poor understanding of this matter, many object that *jizya* is collected from non-Muslims whereas it is not collected from Muslims. Thereby an impression is created that Islam promotes selective treatment of its Non-Muslim citizens and reference is made to *Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:29. The issue of *jizya* seems objectionable to some but it was only a tax that was collected from the Non-Muslim subjects to run the government. Its benefit was to the tax payers indirectly because the state provided for their protection, comfort and welfare and maintained army for the protection of their life and property with this fund. If the objection is why was this tax

only applicable to the Non-Muslim subjects; the answer is that firstly this tax was considered expiation for military service which Muslim soldiers performed and from which the Non-Muslim subjects were exempted. That means, whereas every Muslim was subject to obligatory military service, Non-Muslim subjects were exempted from it and, therefore, it was only fair that a limited amount of burden of the military expenses of the state was put on the Non-Muslim subjects and this was called *jizya*.

Moreover it appears that the taxes in Islam are divided into three categories:

1. Taxes specific to Muslims like Zakāt.
2. Taxes specific to Non-Muslim like *jizya*.
3. Taxes common to all that could be levied on all under appropriate conditions like the land tax.

The reason for this division and distinction was that the Islamic state was charged with tasks that were particular for the Religious interests of Muslims and it was unfair to burden non-Muslims for them. Hence the taxes were separated for Muslims and non-Muslims by Islam with perfect honesty. Thus whereas for taxes exclusive to Muslims like Zakāt, religious and secular purposes were merged; the tax exclusive to non-Muslims like *jizya* had no religious purpose and it was for general welfare. That is why the taxation of Zakāt, which is for Muslims only, has a higher rate than the tax of *jizya* because its scope is wider. Thus the restriction of the tax of *jizya* for the non-Muslims is indeed the proof of the sublime honesty of Islam and the founder of Islam. However,

unfortunately, it has been made the basis for criticism by ignorant people.

Even this light tax was not levied on the entire Non-Muslim populace. Following categories were exempted from it:

1. All those who had dedicated their lives for the service of religion.
2. All women and children.
3. All elderly and infirm who could not be employed.
4. All blind and similarly disabled people who could not be employed.
5. All poor and destitute people who could not afford to pay *jizya*.

Following principles were observed in the collection of *jizya*:

1. *Jizya* tax payer had the right to pay either with cash or by an object of equivalent value.
2. It was a firm directive about the collection of *jizya* that no harshness was to be used in this matter; particularly, corporal punishment was forbidden.
3. If the person died while he owed some amount of the *jizya* tax, it was written off and the heirs were not penalized for it nor was his estate burdened for it.

Does any nation give such a privilege to any people? Not only that

leniency was shown in determining *jizya* but if anyone became incapable of paying it subsequently, the *jizya* tax was forgiven. In this regard the following historic incident is an interesting example.

It is reported that once ‘Umar^{ra} passed by a place where non-Muslims were being treated with some harshness in the course of the collection of *jizya*. He stopped and angrily inquired as to what was going on. He was informed that those people did not want to pay *jizya* and were saying that they did not have the capacity to do so. ‘Umar^{ra} said, ‘Then there is no reason to burden them with what they cannot bear. Let them go. I have heard from the Holy Prophet^{sas} that anyone who causes hardship to anyone in this world, shall be under the chastisement of God on the day of Judgment.’ The *jizya* of those people was forgiven. (*Kitāb ul-Kharāj*)

Professor Thomas W. Arnold writes:

This tax was not imposed on the Christians, as some would have us think, as a penalty for their refusal to accept the Muslim faith, but was paid by them in common with the other *dhimmis* or non-Muslim subjects of the state whose religion precluded them from serving in the army, in return for the protection secured for them by the arms of the *Musulmans* [Muslims] and it is very noticeable that when any Christian people served in the Muslim army, they were exempted from the payment of this tax. The Southern Rumanians, the so-called Armatoli, who constituted so important an element of strength in the Turkish army during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and

the Mirdites, a tribe of Albanian Catholics who occupied the mountains to the north of Scutari, were exempt from taxation on condition of supplying an armed contingent in time of war. (Prof. Thomas. W. Arnold, *The Spread of Islam in the World*, pp 60–62, Reprint by Goodword Books, New Delhi, India, 2003)

‘Umar^{ra} was so concerned about the welfare of his Non-Muslim subjects that he made a special testament while dying which has the following words; ‘I admonish the next Khalīfah to exercise extreme gentleness and kindness when dealing with Non-Muslim subjects; to honour all their contracts: to protect them; to fight their enemies for them; and not to burden them with anything that is beyond their capacity.’ (*Al-Kāmil Fit-Tārīkh*, vol. 2)

This is the real truth behind the *jizya*. People who actually paid this tax in the times of Righteous Khulafā did not object to it because they became eligible for all the benefits and social services by paying a nominal tax for which Muslims had to offer much greater personal and financial sacrifice. It was in the time of ‘Umar^{ra} that Muslims collected this tax from the Christian population after the conquest of Syria. But shortly thereafter Muslims faced the prospect of war again. The commander of the Muslim army, Abū Ubaida refunded the entire tax to the Christian population because he felt that, due to the war, they would be unable to protect their rights and thus are not entitled to keep the tax. (*Kitāb ul-Kharāj*, Abū Yūsuf, pp. 80–82, *Futūh ul-Buldān*, p. 146)

*Difference in the Treatment
of People of the Book and Idolaters*

Several important and fundamental tenants are common between People of the Book and Muslims. For example, the Unity of God is the first and the most important article of faith in Islam and the People of the Book also subscribe to it. Similarly, belief in all the prophets of the People of the Book and in their revealed books is part of the faith of Muslims. Therefore, quite naturally, People of the Book are closer to Muslims because of these shared values, whereas Muslims and idolaters, religiously speaking, have nothing in common. Therefore, more favourable treatment of People of the Book is not due to any bias but is on the basis of merit. This objection is as unreasonable as someone saying that one sees his relatives more frequently and does not have the same degree of social contact with strangers. Man is a social animal and relations, whether they are physical or religious or spiritual, have a special significance in every society. In Islam, regard and respect of relationships has a special place among the obligations to humans.

It is important to emphasize here that the differential treatment of the People of the Book and idolaters in their relationship with Muslims is only to the extent to which their religion obligates Muslims. Otherwise, everyone, be a Muslim or be from People of the Book or be an idolater, enjoys the same rights in society and is to be treated equally

As far as the marriage with idolaters or the People of the Book is concerned, Islam has permitted the marriage with the People of the Book but prohibited it with idolaters. It is obvious from this injunction that here too special treatment is accorded to the

People of the Book and no uncalled for restriction is imposed. The prohibition of marriage with idolaters is because the religious and spiritual harmony and moral and emotional compatibility that is needed for a successful and happy marital life cannot be attained by a Muslim in such a marriage. In Islam, marriage is not just for the gratification of physical needs but its aim is conceived to be much higher and nobler.

It should also be remembered that Islam is not the first religion that has imposed such restriction. Followers of other religions also prefer marriage within their faith. Bible prohibits marriage with idolaters '*Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons.*' (Deuteronomy, 7:3)

Similarly Corinthians 6:14 even prohibits any contact with them.

In Nehemiah 10:28–30 some nations have been made to pledge that they shall not give their daughters to neighbouring tribes nor shall they take their daughters for their sons.

Thus it should be understood that, as far as living together within a state is concerned, and social, cultural or other fundamental human rights are concerned, they are equal for all in Islam. And the ruler is commanded to deal with all with equanimity. (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:59). When it comes to matrimonial relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, Islam, like other religions, prohibits its followers from marrying idolaters in consideration of their religious needs and spiritual growth.

CHAPTER 5

Faith and Reason: Islamic Perspective

by Naveed Hameed

In this chapter, we shall present the subject of reason and faith from the Islamic perspective. We shall analyse the question what Islam says about the transcendence of God with reference to the Pope's criticism. In addition, according to Islam, can God give a commandment that is contrary to reason? And, what are the Quranic teachings about voluntarism, freewill, and predestination. Moreover, we shall discuss the excerpt from the writing of Ibn Hazm, which is quoted by the Pope in his discourse.

Transcendence

Before we discuss the relationship between reason and rationality and the Islamic concept of God, it is important to define 'transcendence', which is alluded to by the Pope. The term 'transcendence' begs explanation (the Pope has not considered it necessary to describe it). The word 'transcendence' is derived from the Latin verb 'transcendere', which means to cross a boundary or go past it. Therefore, when the word 'transcendence' is used with regard to

God, it means that God is beyond physical limits and boundaries. (A. Ulfig: *Lexikon der philosophischen Begriffe*, Komet 2003)

In the spirit of this definition, Islam, like other religions, teaches transcendence of God. That is, God is above and beyond human and physical limits and limitations. The *Quran* defines it by saying:

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ ۖ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ ۖ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

Eyes cannot reach Him but He reaches the eyes. And He is the Incomprehensible, the All-Aware. (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:104)

The attributes of God that are described in the Holy *Quran*, are such that man has some resemblance to them in his limited capacity. Yet, attributes of God are distinct from human qualities. Therefore, God says about himself in the Holy *Quran*:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۖ

... There is nothing whatever like unto Him, ... (*Sūrah ash-Shūrā*, 42:12)

That is, there is nothing like Him, neither in its nature or constitution, nor in its qualities or the scope of those qualities. For example, the *Quran* mentions the 'hand of God,' but it should not be misconstrued to mean that it is something like a human hand. It is a metaphor which refers to God's providence and power. In the holy books of world religions, metaphors and similes are used frequently, like the use of 'son of God' as a metaphor in the Bible.

It does not mean a literal son; it is used to show the nearness and the love of God.

After the definition of transcendence, we turn our attention to the important question whether transcendence precludes man from establishing a relationship with God, or does it mean that God is above and beyond human reason and logic to the extent that it can act contrary to them. The answer to both these questions, according to Islamic understanding, is an emphatic no; the details of which we shall discuss in the following pages, God willing.

Man's Relationship with God

According to Islam, transcendence of God does not imply that man cannot establish any relationship with God, or that man cannot observe the occult attributes and powers of God. It is inconceivable because the foundation of Islam rests upon the belief that a live contact was established between God and his servant, Muhammad^{sas}, and God honoured him with His converse and discourse. According to Quran, even before Muhammad^{sas} God had sent 'guides,' that is prophets, to every nation with whom he held converse.

وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

... And their is a Guide for every people. (*Sūrah ar-Ra'd*, 13:8)

Islam presents the concept of a living God, who proclaims that

He always had, still does, and shall continue to honour man with His converse. This implies that every human being can establish a personal relationship with God, the Exalted. Therefore, wherever Quran mentions the transcendence of God, it also declares that He reaches humans and establishes contact with them:

وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْبَصَارَ

... but He reaches the eyes.... (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:104)

That is, God, who has command over everything, can reach humans. Whenever and wherever He desires, He reveals Himself. It is not required that God should reveal Himself only to the person who is appointed to the rank of prophethood. Quite the contrary, God gives the glad tidings to all human beings in the Holy Quran, that:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا فَامْلِكْ

Thou, O man, art verily labouring towards thy Lord, a hard labouring; then thou art going to meet Him (*Sūrah al-Inshiqāq*, 84:7).

That is, there is no doubt that extreme effort is needed to establish contact with God, but anyone who puts in this effort will most certainly find God one day. Because,

فَأَنَا قَرِيبٌ

..., say 'I am near....' (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:187)

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He knows all things full well (*Sūrah al-Hadīd*, 57:4).

However, He comes near those who try to get near to Him and away from Satan. He reveals Himself to those who sever their ties with ego and strive to lose themselves in God. Therefore, despite God being transcendent He is Immanent as can be understood from these verses:

وَاللَّهُ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ فَأَيْنَمَا تُولَؤُا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

To Allah belongs the East and the West; so whithersoever you turn, there will be the face of Allah. Surely, Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:116).

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

... And He is with you wheresoever you may be. And Allah sees all that you do (*Sūrah al-Hadīd*, 57:5).

Quran tells us that God is the light and luminance of the Earth and Heaven:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.... (*Sūrah an-Nūr*, 24:36).

However, Him being manifest in this world is not direct. Instead, He has kept a veil of secrecy between Himself and his servants, which He does not remove for every ordinary person. However,

if someone brings about a change in him for His sake, God also reveals Himself to him with a new manifestation. And when someone brings about an extraordinary change in him, God performs miracles for him.

When man moves his gaze away from the world and focuses his complete attention towards God, God also turns to him with special attention, and the man observes the nearness of God as if he sees Him.

According to Islam, God establishes contact with His servants not only by converse and revelation, but by other means as well. He listens to their prayers, and by answering their entreaties, He strengthens their hearts and provides succour.

أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ^٣

... I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me... (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:187)

Acceptance of prayers is a matter which every human being can observe in his own life, and thereby learn with certainty the presence of God. Moreover, in the form of dreams and visions, and sometimes by engraving a thought in the mind, God expresses his contact with man. Therefore, according to Islamic precepts, God is certainly Transcendent but He is not disconnected with this world.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam writes in his book, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, after discussing the details of divine converse and relations:

I would be guilty of doing great wrong to my fellow beings

if I were not to declare at this stage that divine bounty has bestowed upon me the status which I have just defined and has honoured me with the kind of converse the features of which I have just set out in detail, so that I should bestow sight upon the blind and should guide the seekers of the One Who has been so far lost, and should give to those who accept the truth the good news of that holy fountain. (*The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p 184)

The Relationship between Religion and Reason According to Islam

There is no doubt that man's intellect and thought is limited, because man's knowledge is limited; and therefore man's ability to deduce from this knowledge is also limited. Many of man's objections to the works of God are because he is unable to know certain matters and understand their wisdom. Does this imply that, according to Islam, something unreasonable can be attributed to God, as the Pope has alleged? Certainly not!

According to Islam, God's acts can be such that they are not comprehended by man but they are not illogical. Therefore, in Islam, God repeatedly invites humans to use their minds to think and ponder. For example, in one place men are told to think individually and in groups:

أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَشْفِيَٰ وَفِرَادَىٰ ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوا ۗ

...that you stand up before Allah in twos and singly and then reflect.... (*Sūrah Saba*, 34:47)

At another place, it is said that there are signs in the Heaven and the Earth for those who ponder:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding (*Sūrah Al-e-Imrān*, 3:191);

Islam also claims that its teachings are from a God who is Wise; and they are based on wisdom.

كِتَابٌ أَحْكَمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

... This is a Book, whose verses are fortified and made flawless and free from imperfection and then they have been expounded in detail. *It is* from One Wise, *and* All-Aware (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11:2).

It also tells us that God, despite His perfect knowledge and unfathomable wisdom, does not invite man to anything that is contradictory to his rationality or beyond his comprehension.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity... (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:287)

That is, man is not commanded to believe something or believe something blindly which is contrary to collective human wisdom and conscience. Instead Islam asserts that all its teachings are not only based on wisdom, but the prophet of Islam has the distinction

that he explains the wisdom of the verses that have been revealed from God in addition to proclaiming them.

وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

... and teaches them the Book and Wisdom... (*Sūrah al-Jumu'ah*, 62:3)

Quran says that wisdom is a great bounty. Whosoever is given this blessing is given a great treasure:

يُوْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good; and none would be reminded except those endowed with understanding (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:270).

God challenges men in the Holy Quran that they should study the creation of God and try to find any flaw or imperfection:

هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ

... Seest thou any flaw? (*Sūrah al-Mulk*, 67:4)

It also claims that they will certainly not find any flaw:

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ

Aye, look again, and yet again, thy sight will only return to you frustrated and fatigued (*Sūrah al-Mulk*, 67:5).

Quran tells us, about those who were punished by God, that

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

And they will say, ‘If we had but listened or possessed sense, we should not have been among the inmates of the blazing Fire’ (*Sūrah al-Mulk*, 67:11).

In the presence of this seminal teaching, for someone to claim that the God of Islam can do something irrational, such a claim is quite irrational in itself. Islamic precepts are so reasonable and logical that Professor Leaman, who is a renowned scholar of Islamic, Jewish, and Eastern disciplines, writes with reference to the relationship between Islam and logic:

I do not know if it is ever useful to rank religions with respect to rationality, but were this to be done, there is little doubt that Islam would score highly. (Prof. Leaman, *A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*, 2001, p. 15)

Can Something Irrational be Ascribed to God?

The question arises whether, from Islam’s perspective, God can give commands contrary to logic, or can irrational acts be attributed to God. In this regard, Holy Quran tells us that God is capable of carrying out all His intentions.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

... Surely Allah has the power to do all that He wills (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:110).

Here, God does not say He can do everything and anything, because by the use of such words, some people begin to raise absurd objections. For example some people ask ‘Is God capable of dying?’ or ‘Is God capable of creating another God like Himself?’ All these things are repulsive and undesirable. A higher and perfect being would not do such abhorrent and unwholesome acts. Anyway, to solve the objections of such people, Quran did not say that God is capable of every action, instead it says, *إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ* That God is capable of doing what He wills. By virtue of God being perfect, He only wills what is perfect. Such an absurd intention cannot be attributed to God that He should destroy Himself or create another one like Himself.

Moreover, the degree of emphasis on the attribute of God being Wise, as is stressed in the Holy Quran, perhaps has no match in any other book. It says:

كِتَابٌ أَحْكَمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

... This is a Book, whose verses are fortified and made flawless and free from imperfection and then they have been expounded in detail. *It is* from One Wise, *and All-Aware* (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11:2).

There are about a hundred places where the attribute of God being Wise is mentioned in the Holy Quran, out of which we mention a few.

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

They (angels) said, ‘Holy art Thou! No knowledge have we except what Thou hast taught us; surely, Thou art the All-Knowing, the Wise’ (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:33).

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

Allah bears witness that there is no god but He—and also do the angels and those possessed of knowledge—Maintainer of justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise (*Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:19)

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأَخِرَةِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَزِيزُ

All praise is due to Allah, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And His is All praise in the Hereafter; and He is the Wise, the All-Aware. (*Sūrah Sabāʾ*, 34:2).

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةَ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ
اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And if all the trees that are in the earth were pens, and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans swelling it thereafter, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise (*Sūrah Luqman*, 31:28).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۗ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ وَ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ ۗ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَزِيزُ

And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth the right way; and the day when He will say, “Be!” And it is.

His word is the truth, and His will be the Kingdom on the day when the trumpet will be blown. He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen. And He is the Wise, the All-Aware (*Sūrah al-An‘ām*, 6:74).

In the last verse mentioned above, it is clearly stated that this universe has been created by the God, who is all-Wise and all-Knowledgeable, according to ‘Bi’l-Ḥaq’ (with attention to the demands of wisdom). This is with reference to the wisdom in the creation of physical form. But even more importantly the book which He has sent for the guidance in the spiritual realm fulfils the requirement of wisdom in every respect.

The Nature and Reality of the Statement of Ibn Ḥazm

The Pope has presented a statement of Ibn Ḥazm that, according to Islamic perspective, God is not bound even by His own Word, and nothing can oblige God to reveal the truth to us, and if He wills, man shall have to do idol worship. Before we analyse the essence of this statement, it is imperative to understand that, in Islam, the foundation of its doctrines is Quran and only Quran, which is the word of God. Next to it are the pronouncements of the Prophet^{ṣas} of God, which are in fact commentary of the Holy Quran, and because of the special affinity that the Holy prophet^{ṣas} had with God and Quran, he derived them from the Holy Quran and presented to us in simplified form. Therefore, any statement that is attributed to the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} but is contradictory to the Holy Quran is not acceptable to Muslims. Thus, when this

principle is applicable to even the Prophet of God, it is a thousand times more rigorously applied to any other saint or scholar. After establishing this principle, now we see what Ibn Ḥazm said and what Quran says about it. In this regard, we first look at Quranic teachings and then we shall discuss the statement of Ibn Ḥazm.

The first issue that requires attention is whether God is bound by His word according to Islamic perspective, or not. In this regard, Quranic understanding is very precise and unambiguous,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْوَعْدَ

... Allah breaks not His promise (*Sūrah Āl-e-ʿImrān*, 3:10).

وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسَانَنَا تَحْوِيلًا

... and thou wilt not find any change in Our way (*Sūrah Banī Isrāʿīl*, 17:78).

This principle is mentioned not just once or twice, but innumerable times in the Holy Quran. Therefore how can even an ordinary Muslim maintain the belief that, according to Islamic perspective, God is not bound by His own word?

The second issue that has been stated is that there is nothing that can oblige God to reveal the truth to us. In this regard also, Quran says very explicitly that God not only teaches truth, but is truth Himself, and one qualitative name of Allah is ‘Ḥaq,’ that is, ‘Truth’.

ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَهُمُ الْحَقُّ

Then they are returned to Allah, their true Lord (*Sūrah al-Anʿām*, 6:63).

Not only this, Allah, the Exalted, always says what is absolutely truthful:

يَقْضُ الْحَقَّ

... He explains the truth... (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:58)

Then falsehood is declared to be such a cardinal sin that it is equated with idolatry.

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

... Shun therefore the abomination of idols, and shun false speech (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:31).

On this subject also, there are many verses of the Holy Quran to underscore the point.

The third issue that has been mentioned is that, according to Ibn Ḥazm, if God wills, He can oblige man to worship idols. This assertion is counter to Quranic injunctions. Thus Quran clearly enjoins man to abstain from idolatry.

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him...
(*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:37)

And it counts it as such a cardinal offense that there is no sin quite its equal:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ
إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

Surely, Allah will not forgive that a partner be associated with Him; but He will forgive whatever is short of that to whomsoever He pleases. And whoso associates partners with Allah has indeed devised a very great sin (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:49).

And it exhorts man to shun idolatry in every form:

فَاَجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

.... Shun therefore the abomination of idols, and shun false speech (*Sūrah al-Ḥajj*, 22:31).

The Holy Prophet^{sas} and his companions were so severely persecuted that one shudders even by reading about it, only for renouncing idolatry and preaching against it (Refer to Chapter 2 and 3 of this book). So, how can an injunction to idolatry be ascribed to God according to Islamic precepts?

Thus, it is quite clear from the Holy Quran that Islam does not teach that God goes back on His word, or that God does not always tell the truth, or that God enjoins idolatry. It is such a seminal and fundamental principle that even a Muslim child is well aware of it. The Pope may or may not have read the Bible but Muslim scholars read the Holy Quran all the time and many even know the entire text by heart word for word. Then how is it possible that Imam Ibn Ḥazm was unaware of this fundamental Islamic precept?

After delineating this point, we shall now present what Ibn Ḥazm actually said. Imam Ibn Ḥazm's statement needs to be seen in the backdrop of his works that he wrote in defence of his

concept of Islam as opposed to the views of the Mu'tazilites school of thought. Without getting into the details of these debates, we think it is sufficient to say here that both parties suffered from excesses in their thinking. Mu'tazilites were of the viewpoint that God is bound by certain rules in all His deeds, His actions, and His works. For instance, it is incumbent on God that He should call virtue a virtue and sin a sin; because only a matter which is pious in its essence is called to be a virtue by God, and God only declares a matter which is impious in essence a sin. (S. H. Nasr, *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Philosophy*, 2002, p. 108–109)

Here, it should be understood that they did not mean that God is bound by any power beside Him, but it is the attributes of God which bind Him to such principles. Whereas Ibn Ḥazm and many other elders showed a severe reaction to the idea that one should consider any kind of limitation for God. Therefore, they held the opinion that if God so wills, He can declare what we consider pious to be a sin and vice versa, because nothing is good or bad in its nature. It becomes good or bad by virtue of what God considers it to be. Therefore, he writes:

Nothing is evil except the one which is called evil by God and nothing is good except what is called good by God. ... Even if He desires to cast all the faithful, the angels and the prophets to fire of eternal hell, He is entitled to do so and it shall be considered fair and just for Him. And if He gives Satan and infidels the bounties of eternal heaven, He is entitled to do so and it shall be considered fair and just for Him. But, since God has denied all this and has said about Him that He does not do so, all these are false and

erroneous and denigration. (*Al-Faṣl fil-Milal wal-Ahwā wal-Naḥl*, vol. 2, Chapter Ta'dīl wa Tajwīr, p. 105, Beirut 1982)

Therefore, despite saying that in principle God can punish for pious deeds and reward for sins because He is the Potent and He is the Proprietor; He can do whatever He wills. Then, Imam Ibn Ḥazm himself admits that He shall not do so because He has Himself refused to do so. Thus, the whole argument is conjectural and hypothetical the purpose of which was to refute Mu'tazilites. Similarly, there is no doubt that Imam Ibn Ḥazm has exaggerated in some matters. He has advanced this hypothesis that God desires that some men should commit idolatry because if He had not so desired, there would have been no idolater in the world. (*Al-Faṣl fil-Milal wal-Ahwā wal-Naḥl*, vol. 2, Chapter Hal Shā Allāh 'Azz wa Jall...)

But even here, in the same chapter of the same book, he has explicated that God is not pleased that anyone should commit idolatry. Therefore, his contention seems to be that God desired that some people should be pious and some impious, some should believe in Him and others should commit idolatry. If it was not so, the entire world would have been Unitarian and there would not have been a single idolater. But God is not pleased with idolatry, therefore He has sanctioned punishment for idolatry. If the Pope had not quoted from a tertiary source (Khoury, Arnaldt, Ibn Ḥazm) and instead had studied Ibn Ḥazm directly by following the fundamental principles of proper research, he would have saved himself from this gaffe. We have not yet found any reference

where Ibn Ḥazm has said that God's acts are in conflict with or beyond common sense and reason.

Issue of Volition and Predetermination¹

If we take a broad look at the relevant injunctions of the Holy Quran in this context, the whole matter become quite clear. God says:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ

... And if Allah had enforced His will, He would have made you all one people, but He wishes to try you by that which He has given you. Vie then with one another in doing good works (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:49).

God's intent is explained clearly by this verse; that is, God does not coerce any human to follow a religion, instead, He desires to try man. This point is defined as the very purpose of the creation of Heaven and Earth,

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

... that He might prove you *to show* which of you is best in conduct.... (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11:8)

1. Rodwell writes in his translation of the Holy Quran that it is evident from 2:196 that Islam instructs free will. (Rodwell, *The Koran*, London, 1966, Footnote to 2:196.)

Similarly, God says:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمَرْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

And say, 'It is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him, who will, disbelieve'...

(*Sūrah al-Kahf*, 18:30)

This verse further reinforces the contention that God Almighty does not impose anything on man coercively. Instead, God says that man is given the right of choice between good and evil. This is the very intent of God that man should, by his freewill and by his effort and hard work, recognize his Lord, believe in Him, and become His obedient servant. Where God says, 'If I had willed, all would have believed,' it only means that it is God's desire that man should believe on his own, and by doing so, he was declared by God to be deserving of the best reward. The impression that one gets from the writings of Imam Ibn Ḥazm is as if God intends to impose His will on man. These verses of the Holy Quran are sufficient to repudiate it. In this context, Quranic teachings is perfectly reasonable and logical. It must be remembered that Islam is the faith of moderation which teaches avoidance of extremes in all matters (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:144).

Therefore, in the light of Islamic teachings, as propounded above, the command to commit idolatry or its desirability can never be ascribed to God under any circumstance. The Holy Quran clearly dictates against it. If Imam Ibn Ḥazm did in fact present the views of coercion, his views are not acceptable to us. By quoting Imam Ibn Ḥazm, the Pope has selected a school of thought of Muslims called 'Zāhiriyyah, which has no adherents in

the world today. He has attributed the view of this extinct school of thought to the entire Islamic world and attempted to create the impression as if Islam is a religion counter to reason. The Pope has very unfairly ignored the rationalist school of thought of Muslims all together. He has not mentioned the great philosophers, saints, religious scholars, and hermits, the likes of such renowned 'rationalist' thinkers as Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), Averroes (ibn Rushd), Imam Rāzī, Imam Zamkhsharī, Ibn Khuldūn, etc., the works of whom were used for centuries in the curriculum of logic and philosophy in Christian European universities.

As far as Islam is concerned, rational recourse is an important principle of the Holy Quran, implementation of which is obligatory for every Muslim. Additionally, man is exhorted to use his God-given gift of mind and reason. God presents Himself as an example that all His actions are in accord with wisdom, reason, and justice. It is forbidden to attribute any irrational act to God, and the Holy Quran considers such a thing extremely abhorrent (*Banī Isrā'īl*, 17:91–96). In these verses, the infidels of Makkah place unreasonable demands on the Holy Prophet^{sas}. In response to this, God the Almighty instructs the Holy Prophet^{sas} to tell those infidels, 'Subhāna Rabbi', that is, 'say, my God is Holy, and He is above and beyond such absurd things'. Therefore, in the light of these verses, it becomes quite evident that the Quran declares God Almighty to be free from anything which is irrational or absurd. These verses also repudiate all such statements which dare to say that, according to Islam, irrationality can be attributed to God. We seek God's refuge from this kind of thinking.

Christianity and Rationality

The Pope has presented the example of Imam Ibn Ḥazm in his discourse on the subject of faith and reason while it is not obligatory for Muslims to follow him. But the Pope's own statement on the subject of faith and reason is quite astonishing. On one hand, by quoting an extinct Islamic school of thought, he asserts that irrationality is attributed to God in Islam, but towards the end of his speech, he himself says that the term reason needs to be broadened. The question is, in this expansion, who will draw the line and where? By doing so, does he intend to declare such teachings which, to any sane person would seem completely illogical to be reasonable and sound? We wish to draw the Pope's attention to Christian doctrines and ask him to explain what is their relationship to rationality? In Christianity we see such beliefs, from the creation of Adam to the Crucifixion of Jesus, which are impossible to understand rationally; such as inheritance of sin, atonement, the Trinity, etc. If, according to Christianity, God's acts are not in conflict with reason, why is there such discordance between faith and reason? The views about coercion that the Pope has attributed to Islam, by quoting the 'Zāhiriyyah school of thought, in fact appear in certain injunctions of the Old Testament that the Pope himself supports. For example, Adam and Eve were chastised because they ate the fruit from the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,' which allowed them to distinguish between good and evil. But before they ate that fruit, they knew no difference between good and evil (Genesis 3:22-32). So, why were they punished? Not only were Adam and Eve punished, their entire progeny, till the Day of Judgment shall continue to be cursed due

to the sin committed by Adam and Eve (Genesis). It is bewildering that, according to the Old Testament, the punishment for the offense of a man who passed away almost six thousand years ago is being suffered by his progeny even to this day. Is it that the Pope has attempted to conceal his own convictions by quoting Imam Ibn Ḥazm and attributing it to Muslims? If we compare these teachings of the Old Testament with those of the Holy Quran, we have a totally different picture. The Quran is very explicit about it, that no soul shall be burdened for another (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:69). Would the Pope care to tell which of these teachings is in accord with reason, rationality, and justice?

CHAPTER 6

Islam: Knowledge, Wisdom, and Rationality

Dr. 'Abdur-Raḥmān Bhutta

Referring to Emperor Manuel's assertion in his lecture, the Pope created the false impression that Islam teaches to enforce its faith through coercion and violence; and to make his point, he borrowed the following statement of the Emperor:

...Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death...

Thus, the Pope gave the impression that the religion of Islam uses coercion and oppression to spread its beliefs instead of using reasoning and rationality. This notion is absolutely incorrect, baseless and contrary to facts. The amount of emphasis the Quran puts on freedom of conscience and logical reasoning is unparalleled in any other religious scripture. Study of the Quran makes it abundantly clear that Islam upholds freedom of conscience. As far as Emperor

Manuel is concerned, according to the Pope's statement, he was a learned man, and knew the Quran well. Had the Emperor in fact studied the Quran thoroughly, as asserted by the Pope, he would have known that more or less the same methods were used by the Quran to convince others as were envisioned by the Emperor himself. The Quran has stated it fourteen hundred years ago

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:126).

This chapter shall explain that, according to the Quran and words of the Holy Prophet, the religion of Islam admonishes to prove one's view point on the strength of logic. It puts extraordinary emphasis on the importance of acquisition of knowledge. Moreover, it shall be shown that the Quran is an unlimited treasure-trove of knowledge and wisdom that anyone can use as arguments while talking with an opponent.

To find out correct information about any religion, it is essential to go to its original revealed Book and to find out what are its seminal teachings and precepts. One should not look at the mores and manners and customs and practices of its followers to make the final determination. It is regrettable that the Pope had a cursory look at Islam and formed his opinion based on some practices of Muslim populace and did not value the need for an unbiased study of fundamental books and teachings of Islam. This kind of attitude would be like someone forming opinion about Jesus and his teachings by looking at centuries old warfare going on between Christian Catholics and Protestants in Northern

Ireland, or the Thirty Years' War fought among Europeans. Such an approach misleads one by taking him away from real facts.

The Importance of Arguments and Reasoning in the Holy Quran

Islamic teachings are full of knowledge and wisdom, and rational arguments are of fundamental value in its preaching and propagation. The Holy Quran states:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly
exhortation and argue with them in a way that is best...

(*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:126)

This instruction of the Holy Quran contains all the qualities that should be adopted to invite a person to one's religion. 'Goodly exhortation' includes sound reasoning, pious advice, good manners, and use of polite language. The instruction is that instead of trying to defeat an opponent, the objective of dialogue should be truth, goodwill and sympathy for the other party. In another verse, Allah says:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَحِيمًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَسْتَوِي
الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۗ اذْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَأَذَا الَّذِي يَبِينُكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَبِي حَبِيبٌ

And who is better in speech than he who invites *men* to
Allah and does good works and says, 'I am, surely, of those
who submit?'

And good and *evil* are not alike. Repel evil with that which is best. And lo, he, between whom and thyself was enmity, will become as though he were a warm friend (*Sūrah Hā Mim As-Sajdah*, 41:34-35).

Similarly, the Holy Quran upholds that sound reasoning should form the basis for life decisions. It says:

لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَيَعْيَىٰ مَنْ حَجَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَاتٍ

... so that they may perish who are doomed to perish by manifest justification, and they may survive who deserve to survive on the strength of manifest justification....
(*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:45)

In these verses, we are advised that when you converse with your adversaries, the objective should be to invite them towards God, and not to show off your knowledge, or to humiliate them. The best conversation is carried out by keeping God's pleasure in mind, and the intent to proclaim the truth. Moreover, whatever good advice you may give to others, you should also practice it.

In the second verse, it is mentioned that evil and good are not equal, therefore truth ultimately prevails. If you think something is wrong, then you should try to correct it through polite and virtuous means. Also, it is instructed here that not only harsh or bad-manners are completely forbidden, even if the opponent is offensive, you are not permitted to be offensive in retaliation. Instead, your reaction should always remain polite. Next, God has also elucidated the point with cogent reasoning that if you respond to evil with goodness and kindness, it would certainly

have its effect on the soul of the person, and his heart would change for the better, and you will see that the same person who was cruel and callous to you, his animosity is transformed into deep friendship.

Study of the Quran makes it clear that it provides reasoning in support of every claim it makes; and it also demands a proof from the opponents in support of their claims. For example, the Quran claims that it is the Word of God, while its opponents said it was not and that it was composed by the Prophet himself. The Quran puts forward a proof in support of its claim, and says:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۚ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

And if you are in doubt as to what We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it, and call upon your helpers besides Allah, if you are truthful (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:24).

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ نَقُولُهُ ۚ بَلْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

Do they say, ‘He has fabricated it?’ Nay, but they would not believe. Let them, then bring forth a narration like this, if they speak the truth (*Sūrah at-Tūr*, 52:34–35).

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۚ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Do they say, ‘He has forged it?’ Say, ‘Bring then a *Sūrah* like unto it, and call for help on all you can, besides Allah, if you are truthful’ (*Sūrah Yūnus*, 10:39).

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ ۖ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
 إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Do they say, ‘He has forged it?’ Say, ‘Then bring ten chapters like it, forged, and call on whom you can beside Allah, if you are truthful (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11:14).

قُلْ لِّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَ لَوْ كَانَ
 بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

Say, ‘If mankind and the Jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another’ (*Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl*, 17:89).

That is to say, if it is the work of a human being, then you too are humans, so go ahead and make at least one *Sūrah* (chapter) like it even collectively. This argument is so reasonable and strong and compelling that no one has rebutted it up to this time.

Similarly, the Quran mentions a claim of adversaries, and asks for a proof of its validity:

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا ۗ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ ۗ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن
 كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

And they say, ‘None shall ever enter Heaven unless he be a Jew or a Christian.’ These are their vain desires. Say, ‘Produce your proof, if you are truthful’ (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:112).

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۚ اقْرَأْ وَ رَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۗ عَلَّمَ
 الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

Recite in the name of your Lord Who created, Created man from an adhesive clot. Recite! And your Lord is the Noblest; Who taught by the pen, Taught man what he knew not (*Sūrah al-'Alaq*, 96:2–6).

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى

The Lord of Mighty Powers has taught him (Sūrah an-Najm, 53:6).

In brief, the Holy Quran invites mankind to use faculties of thinking and reasoning by employing logical and rational proofs. The Quran is known to be an epitome of reasoning and rationality. Addressing all mankind, God says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُبِينًا

O ye people, a manifest proof has indeed come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear Light (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:175).

In this verse, the Quran is called such an argument and proof that not only it contains light, but like the sun, it even illuminates the entire world. Hence, there remains no need for any coercion or oppression to spread such a teachings which is replete with wisdom and brilliant arguments. It is the light that illumines the soul; and it cannot be thrust upon the heart by force. It needs opening up of spiritual eyes, not the physical eyes, to benefit from it; not the physical sight, but discerning insight is required. Thus, God says:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِصَآئِرٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ؕ فَمَن أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن عَمِيَٰ فَعَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ

Proofs have indeed come to you from your Lord; so whoever sees, it is for His own good; and whoever becomes blind, it is to his own harm. And I am not a guardian over you (*Sūrah al-An‘ām*, 6:105).

The above mentioned verses are enough to remove the misconception that Islam does not teach to convince with reasoning or that it promotes its beliefs through physical force or threats. Islamic teachings do not need such tactics, nor does it permit their use. Islam is fully convinced of peaceful co-existence. It insists upon a scholarly exchange of ideas in a cordial environment during any dialogue.

After submitting the above explanations, we will now examine the significance of knowledge and its acquisition in Islam. We will study this aspect of Islam in the light of the Holy Quran and the guidance provided by the founder of Islam, and will also quote supportive statements of non-Muslim scholars.

Importance of Pursuit of Knowledge in Islam

The first and the final objective of religion is to guide man through progressive stages of spirituality towards God, and to help him establish a living relationship with Him. The religion of Islam has coupled this objective with the acquisition of knowledge. In the Holy Quran, God has referred to knowledge hundreds of times, and made it the foundation in all matters of principle. For establishing a relationship with God, it is clearly stated:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Mighty, Most Forgiving (*Sūrah Fāṭir*, 35:29).

Again, it is stated:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Say, 'Can those who know and those who do not know be equal?' Verily, only those endowed with understanding will take heed (*Sūrah az-Zumar*, 39:10).

Such is the strong relationship between knowledge and reasoning that without knowledge there is no dialogue:

هَآءُنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ حَآجَجْتُمْ فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Behold! You are those who disputed about that whereof you had knowledge. Why then do you now dispute about that whereof you have no knowledge at all? Allah knows and you know not (*Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:67).

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ

And these are similitudes which We set forth for mankind, but only those understand them who have knowledge (*Sūrah al-Ankabūt*, 29:44).

The very purpose of the Holy Prophet's ministry is to impart knowledge:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

He it is Who has raised among the Unlettered *people* a Messenger from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest misguidance (*Sūrah al-Jumu'ah*, 62:3);

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

Even as We have sent to you a Messenger from among yourselves who recites Our Signs to you, and purifies you, and teaches you the Book and Wisdom, and teaches you that which you did not know (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:152).

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۗ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

He it is Who made the sun radiant and the moon lambent, and ordained for it stages, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning *of time*. Allah has not created this but in truth. He details the Signs for a people who have knowledge (*Sūrah Yūnus*, 10:6).

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۗ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَصَلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا

And We have made the night and the day two Signs, and We erased the Sign of night *replacing it with day* and the Sign of day We have made alight, that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the computation

of years and *the science of reckoning*. And everything We have explained with a detailed explanation (*Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl*, 17:13).

Compared to the founder of any other religion, the instructions given by the founder of Islam to gain knowledge are far greater in quantity. Following are a few of his sayings in this regard. He said:

God helps his servant who helps his Muslim brother; and he who travels in search of knowledge, God makes his path easy to enter Paradise. (*Muslim, Kitāb adh-Dhikr wad-Duʿā wad-Taubah*; Chapter: The virtue of gathering to read the *Quran* and *Zikr*)

It is hard to imagine a better concept concerning eminence of a student as is mentioned in this *ḥadīth*. To attain Paradise is the goal of life for everyone, and to gain knowledge is described as an important means to achieve it.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

Pursuit of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim, man and woman. (*Ibn Mājah, Kitāb al-Muqaddamah*, Chapter: Merits of the scholars and seeking knowledge)

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

He who travels in pursuit of knowledge remains on the way of Allah till the time he returns from his journey.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

Acquire knowledge even if you have to go to China.
(*Tirmidhī, Kitābul ‘Ilm*, Chapter: The virtue of seeking knowledge)

The small sentences of the above sayings of the Prophet^{sas} have condensed the significance and greatness of knowledge—*multum in parvo*—like a sea in a jug, an ocean in a cup.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

He who takes a journey in search of knowledge, Allah will lead him onto one of the paths to Paradise. Certainly, the angels spread their wings for the bliss of a student. Whatever is in the earth and in the heaven, even the fish in the depth of an ocean, pray for his forgiveness! Surely, a scholar is superior over a worshipper as the full moon in a moon-lit night is superior over the stars. Certainly, scholars are the inheritors to the prophets, and the inheritance of the prophets is not gold and silver; it is knowledge...
(*Kanz-al-‘Ummāl, Harf-ul-‘Ain*, Chapter 1 on Targheeb feeh, Tradition No. 28698)¹

Without any doubt, greater significance and value of knowledge that what is presented in Islam can not be conceived. All other

1. And also see: *Jām’ē Tirmidhī*, Book of Knowledge, Chapter: What has been related about the superiority of Fiqh over worship. [Publisher]

religions lag far behind Islam in this respect, and are no match at all.

Bless, O Allah, Muhammad and his people!

Holy Quran—A Treasure of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Let us examine, in the light of the Holy Quran, the impression created by the Pope in his speech that Islam is devoid of knowledge and wisdom, and it uses corporal force instead of cogent arguments.

According to the Quran, the real source of all knowledge is God,

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

... and they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases ... (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:256)

The message is obvious that humans can have access to the realm of the unknown, but only to the extent that He allows. This also implies that the so-called secular research and exploration is not entirely secular after all. Every era, which opens up a new vista of knowledge, is in accordance with the Divine plan and design. (*Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth* by Mirza Tahir Ahmad, p. 276)

The message of this verse is very clear that all research about nature takes place with His permission and blessing and is part of religion. In every age, new vistas of knowledge are brought before man under a divine plan and design.

With this reference, the Quran tells us that the treasures of knowledge are unlimited, but man receives them as much as needed. Hence, the Quran states:

وَأِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِلُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures thereof and We sent it not down except in a known measure. (*Sūrah al-Hijr*, 15:22)

His Holiness [Mirza Tahir Ahmad] writes:

The most wonderful message delivered by the verse just quoted is that the world of the unknown is boundless and fathomless, yet man will always be permitted access to it, but in measured portions which will be estimated by God in accordance with the requirements and dictates of the time. Thus, the Quranic terms of the ‘unknown’ and ‘the unseen’ do not in any way encourage blind faith and ignorance. On the contrary, they promote perpetual investigation by assuming man that what he knows and observes as reality is but infinitesimally small in proportion to what he knows not. Hence man’s quest for knowledge must always continue because the ocean of the secrets of nature is inexhaustible. (*Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth* by Mirza Tahir Ahmad, p. 277)

This verse has the most amazing message that the knowledge unknown to man is limitless. And man is given access to them according to his need and to the extent that God wishes. Therefore,

when Quran says to believe in the unseen, it does not mean blind faith but what is meant is that what is known to him is only a very insignificant portion of what is not known to him. Therefore, man should always continue to strive to learn because this ocean of knowledge has unending mysteries.

We just reviewed Quranic teachings about the span and depth of knowledge. Let's now see the means of acquiring this knowledge and forms of knowledge, particularly with regard to reasoning and logic. The appointed leader of the age and the one in true love with the Quran, the Promised Messiah^{as} states:

... of all the scriptures in the world today, the Holy Quran is the only one whose divine origin can be established with irrefutable arguments. It is the only one whose principles regarding salvation are based on truth and human nature; whose doctrines are comprehensive and firmly grounded in truth and are confirmed by powerful arguments; whose commandments are nothing but the dictates of truth and whose teachings bear no blemish of idolatry, human innovations and false deities. Its teachings zealously promote the Oneness, Greatness and Excellence of God; and it is filled to the brim in establishing the Oneness of the Glorious God. It does not impute to Him anything that is contrary to His Oneness or attribute to Him any blemish, shortcoming, or unworthy attribute. It does not impose any teaching upon us without first providing adequate proof in support thereof and explains each of its principles with proofs and clear arguments and leads its followers to perfect certainty and understanding. It removes,

through clear and unequivocal arguments, all the corruptions, impurities, defects and distortions that have found their way into people's beliefs, actions, sayings and deeds; and teaches all ethical and moral norms, the knowledge of which is essential for becoming truly human. (*Barāhīn Ahmadiyya* Part 2, pp. 95–96, published in 2012)

CHAPTER 7

Novelty in the Teachings of Muhammad?

by Dr. Mohammad Daud Majoka, Mir 'Abdul Latif

The passage that was read out by the Pope taken from the Emperor of Byzantium also contained a question whether there was anything new in the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}! The Emperor, on his own, stated that there was nothing but inhumane teachings that the Prophet had brought (God forbid). There is no doubt that serious misunderstandings about Islam exist in the non-Islamic world because of such statements by responsible persons like the Pope. Instead of removing misunderstandings, the irresponsible talk by the Pope made it all the more problematic. In this chapter, we shall present those features of the teachings of the Holy Prophet that were not present in the world before his advent, and, God-willing, the readers will come to know what new teachings did the Holy Prophet^{sas} bring to the world.

What is new in the teachings of Muhammad^{sas} can be determined only when we compare various aspects of Islamic teachings with those of previous religions. Therefore, we will make a comparison in the following discourse between Islam and the

teachings of Christianity and Judaism because these two religions are close to Islam, and the Pope also relates to them.

It should be kept in mind that there are three aspects of Islam's teachings that are new:

First, some of the knowledge Islam has brought is such that it did not exist at all before Islam.

Second, there is some knowledge that existed in rudimentary form but Islam completed and perfected it and removed its flaws.

Third, the perfect knowledge that was present in previous religions but had slowly disappeared, was revived by Islam.

True teachings of any religion can be found by referring to their original source, otherwise, the followers of each religion keep on changing their interpretations to keep pace with the changing trends, and they declare their self-made beliefs to be their religion. The original authentic source of Islamic teachings is the Holy Quran, and its explanations are the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} known as *Aḥādīth*. However, any *ḥadīth* that contradicts the Quran is unacceptable even if it is authentically attributed to the Prophet^{sas} of Islam. Likewise, the basic source of Christian and Jewish teachings is the Bible because they consider it to be the Word of God. Therefore, in our comparison we shall refer to these sources. Secondary sources can be presented to explain the original sources but not to contradict them.

Keep in mind that we do not blame the Torah and the Gospels for their limitations because these Books never made a claim to be perfect teachings for the world. In fact, Jesus himself said:

I shall have many things to say to you, but you cannot

bear them now. However when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth (John 16:12, 13).

In fact, the Spirit of truth came—(who is Prophet Muhammad^{sas} according to the Muslims)—and made a powerful claim that his teachings were complete and perfect (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:4). It openly challenged every opponent to present something at least equal to it if they could not bring anything better, and claimed that they would most certainly fail in their efforts (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:24). Thus, by this comparison our objective is only to present the new and perfect aspects of the teachings of Islam.

We have selected three areas for this comparison:

First: Beliefs

Second: Values

Third: Spirituality.

By comparing Islamic teachings with other religions under these three categories, we can find out what is new in the teachings of Islam, and what their special characteristics are.

Religious Doctrines

In religious beliefs, we have selected three subjects for illustration that are basic and fundamental for each religion, namely, the concept of God, the status of man, and the fate of man. We compare these three subjects in Islam and other religions to elicit the new teachings the Holy Prophet^{sas} brought.

CONCEPT OF GOD

Compared with the perfect concept of God as presented in Islam, the views of earlier religions about God are only rudimentary. Prior to Islam, though God was considered to be the Creator and Master of the universe, He still was only the God of a tribe or a race. In the Old Testament, God is depicted as 'the Lord God of Israel' and 'the Lord God of Hebrews' (Exodus 5:1; 9:1). Even a casual study of the Old Testament would suffice to prove that its God had a special interest only in the Children of Israel. They were a special chosen people of God (Deuteronomy 7:6) and God had chosen them above all other people (Deuteronomy 14:2). For this reason, according to Bible, God granted them the lands of seven nations, and commanded them to completely destroy those nations (Deuteronomy 7). It is worth noting that according to the Bible, the Children of Israel, not the Jewish religion, were selected (Amos 3:2). For this reason, on the return from Babylon, the people who belonged to Jewish religion but could not prove their genealogy were declared as 'polluted' (Nehemiah 7:64). It is also mentioned in the Old Testament that God loved Israel (Jacob), but He hated Esau, Jacob's brother. (Malachi 1:2, 3)

The same state of affairs persisted at the time of Jesus. Jesus also said, '*Salvation is for the Jews*' (John 4:22). Through his conduct he repeatedly proved that he had come with a message for the Jews and only the Jews. Giving a command to his disciples, he said, '*Go not unto the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*' (Matthew 10:5-6). He restricted his message only to the Jews so much so that he declared '*I am not sent but unto the lost*

sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 16:24). When a Canaanite woman approached him crying for help, he responded by saying, *'It is not good to take the children's bread, and to throw it to the dogs'* (Matthew 15:26). This was his view about other nations! He practiced the same teachings. All of his twelve disciples belonged to the tribe of Israel. Though towards the end of Gospel of Matthew, following words are attributed to Jesus: *'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations'* (Matthew 28:19), it was not in contradiction to the above mentioned teachings. It only meant that Jesus was telling them to go to all the tribes of Israel that were scattered in many lands. This fact is confirmed by the actual actions of his disciples who received the teachings directly from him (The Acts, 11:1–3; 11:19). Thus, when Paul, who is in fact the founder of present day Christianity, started to convert Gentile (non-Jewish) people to Christianity, he met with resistance from apostles and elders who were taught directly by Jesus, and he had to explain and defend his position in front of them (The Acts, 15). It was the same teachings of Jesus that compelled Paul to declare, *'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes; for the Jews first, and also for the Greek'* (Romans 1:16). This declaration was also Paul's own innovation, because Jesus was against preaching the gospel to any nation other than the Children of Israel. To read in detail how the Gentiles received the teachings of Jesus, please see The Acts, 11.

Islam is the only religion that presents the concept of a universal God. The very first verse in the Holy Quran introduces God as the Lord of all the worlds (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:2). Islam also teaches that God is the God of all nations, and He sent his messengers to all peoples (*Sūrah Fāṭir*, 35:25) so that all mankind

may receive God's mercy. The Muslims believe the founders of all religions to be truthful, and in this way Islam lays down the foundation of mutual respect among all peoples of the world. Moreover, glad tidings are given to the followers of other religions that, though Islam is preferred by God, still God will not ignore the good works of anyone who may not have heard about Islam or was not fully aware of the true teachings of Islam or was unable to accept Islam for any other reason provided he believed in God and did good works. Such a person will be rewarded by God (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:63). Is there any other religion that has made such a provision for the followers of other religions?

Under the command of God, the Holy Prophet Muhammad proclaimed aloud, 'O mankind! Truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth' (*Sūrah al-A'rāf*, 7:159). It was not merely a verbal proclamation; he indeed proved it through his actions. Among his companions were Arabs, Persians (Salman), Romans (Ṣuhaib), Ethiopians (Bilāl), Egyptians (Mariah), and Israelites ('Abdullāh bin Salām). He wrote letters to the chiefs and kings of Arabia, Persia, Rome, Ethiopia and Egypt, peacefully inviting them to Islam (Sirat ibn Hishām). No founder of any religion has ever invited anyone other than his own people to his religion. Neither Jesus, nor Moses, nor any other has done that. The self-made claims of universality forwarded by their followers are mere excuses to hide their embarrassment and to increase the numbers of converts; nothing more than that.

Prior to Islam, other religions had described only a few major attributes of God, but in contrast, Islam not only stated, '*To Allah alone belong all perfect attributes*' (*Sūrah al-A'rāf*, 7:181), it also

added such attributes that no other religion had ever mentioned before. For example, before Islam no religion had stated that ‘*God is Swift at reckoning*’ (Sūrah an-Nūr, 24:40), ‘*God is Capaciously Bountiful*’ (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:116), He is ‘*Appreciating*’ (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:159), etc.

Not only Islam has enumerated more attributes of God, it has removed the errors about the attributes that were already known in other religions. All religions acknowledge, in one way or the other, that God is Merciful, Forgiving, Creator, and Master. But, regretfully, ‘*they do not make a just estimate of God*’. (Sūrah al-An‘ām, 6:92). In Hinduism, some thought that God could create everything but he could not create souls. Christianity thought that God has the power and ability to do all things, but was unable to forgive man’s sin and He needed to make Jesus an escape goat to forgive sins of man. According to Christian doctrine, God is just in other matters, but he did not do so in the matter of sin of Adam, and He has punished all of his progeny till the Day of Judgment. So, Muhammad^{sas}, the Messenger of Allah, not only gave the world new teachings about God and His attributes, he also corrected many errors prevalent about the attributes of God in previous religions.

Earlier religions were mistaken even about the person of God. The Jews had made God specially attached to them alone, as if He was their relation; that He only cared for them, and was not concerned with other people. A vast majority of Christians had taken Jesus to be the son of God, and had denied the Oneness of God, while these doctrines are against the basic teachings of their own religion, and are logically and rationally untenable as well. In contrast to these teachings, Islam presented the teachings about

God's person that He is without any associate (*Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, 112:2); He does not need any son to do anything (*Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, 112:4) (even if it is to forgive sins of man); He is not in need of anyone to affirm His existence and to manifest His powers (*Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, 112:3). He has power over everything; is above everyone; is Independent of everyone; is Creator of everything beside Him, is Sustainer of everything and Terminator of everything. His person is indivisible, and beyond any subtraction, deficiency or excess.

STATUS OF MAN

The second subject that we have selected for this comparison of beliefs is the rank and status of man. In other religions before Islam, either there are no teachings at all concerning the status and purpose of man or it is wanting and imperfect. Judaism in general did state that God created man in His image (Genesis 1:26), but in practical terms, it degraded the entire mankind to a subhuman level except the Children of Israel (Deut. 7; Malachi 1; 2–3) as is also evident from the discriminatory commandments against other nations. Christianity in its original form, which is the pronouncement of Jesus, did not add anything in this regard. We have already observed Jesus calling the Children of Israel as 'sons' and other nations as 'dogs' (Matthew 15:26). Islam was the first to vigorously present the maxim of equality for entire mankind in the world, and asserted that the division of races and tribes has no merit. It is only for identification; and the most honourable person in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:2; *Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, 49:14). The Bible and the Quran

both have stated that, like every other religion, their objective is to bring man close to God, that man should imbue in his person the attributes of God. However, when we study the Bible, it seems as if the God of the Bible is scared lest man becomes like God. Thus first He forbade man to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge about good and evil (Genesis 2:17) while this knowledge was essential to get nearness to God. When He saw that man has started differentiating between good and evil, God expelled him from the Paradise for the fear that he might become very much like God (Genesis 3:22). If God wants man to become His image by adopting His attributes, then why did He prevent him to become like Him? In contrast, Islam does not ascribe any such irrational act to God. Islam gave the command that man should adopt God's colours and ways (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:139) and should endeavour to become like Him.

Concerning the creation of man, the Old Testament taught that as a result of sin of Adam, the birth of every man was in sorrow (Genesis 3:16), and the earth was cursed on account of this (Genesis 3:17). The New Testament went a step further, and declared that every man was sinful and accursed (Romans, 5:12, 18). This is the view the Bible presents about man's birth and his status. In contrast, the concept that Islam has presented about nature of man and man's creation is that every human being is born innocent and sinless, and is created in the nature of God. (*Sūrah ar-Rūm*, 30:31; *Bukhārī, Kitābul Janā'iz*, Chapter: When a boy becomes a Muslim and then dies, Tradition No. 1270)

Which teachings are more sensible and better according to human conscience? Any intelligent person can easily make a clear

distinction between Islamic teachings and that of other religions concerning the creation of man, the purpose of his creation, man being sinful by birth or not, the design of man's nature, distinction among men on national or racial grounds, etc.

THE FATE OF MAN

The third part, that relates to religious beliefs and is part of the fundamentals of all the faiths, is concerned with the end of man's life, and the life hereafter. Life-after-death is a basic belief of all religions, and every religion has taught that there is life after death. Therefore, it is imperative to make a comparison of teachings about the life to come. The Old Testament mentions the subject of life-after-death only as a hint. The concept does exist that there are Hell and Heaven where punishment and reward will be given to man, but there is no detailed knowledge about their nature, quality and essence. Christianity being a branch of Judaism could not and did not make any progress and failed to throw any light on this subject.

As for the teachings of the Bible, it depicts Hell and Heaven as corporal places because it is written in (Genesis, 2:8) that God planted a garden near Eden. Moreover, God's punishment to the sinners in Hell shall be everlasting (Isaiah, 33:14; 66:24; Matthew, 25: 41-46). Islam, on the other hand, clearly and explicitly states for the first time that Hell and Heaven are not physical things; rather they are spiritual places. Islam also teaches that Hell is not an everlasting place, nor is God a personal enemy of any one that he should give him an everlasting punishment. To be in Hell is like

a healing place, and after passing through it, all will enter Heaven. Hell is only a temporary abode where the people shall stay for a long time, but it will be for a finite time. لَا يَبْقَيْنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا that is, 'they will tarry therein for ages' (*Sūrah an-Nabā'*, 78:24). In comparison to this, Heaven is described as عَطَاءٌ غَيْرٌ مَّجْدُودٌ 'a gift that shall not be cut off' (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11:109). Whenever God desires, the punishment in Hell shall come to an end (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11:108). Life in Hell will seem longer than it is due to its torment and the anxiety of the bearer.

A detailed description of Hell and Heaven is provided; that it is not an imaginary world; these are the consequences of the deeds done in this life that will appear in a spiritual form in the life to come; and to make us understand, some similitudes have been mentioned. Thus:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلِّبَاءٌ رِزْقًا مِنْهَا
 مِنْ شَرِّ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رَزَقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا مُتَشَابِهُونَ وَ لَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَ
 هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

Meaning that: And give glad tidings to those who believe and do good works, that for them are Gardens beneath which flow streams. Whenever they are given a portion of fruit therefrom, they will say: 'This is what was given us before,' whereas only similar things shall be brought to them. And they will have therein mates perfectly pure, and therein will they abide (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:26).

These gardens shall be given to them for being fearful of God and for adopting righteousness; *وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ* ‘but for him who fears to stand before his Lord there are two Gardens’ (*Sūrah ar-Raḥmān*, 55:47). Likewise, the Quran tells us that in Heaven there shall be such streams that can be likened to that of honey, milk and wine, but those are not worldly drinks; they are spiritual rewards; for it is said about those drinks that *لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْزِفُونَ* ‘wherein there will be no intoxication, nor will they be exhausted thereby’ (*Sūrah aṣ-Ṣāffāt*, 37:48). The canals of water and milk in Heaven shall be different than that of this world, because *مَاءٌ غَيْرٌ* ماء غَيْرٌ that water shall never go stale, and *لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ* that milk shall never change (*Sūrah Muḥammad*, 47:16). Thus, the concept of Heaven presented by Islam is that of a spiritual place, and the rewards of the Heaven should not be confused with things of this world. These are mere similitudes.

In the same manner, it is described in the Quran that the heat of sunshine shall not bother those who would be in Heaven (*Sūrah ad-Dahr*, 76:14). They will have different ranks in Heaven in accordance with their effort, resolve and sincerity (*Sūrah al-Aḥ-qāf*, 46:20). They will enjoy the fruit of their good deeds.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَدِيَّتَنَا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ

Eat and drink joyfully because of the good deeds you did
in days gone by (*Sūrah al-Hāqqah*, 69:25).

All feelings of rancour and resentment shall dissipate from the hearts of those who are in Heaven:

وَنُزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِن غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ

And We shall remove whatever of rancour may be in their breasts so that they will become as brothers reclining on couches, facing one another (*Sūrah al-Hijr*, 15:48).

Thus, the Heaven portrayed by Islam is a spiritual station of real peace and security where the denizens of heaven shall receive inexhaustible reward for their good deeds.

Moreover, Islam explains in detail that those who are disconnected and distant from God shall be reformed in Hell. The condition of those who will enter Hell is described as:

مَا سَأَلْتَهُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ وَ لَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمَسْكِينِ وَ كُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْفَاحِشِينَ وَ كُنَّا نَكْذِبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ

What has brought you into ‘Saqr’? They will say, ‘We were not of those who offered Prayers, nor did we feed the poor; and we indulged in objectionable talk with those who indulge therein; and we used to deny the Day of Judgment’ (*Sūrah al-Muddaththir*, 74:43–47).

Thus, they will be punished for not worshipping God, for ill-treatment of others, indulging in vain talk, and for being careless about accountability for their evil deeds. Equating sins with wounds, it is stated:

وَ لَا طَعَامَ إِلَّا مِنْ غَسِيلِينَ لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ

Nor any food, save the washing of wounds, which none but the sinners eat (*Sūrah al-Hāqqah*, 69:37–38).

This جزاءً وَفَأْتَا punishment is a befitting requital for their evil deeds (*Sūrah an-Naba'*, 78:27). The Quran also confirms that the Fire of Hell is not the physical fire; it is a consequence of various evil actions. For example, the Quran calls the consequences of jealousy and arrogance as fire (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:65; *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, 7:37–39), and says when man is overwhelmed by his vices, Hell becomes his abode:

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

Aye, whoso does evil and is encompassed by his sins—
those are the inmates of the Fire (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:82).

For those who would be in Hell, there will be different levels in accordance with their deeds. However, this remedial treatment shall have a limit. Though it would be a long period, still they will be delivered from it.

These are just a few issues that have been presented as an illustration, otherwise a full book can be written on the concept of life-after-death. Has any other religion before the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} provided such a logical and insightful teaching with such detail and clarity?

SUMMARY OF COMPARISON OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

	BELIEF	BIBLE	QURAN
1	Concept of God	National and racial	Universal
2	Attributes of God	Limited and Imperfect	Perfect and comprehensive

	BELIEF	BIBLE	QURAN
3	Equality of humans	The Israeli race is superior to all other races.	All humans are equal.
4	Birth of man	The earth was cursed because of man. Old Testament: Sinner and accursed by birth	All humans are born on the nature of God and are pure.
5	Hell & Heaven	Physical	Spiritual
6	Hell	Everlasting	Temporary
7	Philosophy of Hell & Heaven	Not provided	Spiritual similitude of human actions and their natural consequences

INJUNCTIONS ABOUT DEEDS

Religion has special relationship with human actions. Every religion has presented some instructions concerning rules of conduct and moral values. As for the religion of Islam, it has explained moral teachings with great detail out of which a few examples are set down below. Human society needs three kinds of rules; those that concern his morality, those that apply to his economy and those that regulate his politics and organization. We shall compare Islam with other religions concerning all these three set of principles.

SOCIOLOGY

Every religion contains teachings concerning social conduct and basic morality. Every religion has admonished against falsehood, deception, adultery, killing and anarchy. These teachings are common among all, whether it is Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity or Islam.

The first difference that exists between Islam and other religions is the scope and sphere of its teachings. Earlier faiths, being parochial and tribal, gave only limited guidance. For example, Judaism said if a Jew asked for a loan, he should get interest-free loan and usury was prohibited (Leviticus, 25:35–37); but the collection of usury was permitted from the non-Jews (Deut. 23:20). Judaism instructed to remit the loans of the Jews in the year of Sabbath but allowed the demand from the borrower if he was a non-Jew (Deut. 15:3). In contrast, Islam prohibits usury entirely (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:276–277) and enjoins leniency in collection of loans (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:281), and does not tolerate any ethnic or religious bias in these matters.

Another distinction is that Islam has nurtured human morals with attention to fine details. Islam identifies the defects that were mentioned by earlier religions and the ones that were not; and gives guidance how to eschew them. Giving the basic moral guidance, the Quran says walk not in the earth haughtily; and walk at a moderate pace, and keep your voice low (*Sūrah Luqmān*, 31:19). Shun all that which is vain (*Sūrah al-Mu'minūn*, 23:4). Do not deride other people (*Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, 49:12). Do not enter the houses of others without permission (*Sūrah an-Nūr*, 24:28). If the owner of the house asks you to leave, then depart (*Sūrah an-Nūr*,

24:29). Enter the houses through the doors (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:190). Return someone's greeting (or gift) with a better greeting (or gift) (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:87). Avoid all intoxicants because their harm is greater than the benefit (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:220; *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:91–92). Say straightforward and truthful words, it will reform you (*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, 33:71). Return the trusts (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:59; *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:284). Keep your covenants and promises (*Sūrah al-Mu'minūn*, 23:9). Use moderation in eating and drinking (*Sūrah al-A'raf*, 7:32). Eat not only what is lawful, but that which is also wholesome (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:89). Do not be extravagant (*Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl*, 17:27). Help those who ask for help and those who do not (*Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt*, 51:20). Do not create disorder in the land (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:205–206). Do not kill an innocent person (*Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl*, 17:34). Do not even go near adultery (*Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl*, 17:33). Do justice even to your enemy (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:9). Be kind to your parents (*Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl*, 17:24). Promote virtues and forbid vices (*Sūrah Luqmān*, 31:18). Speak softly (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:84). Collaborate in good deeds but not in sin (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:3). Do not conspire (*Sūrah al-Mujādalah*, 58:10).

These are only a few examples from Islam's comprehensive moral teachings. These are matters that have fundamental significance in transforming a man into a moral human and in establishing a peaceful society. Without them, a strong social order cannot take shape. However, even in these fundamentals, other religions cannot compete with Islam. Today, through their own experience, the entire mankind recognizes the validity of these teachings; but

prior to Islam no religious scripture had these instructions in such detail.

The third distinction is that Islam removed the deficiencies that existed in the teachings that are shared by Islam and older religions. For example, Judaism had taught the law of retribution—*tooth for tooth, eye for eye* (Exodus 21:23–25); and Jesus taught not to resist evil: *whosoever smites your right cheek, turn to him the other also* (Matthew 5:39). Both these teachings are immoderate. Neither it is appropriate to be always harsh and vengeful, nor it is good to show leniency and forgiveness at all times. Practically, the Christian nations have discarded the teachings of Jesus, acknowledging the fact that sometimes kindness and forgiveness may promote crimes instead of reformation. Islam teaches that punishment for crimes is necessary:

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

And there is life for you in *the law* of retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may enjoy security (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:180).

Otherwise the criminals and savages shall become bold and increase in their transgressions and crimes. Nevertheless, along with this instruction, Islam teaches that punishment at all times may not be the best method for reformation. If someone is really repentant, and kindness and forgiveness would reform him, then adopt that method. God will reward you for that

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۗ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and *his act* brings about reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers (*Sūrah ash-Shūrā*, 42:41).

Thus, it is Islamic teachings that appeals to good sense. Can anyone object to these teachings or bring forth anything better than this?

Similarly, Islam provides another principle that one should not even go near the things that are prohibited by God:

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا

These are the limits fixed by Allah, so approach them not (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:188).

For, when a person shall go near them, the possibility is that, due to human weakness, he might end up trespassing. For this reason, Islam does not teach, unlike Christianity (Timothy 5:23), not to drink in excess. In contrast, it teaches that, though there are some benefits and some risks in drinking, the harms outweigh the benefits:

فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا

In both there is great sin and also *some* advantages for men; but their sin is greater than their advantage (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:220).

Therefore:

إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رَجَسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Intoxicants and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork.

So shun *each one of* them that you may prosper (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:91).

That is, do not drink, be it in small or large quantity. In real world experience, excellence of Islamic teachings is self-evident. In Christian countries, where drinking is permitted, many people are unable to restrict themselves to a few drinks and become alcoholics. Thus not only they become a financial burden on society, they also cause many other ills. There are innumerable alcoholics who are involved in child and spouse abuse while drunk. Every year there are countless accidents and deaths caused by alcoholism.

We have already discussed racial discrimination based on social teachings, as the Bible has given preference to the Jews over others, and Jesus and his disciples perpetuated that differential treatment. But more painful is the fact that the Bible has also discriminated against disabled persons from becoming priests, so that '*no man who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God. For any man who has a defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has marred face or any limb too long, a man who has a broken foot or any limb, or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man who has defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is eunuch*' (Leviticus 21:16–24). In Islam, however, there is no restriction on any disabled person to perform any religious ceremony unless the disability becomes a hindrance in the performance of the ritual.

For example, a blind person can recite prayer aloud but obviously speaking a dumb may not be able to recite it.

Thus Islam has widened the circle of moral teachings in a real and comprehensive way and described new and important aspects that were necessary for the perfection of moral instructions. The instructions which already existed in previous religion were also properly modified and their deficiencies removed.

SUMMARY COMPARISON OF SOCIAL TEACHINGS

ISSUE	BIBLE	QURAN
1 Audience	The children of Israel	Entire mankind
2 Moral teachings	Elementary	Detailed and perfected
3 Moral teachings	Immoderate. Old Testament: eye for eye New Testament: unconditioned forgiveness	Moderation and flexibility; forgiveness preferred provided it leads to reformation
4 Social interaction	Discriminatory against disabled	No discrimination

ECONOMICS

The second major part of human life pertains to economic matters which are necessary for the survival of any society. Besides Islam, other religions contain very little teachings about economic matters. In this respect, when we study Islam, we find a continuous stream of guidance flowing in the Quran, while all previous religions seem to remain content with only a few drops. For example, in Judaism there are only a few instructions about financial system and even those are mostly concerned with the seventh year, known as the Year of Release (or Sabbatic Year), when Jews freed the slaves and all Jewish debts were remitted (Deuteronomy 15:1); or there are some rules concerning inheritance. However Islam throws a flood of light on economic principles.

Islam initiated an elaborate system of inheritance and defined the share of every person that he is to get from the estate of the deceased. For example, how much shall be the share of the son, the daughter, the husband, the wife, the sister, the brother, the mother and the father (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:12–13, 177). There is no description in such detail concerning inheritance in religions before Islam; and, for that reason, their followers often quarrelled with each other in this matter. If there were male children, females were not given any share in inheritance (Numbers 27:8); and even among the males their respective share was not clearly defined. The Bible tells us only that the first-born son should receive double the share compared to others (Deuteronomy 21:17). Islam defines it clearly that men and women both shall inherit the property

لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ
مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ ۗ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

For men is a share of that which parents and near relations leave; and for women is a share of that which parents and near relations leave, whether it be little or much—a determined share (*Sūrah an-Nisā*, 4:8).

Thus, for the first time it was Islam that fixed a portion in inheritance for women as well.

Islam also enlarged the circle of inheritors to a great extent and, in addition to the children and spouses, it added other relatives:

إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا ۗ الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِأَمْرٍ

When death comes to any one of you, if he leave much wealth, that he make a will to parents and near relatives to act with fairness (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:181).

Islam also introduced the economic rule that, at the time of giving or taking a loan, the terms of transaction should be put down in writing and there should be witnesses to it (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:283). It also defines who should dictate the terms, that is, *وَلْيُكَلِّمِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ* let him who incurs the liability to pay back the loan should dictate. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:283). Likewise, Islam requires that when you buy or sell, you should record it and issue a receipt for it (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:283).

The system of usury is used to make the rich richer, and the poor poorer. Islam abolished it altogether *وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا* 'Allah has made trade lawful and made interest unlawful' (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:276); and it instructs to relinquish the remainder

of interest in favour of the debtor (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:279). Not only that, it explained its disadvantage and harmful consequences:

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا أَلَّا يَقُومُوا إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ

Those who devour interest do not rise except as rises one whom Satan has smitten with insanity. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:276)

That is, such people lose their reasoning and fair-mindedness under the influence of their covetousness.

As opposed to it, Islam has initiated a system of taxation in the form of Zakāt in which the economic system is based on investment. In comparison to other religions that laid the tax on income (for instance Bible specifies one tenth of the income: Deut. 14:22), Islam places the tax primarily on the money that is surplus after personal expenditure and remains non utilized for the whole year. It is more sensible that the money that remains unused and is not put into circulation should be taxed. The Holy Prophet gave elaborate instructions as to how to assess tax (Bukhārī, *Kitāb-ul-Zakāt*). Not only did he tell how the taxation shall be accomplished and explained the significance of charity, he also outlined how the money so collected by the state shall be spent. Hence the Holy Quran described elaborately as to the usage of that money:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَرَامِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ

For the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the freeing of slaves, and for those

in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer
(*Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:60).

Islam also laid down the principle that wealth should not be allowed to accumulate in a few hands. One of the reasons to spend wealth on the needy, wayfarers and orphans is that: لَا يَكُونُ دَوْلَةٌ بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ *it may not circulate only among those of you who are rich* (*Sūrah al-Hashr*, 59:8). Against this, we find the teachings in Christianity that Jesus exhorted that one should not collect any money: ‘*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth*’ (Matthew 6:19). This teachings is against the nature of man, and the Christian world could never act upon it.

To avoid wastage of wealth, Islam has instructed to supervise such persons who may not have the ability to manage their own financial affairs so that they do not end up losing their inheritance:

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاَسْوَهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

And give not to the foolish your property which Allah has made for you a means of support; but feed them therewith and clothe them and speak to them words of kind advice.
(*Sūrah an-Nisā*, 4:6).

At the same time Islam admonishes to evaluate their competence and when they do become capable, to return to them what is theirs. During this period, Islam advises not to misappropriate the trust:

وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ ۚ فَإِنْ أَنتُم مِّنْهُمْ رُّشَدًا ۖ فَأَدْعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۖ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبَرُوا ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا

And test *the understanding* of the orphans until they attain *the age of marriage*; then, if you find in them sound judgment, deliver to them their property; and devour it not in extravagance and haste against their growing up. And whoso is rich, let him abstain; and whoso is poor, let him eat *thereof* with equity. And when you deliver to them their property, then call witnesses in their presence. And Allah is sufficient as a Reckoner (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:7).

Islam also provides comprehensive guidance in matters of trade. It is commanded that all measures should be accurate:

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ ۖ بِالْقِسْطِ

And give full measure and weight with equity. (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:153);

And instructed that making a profit in trade is lawful (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:30), but bribery, in order to devour wealth, is not allowable:

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ ۖ وَتُدُلُّوا عَلَيْهَا إِلَىٰ الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

And do not devour your wealth among yourselves through falsehood, and offer it not *as bribe* to the authorities that you may knowingly devour a part of the wealth of *other* people with injustice. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:189)

In addition, it is admonished that engaging in business and making money should not become the primary objective of human endeavour and it should not make one forgetful of his spirituality (*Sūrah al-Jumu'ah*, 62:10). Moreover, instructions are given about how to conduct business; no deception is to be used, the bulk items should have the same quality as the sample (Muslim, Tradition No. 147); deals made by others are not to be interfered with (Bukhārī, Tradition No. 1995); no deception and cheating is to be used in business (Bukhārī, Tradition No. 1968). Principles of farming are also fully explained, as an example, in the books of *ḥadīth*, under the chapters dealing with sales and farming. In short, there is no aspect of business about which there is no guidance in the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Prophet^{sas}.

Similarly, Islam has put much emphasis that a man should spend willingly a portion out of his wealth for the welfare of mankind and on charitable causes, and it should be out of pure and lawful earnings:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ

O ye who believe! Spend of the good things that you have earned, and what We produce for you from the earth.

(*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:268)

The acts of charity should be overt so that others may also be inspired to do the same, and it should also be covert so that one may avoid ostentatiousness: وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً that is the wise are those who spend out of that which We have provide them, secretly and openly (*Sūrah ar-Ra'd*, 13:23).

Moreover, moderation is recommended; one may neither be a spendthrift, nor stingy:

إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

When they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly,
but moderate between the two. (*Sūrah al-Furqān*, 25:68)

Not only that they spend when they have extra wealth, they also spend by cutting down their personal expenses, leaving aside their rightful needs; and enduring hardship, they spend for the poor:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالصَّرَّاءِ

Those who spend in prosperity and adversity. (*Sūrah Āl-e Imrān*, 3:135)

Moreover, it is instructed that, after spending on others, one should not boast about it (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:265). To conclude, an elaborate system is outlined, that is only referred to here briefly, as this is not the place to get into its details.

*Summary of Comparison of Teachings
Related to Economy*

ISSUE	BIBLE	QURAN
1 Inheritance	Women have no rights if the sons are alive	Men and women both have their share regardless
2 Inheritance	First born son has double the share	All sons have equal share
3 Inheritance	Only a few heirs	Circle of heirs much wider
4 Financial dealings	Different rules for own people and other	All have same standard
5 Wealth accumulation	New testament forbids it	Discourages concentration in a few hands
6 Basis for taxation	On entire income	On yearly idle surplus
7 For young or immature	No guidance	Guardianship
8 Financial sacrifice	Rudimentary instructions	Detailed and comprehensive instructions

Politics

The third area of human activities is associated with the internal organizational policies of various nations and their relations and interactions with each other and that is known as political system.

Islam defined, for the first time, several principles of politics and threw light on international affairs.

In Judaism, politics depended upon the will of the Kings or religious leaders. Christianity promoted the idea: '*Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's*' (Matthew 23:21), and thus the rights of the rulers were established to some extent but the limits of the same were not defined and no mention was made of the rights of the public.

Who should be the ruler? Responding to this question, the Bible says that the ruler can only be from your nation and who shares your religion (Deuteronomy 17:15). Thus all who did not belong to their religion were deprived of this right. Islam did not place any such restriction and the door, to become head of state, is open to all.

Islam gave elaborate guidance to rulers that it is their obligation to govern the people with justice and equity:

وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا
بَصِيرًا

And that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice. And surely excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:59).

Along with this, it is emphasized that even the religious difference with any person or people should not be a hindrance in this regard:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ۤأَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا ۚ اِعْدِلُوْا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى

...and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be *always* just, that is nearer to righteousness (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:9).

Then, they were commanded to administer their affairs with mutual consultation: 'وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ' and whose affairs are *decided* by mutual consultation' (*Sūrah ash-Shūrā*, 42:39), and not without mutual consultation or regard to public opinion. This commandment is for every decision and Islam has not left it to the prerogative of the ruler.

Similarly the rights of the subjects are also defined that not only they should participate in consultations but they have the right not to obey the ruler if he rules in violation to the basic commands of the Divine teachings and the principles defined by God:

وَلَا تُطِيعُوا مَنْ هُمْ اِثْمًا اَوْ كُفْرًا

And yield not to any one among them who is sinful or ungrateful (*Sūrah ad-Dahr*, 76:25).

However, it is made clear that the response should not be rebellion or sedition but it should be migration from such a place (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:98). Rebellion and lawlessness are not to be permitted under any circumstance.

وَلَا تَبْخِجُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

...and seek not to make mischief in the earth, verily Allah loves not those who make mischief (*Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28:78).

As the older religions were not universal, we are not expected to find any instructions in them about international affairs. For the first time, Islam threw light on international relations. Islam declared that all nations are equal (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:2, *Sūrah al-Hujurat*, 49:14). No nation is 'children' of God, and other are 'dogs' as is the opinion of the Bible (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; Amos 3:2; Matthew 15: 26). The Holy Prophet^{sa}s said that no Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, and no white has any superiority over black (Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal; Bāqī Musnad Al-Ansar, Number 22391). The Bible said that progeny of Ham shall always be slaves of others, and the Jews have said that Ham's progeny was black (Genesis 9:24, and its interpretation Babylonian Talmud, Sandhedrin 108 B). Islam also presented the teachings that differences between races and tribes are only for the sake of identification and recognition. God is not a relative of anyone; whoever will listen to Him and submit to Him, being righteous, shall be close to Him and shall be loved by Him:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind, We have created you from male and female; and We have made you into clans and tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most

righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware (*Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, 49:14).

Only Islamic teachings can guarantee lasting peace in the world that gives equal rights to all the nations.

For international disputes the injunction is that if one nation transgresses against another, all nations should collectively try to persuade the transgressor; and if it does not comply, it can be disciplined, but only to the extent that the offender should cease the transgression. Beyond that there should be no prosecution and the original dispute should be resolved with justice (*Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, 49:10). This rule presented by Islam fourteen hundred years ago is now validated in the form of International laws of the UNO. But still, the world has not reached the height of Islamic principle, and it is common to prosecute the aggressor even after it has been subdued. One example is the division of Germany after World War, and carving out German territories for other countries. Likewise, it is commonplace for the superpowers to cooperate in transgression against smaller nations. If the Islamic principle is not fully adopted even now, the world shall not see peace!

Islam also teaches to ask for your rights on national level from other nations; and grant them their rights (*Sūrah al-Mumtahinah*, 60:11). Another injunction is not to blockade the passage to their Holy Places as a result of these disputes (*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:3). Again, it is discussed in detail that if a nation violates your rights and commits aggression, you are permitted to defend yourselves (*Sūrah al-Hajj*, 22:40). However Islam does not condone wars (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:217, *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:33). Therefore, whenever the enemy makes an offer of peace, you should make

peace with them (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:91); do not commit any excesses even during war (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191); do not attack the enemy in the darkness of night: (*Bukhārī, Kitābul Adhān*, Chapter: To suspend fighting on hearing the Adhān, Tradition No. 575; *Muslim, Kitābul Jihad*, Chapter: Ruler appointing leaders [of expeditions and advising them of the etiquettes of war, etc.], Tradition No. 3261). Neither should one try to seize their property (*Abū Dāwūd, Kitābul Jihad*, Chapter: Regarding the prohibition of plundering when food is scarce in the land of the enemy, Tradition No. 2330). Do not take captives, except those that are captured in the course of war (*Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:68). Elderly, religious leaders, children and women should not be attacked, nor should they be harmed. (*Bukhārī, Kitābul Jihad*, Chapter: Killing women during war, Tradition No. 2792; *Abū Dāwūd, Kitābul Jihad*, Chapter: Regarding killing women, Tradition No. 2294; *Abū Dāwūd, Kitābul Jihad*, Chapter: Inviting the Idolaters [to accept Islam], Tradition No. 2247)

For the establishment of peace, the Holy Prophet^{sas} demonstrated, by his practice, to make formal peace pacts and to write peace treaties (*Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Maghāzī*), not to violate pacts (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:92), make peace on equal terms, and not by imposing your supremacy, and by accepting the terms, even if they seem dishonourable, just for the sake of peace. (*Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Maghāzī; Sīrat ibn Hishām; Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah*)

Do not transgress even against the enemy. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191)

Thus, a litany of instructions is available on this subject as well and all this is based on new teachings. In comparison, what are the teachings in the Bible? It enjoins that even when the enemy

surrenders, place all of them under your tribute and to serve you (Deuteronomy 20:11). After conquering cities, and receiving them as an inheritance, *'you shall leave nothing that breaths remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them'* (Deuteronomy 20:16), *and to take away all their possessions* (1 Samuel 27:7-11). And if people of any city leave the religion of the people of the Bible, that is they apostate, then *'you shall surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword; and you shall gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shall burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit'* (Deuteronomy 13). In 1 Samuel 15:3, teaching is specific; *'spare them not; but slay man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.'* *When you enter victoriously in to the Promised Land, you should not make any covenant with, or show mercy unto them; utterly destroy them; you should destroy their altars'* (Deuteronomy 7). Whereas Islam says not to even revile the gods of other people (*Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:109); and it guarantees the sanctity of their places of worship (*Sūrah al-Ḥajj*, 22:41). This is the difference that exists between the religion brought by the Holy Prophet and other religions.

Comparison of Teachings Concerning Politics

ISSUE	BIBLE	QURAN
1 Principles of politics	No	Elaborate system
2 System of governance	No	Administration must be based of consultations and justice
3 Status of other nations	Children of Israel are special and superior	All nations are equal, Arabs are not superior over non-Arabs, whites are not superior over blacks
4 Nearness to God	Dependant on the race	Dependant of righteousness
5 International relations	No teachings	Comprehensive guidance
6 In case two nations fight	No teachings	Mediate and, if it fails, collectively stop the aggressor
7 Treatment of enemies	No man, child or animal to be left alive in the promised land; outside of promised land, take them as slaves	If enemy desires peace, you must accept it; no transgression against the enemy allowed
8 Places of worship of other peoples	Destroy them	Safeguard them; even their deities should not be abused

Teachings About Women

Since Islam is attacked specifically with regard to the issue of women, a comparison between Islamic teachings concerning them and the teachings of other religions is presented.

In Judaism and Christianity, a woman is considered slave to man (Genesis 3:16), and it is written that the man was not created for woman, but the woman for man (1 Corinthians 11:9). Discrimination between man and woman is to the extent that if a mother gives birth to a son, she shall be unclean for seven days; but if a daughter is born, she shall be unclean for two weeks (Leviticus 12:2,5). Islam has not made any such distinction nor has it given any such teachings; it proclaimed that man and woman are like garment to each other: *هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ* ‘They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them’ (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:188). Men have rights over women just as women have rights over men: *وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ* ‘And they (the women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in equity’ (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:229).

Prior to Islam, woman were pronounced unclean during their menses. Thus, she was unclean even according to the Bible (Leviticus 15:19). And, it did not stop there; it was said that anyone who touched the woman during her impurity, that person would also be unclean till evening; everything that woman sat upon, shall be unclean; and whoever sat upon that spot, shall also be unclean until evening (Leviticus 15:20–25). In other words, during that period, a woman was the worst of untouchables. Islam says:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ آذَى

And they ask thee concerning menstruation. Say: It is harmful thing (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:223),

But to touch them during this period is not a thing unclean (*Bukhārī, Kitāb as-Salat*, Chapter: To offer Salat facing a bed occupied by a menstruating woman, Tradition No. 488).

About women covering their heads, the Bible tells us that a woman should cover her head in a church, because it is a sign of her servitude; the same is not required of a man, because *‘Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man’; and man is ruler over her, ‘the head of the woman is the man’* (1 Corinthians 11:3-10). In comparison, Islam taught that covering of head was a sign of respect both for men and women. The Prophet^{sas} and his wives used to cover their heads (*Muslim, Kitābul Ḥajj*, Chapter: Entering Mecca without Ihram, Tradition No. 2420; *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Baqī musnad al-Ansār hadith Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet, Tradition No. 25399). For the same reason, all Muslim scholars and kings always kept their heads covered, and considered it a sign of honour and respect.

Christianity did not allow women even to speak out in a church, nor was she permitted to teach men (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12). Islam did not put any such restriction on women. Therefore, many male companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} frequently asked his wife ‘Āisha^{ra} questions and were taught by her. For this very reason, in the six most authentic books of Traditions there are 3246 sayings attributed to her, wherein she has discussed varied issues.

With respect to inheritance of property, the Bible commanded

that if there was a male issue of the deceased, then there was nothing left for the females to inherit (Numbers 27:8). Against these teachings, Islam grants the right for women to inherit property from her father, son, brother and husband, etc. (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:12–13, 177). Here it would be proper to explain that Islam has set the share of the woman in inheritance to be half of the man but this is due to the fact that man is made financially responsible for the upkeep of his family whereas the woman is not burdened in this respect. Similarly, at the time of wedding, woman receives gifts from her parents, as well as dowry from her husband. Thus, this difference in inheritance between man and woman is perfectly equitable.

Another abomination to women in Bible is that it gives this absurd directive that if a husband accuses his wife of a trespass against him but has no witnesses, she would be made to drink mixed bitter water, and if her belly swelled, she would be found accursed and guilty as accused (Numbers 5:12–31). Islam, in contrast, instructs that in case where a husband calumniates his wife but has no witnesses, both husband and wife should testify four times on oath as to their truthfulness and then invoke the curse of Allah if they be the liars (*Sūrah an-Nūr*, 24:7–10), and no injustice should be done to woman in this matter.

Before Islam, there was no limit set on the number of wives a man could have. Hence, Solomon is known to have several hundred wives (1 Kings 11:3). Islam, on the other hand, has emphasized there should be only one wife. It did permit up to four wives but only under exceptional circumstance and it was forbidden to have more than four:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَاتَّكِفُوا مِآطَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعًا ۚ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً

And if you fear that you, the society, may fail to do justice in matters concerning orphans in the aftermath of war then marry women of your choice two or three or four. And if you fear you will not deal justly, then marry only one (*Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:4).

One wife in Christianity: Before Islam, women had no right to get a divorce. Jesus said, 'What God has joined together, let not man put asunder' (Matthew 19:3-12). In contrast, the Holy Prophet gave equal right of divorce to men and women (*Bukhārī, Kitāb at-Talāq*, Chapter: Divorce initiated by a woman and its process, Tradition No. 4868). Today, in the laws of the Christian world men and women have been given equal right to divorce, but in this respect, the Christian world is following the teachings of Prophet Muhammad^{sas} and not that of Jesus which proves its equanimity and perfection.

In religions before Islam, a divorced woman was considered to be of a lower stature. Therefore, the Bible forbade the priests to marry a divorced woman (Leviticus 21:7); and Christianity also gave the edict that if a woman divorced her husband and married another during his lifetime, she would be committing adultery (Romans 7:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Islam did not impose any such stigma on divorced women. The Prophet^{sas} himself set an example by marrying Zainab bint Jaḥsh, a divorcee, and proved that a divorced woman was as respectful as any other woman. (*Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb at-Tā'mah*, Chapter: Regarding the recommendation for holding a wedding feast, Tradition No. 3252; *ibn Mājah*,

Kitābun Nikāh, Chapter on the wedding feast [waleemah], Tradition No. 1898)

Likewise the widows did not have the same status in Bible as the virgins. The priests were forbidden to marry the widows (Leviticus 12:24) and thus they were discriminated against. On the contrary, Islam has put great emphasis on marriage of widows:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنكُمْ

And marry widows from among you (*Sūrah an-Nūr*, 24:33);

And the Holy Prophet^{sas} had married Khadija^{ra} who was a widow and fifteen years senior in age (*Sīrat Ibn Hishām*).

Prior to Islam women did not have the right to marry on their own. They were married wherever their guardians wanted. The Bible is replete with such examples where women were married without their consent; the father was allowed even to sell his daughter (Exodus 21:7–11), or to marry her with someone as a reward (Judges 1:12; 1 Samuel 17:25), or to give away his daughter as wages for his services (Geneses 29:15–20); obviously it was the father who took all the advantage, and there was nothing for the daughter. In contrast, the Holy Prophet^{sas} made it essential to obtain consent of the bride for her marriage whether she was a virgin or widow or a divorcee. (*Bukhārī, Kitābun Nikāh*, Chapter: The father or guardian cannot give a virgin or matron in marriage without her consent, Tradition No. 4741; *Muslim, Kitābun Nikāh*, Chapter: Seeking permission of previously married woman by consent a virgin by silence, Tradition No. 2546; *Bukhārī, Kitābun*

Nikāh, Chapter: A man giving his daughter in marriage without her consent, the marriage is invalid, Tradition No. 4743)

In the same vein, dowry and its payment was made obligatory (*Bukhārī*, *Kitābun Nikāh*, Chapter: To give the dowry [to the woman] in the form of material goods, Tradition No. 4753; *Bukhārī*, *Kitāb ash-Sharūt*, Chapter: The terms and conditions of the dowry, Tradition No. 2520). And this money is received by the woman, not by her father or her guardian.

Summary Comparison of Teachings about Women

	ISSUE	BIBLE	QURAN
1	Man and woman	Woman created for man	Men and women have equal rights
2	Birth	Twice the uncleanness at the birth of daughter	No such discrimination
3	Woman in menses	Unclean, everything she touches is unclean	It is only a painful period
4	In religious matters	Woman cannot speak in church	No such restriction
5	Woman as a teacher	Cannot teach man	No such restriction
6	Woman's rights in inheritance	None if the deceased had a son	Right guaranteed in any case

	ISSUE	BIBLE	QURAN
7	Marriage to women	No limit, hundreds permitted	Only one, in exceptional cases up to four
8	Covering the head	Women must do so as the sign of her servitude	Both should do so as a symbol of honour and dignity
9	Divorce	No divorce lawful except in case of adultery	Permitted though discouraged
10	Divorce by a woman	Woman has no right	Woman has equal right to divorce
11	Consent in marriage	No provision	Prerequisite
12	Divorcee	Restrictions on her	No restrictions on her
13	Widow	Restriction on her	No restrictions on her

Spiritual Advancement of Man

The third dimension that we have selected for this comparison comprises of teachings concerning spiritual progress of man and his relation with God as contained in different religions. The beginning, the end and the pinnacle of every religion is obtaining nearness to God. However, the question arises how is it to be

achieved. Is it still possible to attain the ranks and results that were achievable in the past? Who can achieve this nearness? What are the methods to gain proximity to God? These are the questions that distinguish Islam from its preceding religions. In this context, acts of worship and religious practices also come under consideration because their objective is to bring man closer to God too.

Continuation of Revelation

We have already explained that earlier religions were limited in scope, therefore, they had assumed monopoly over God; and God's relationship with any people beside their own could have only an incidental mention. Islam was the first to affirm universality of God and the equality of all nations in the sight of God and the deliverance of His message to all nations of the world (*Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:37). It declared that it was equally possible for everyone to gain nearness to God (*Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, 49:14). This is the first difference between Islam and other religions that is obvious in this regard. But the real difference is in the continuation of this relationship between God and man. Islam teaches that any person, who wishes, can still advance in righteousness with the help of God and can establish a living relationship with God by so doing. Islam teaches that God listens to prayers (*Sūrah Ibrāhīm*, 14:40); but, unlike other religions, it does not stop there that God listens and accepts. Instead Islam tells us that not only God listens and accepts prayers; He also answers them today just as He did in the past (*Sūrah al-Mu'min*, 40:61). Islam claims that the blessing of revelation is still continuing. It also elaborates what are the

three different modes by which God communicates His response; namely, through clear verbal revelation; by showing dreams and visions; by veiled revelation (*Sūrah ash-Shūrā*, 42:52). This is the most effective method of assurance that encourages man. This is why there always have been individuals in Islam in every age with whom God spoke as He had spoken in the past with Moses and Jesus (peace be on them); and He provided the most convincing proof of His own existence by saying:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا

Verily, I am Allah; there is no God besides Me (*Sūrah Ṭā Hā*, 20:15).

In this age, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani^{as}, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, has claimed:

I will be guilty of doing great wrong to my fellow beings if I were not to declare at this stage that Divine bounty has bestowed upon me the status which I have just defined and has honoured me with the kind of converse the features of which I have just set out in detail, so that I should bestow sight upon the blind and should guide the seekers of the One Who has been so far lost, and should give to those who accept the truth the good news of the Holy Fountain of which many speak but which few find. (*The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 132, Islam International Publications Ltd., 1996)

This bounty of God is still continuing.

Essence of Religious Teachings

Every religion summarizes its teachings in a short formula to use it in its daily religious rituals and prayers. That brief prayer or credo reflects the religious doctrines, national aspirations, its intellectual prowess and its course of action. Therefore, it is essential to compare various religions from this perspective as well. For this purpose we have selected the 'Shema Yisrael' of Judaism, the prayer 'O our Heavenly Father!' of the Sermon on the Mount of Christianity, and *Sūrah al-Fāṭihah* of Islam. These are the passages that are recited at every occasion of worship, and the followers of these religions are enjoined to repeat them again and again.

Shema Yisrael is first mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:4–9 as follows:

Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

In Deuteronomy 13:13–21, the concept of reward and punishment is introduced if one loves or does not love God whole-heartedly. Lastly, in Numbers 15:37–41, the Jews were asked to make special

tassels on the corners of their garments to remember all the commandments of the LORD. Consequently, it teaches:

And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land and its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil (Deuteronomy 11:13).

The punishment is described in these words:

Take heed to yourselves, lest heart be deceived and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which Lord is giving you (Deuteronomy 11: 16–17).

These teachings make it clear that the stated attributes of God have no internal harmony with reference to the being of God; instead the Jews themselves are the focal point. All emphasis is on God being One, and on His reward and punishment. The reward and punishment are depicted purely in physical terms so much so that to love God shall be rewarded with wealth and worldly possessions. There is no indication concerning life after death. There is nothing that teaches to pray to seek God's help to gain something or avoid something.

The prayer described in the Sermon on the Mount holds central place in the Christian world. The prayer is as follows:

O Father in heaven, hallowed by Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen! (Matthew 6:9–13).

A study of this prayer shows us that it also is imperfect. It does not throw any light on the attributes of God. Materialistic and worldly considerations hold a central place here too, as it teaches to ask for daily bread! To forgive mistakes of others, the term used is ‘debt’. Among the attributes of God, He being the Father, King, Holy, Powerful and Glorious are mentioned, but it is not mentioned what is the link between them or what is the wisdom in their order. Instead of asking for something meritorious, only asking for safeguarding against a negative thing (that is evil) is taught.

When we compare Islam’s teachings with the above mentioned teachings, we observe an extraordinary difference. *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ
نَعْبُدُ وَ إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, The Gracious, the

Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help. Guide us in the right path—The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed *Thy* blessings, those who have not incurred displeasure, and those who have not gone astray.

In the beginning, Allah has described His four attributes that are the mother attributes. They are mentioned in a natural order, that is, in a matter-of-fact sequence in which they are manifested in this world. God's bounties descend upon the world in four manners, and the first one is incessantly continuous and overwhelming, covering every thing, that is, He creates out of nothingness and then develops everything into perfection. Therefore, in *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, in the very beginning God has put this bounty as His attribute of being the 'Lord of all the worlds'. Next, He mentions His attribute of being 'Gracious' towards His creation, an attribute that also comprehends everything. This attribute is gratuitously and extensively at work in all living things without regard to their effort or work. Under the blessing of this attribute, all living creatures receive their sustenance for life, are safeguarded from disasters, and have all their needs being met. In consequence, every living thing is provided what its nature requires, that is, whatever is its natural urge, there is a way to satisfy it, and no living thing is left out of this beneficence. The third type of grace pertains to special rewards and it is limited to those who make effort to purify their soul, make prayer, and concentrate on Allah. These are limited in the sense that these are conditional to appropriate hard work. This bounty is for those who seek God, and strive for it. Naturally, this attribute follows the unbounded Grace of God;

therefore, it is third in sequence. When all actions are done, then lastly their consequences come into play. Therefore, the attribute of God being the Master of the Day of Judgment is mentioned at the end. The beneficence covered by this special attribute is more specific, and it would come into full manifestation after termination of the world of cause and effect. Then, God's absolute Power would become totally apparent. The person on the receiving end would experience that in reality it is the Universal Master bestowing through His will and special authority an enormous reward and immense joy upon him. The recompense for his deeds is everlasting, exceedingly pure, superior, affable and delightful. As a result of it, God makes the person meet his objective. This attribute of God also rejects the Christian doctrine of atonement. Islam presents, through this attribute, the God who is more than merely being Just. He is the Master, and as such He has no restrictions imposed on Him that He should punish each and every sin. Being the Master, He has full authority to forgive and overlook the sins as He may deem appropriate. These four bountiful attributes of God are most eloquently described in *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* in the same sequence as they appear in the natural order of this world. Thus, God's Word is a perfect reflection of His Work, and the style of expression is such that every intelligent person can clearly see its full implementation in the composition of the universe.

By describing these four cardinal attributes, an outline of God is shown that Quran presents to the world and desires to get it accepted. By pondering over these attributes, one can see the face of God, and the soul prostrates before Him in ecstasy. That's the reason that in the beginning of this prayer God, the Exalted, is addressed in the form of a third person. However, thinking of

these four attributes brings God closer, as if we are present in front of Him. Hence, from this point on, the eloquence required that He should be addressed in the 2nd person. Therefore *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* ‘Thee alone do we worship, and Thee alone do we implore for help’ is grammatically in the second person. Thus, the verses are well-connected with the described attributes.

The above mentioned four attributes of God, the Exalted, and His personal name Allah are five oceans. The eloquence and the wondrous nature of the Quran are such that the five verses that follow are the recipients of the bounties of these five oceans. Every one of the five verses is a beneficiary of an attribute that is juxtaposed and akin to that verse. Each verse draws its meaning from the overriding relevant attribute.

The first ocean is ‘Allah,’ and *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* ‘Thee alone do we worship’ is juxtaposed to it. After presenting the true nature of worship, it is explained that the thirst in human nature can be quenched adequately only by drinking deep the water of worshipping God.

The second ocean is *رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ* ‘The Lord of all the worlds,’ and this portion has an explanatory connection with *إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* ‘Thee alone do we implore for help.’ A powerless servant of God anticipates His help by crying out to the Sustainer of all the worlds that He may assist him through His attribute of the Lordship of the entire universe. To be the Creator and Sustainer means that through this attribute nothing is left without the required nourishment, and it is taken to perfection.

The third ocean is *الرَّحْمَنِ* Graciousness that nurtures the verse *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* ‘Guide us in the right path.’ God’s Graciousness provides all that is needed to things that come into existence by

God's attribute of Creativeness. For this reason, the Graciousness comes after mentioning the Lordship of God.

The fourth ocean is the attribute of الرَّحِيمِ 'the Merciful' that addresses the sentence صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ 'The Path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings,' so that God's servant may enter into the fold of those who are specially blessed. Mercy is such an attribute that leads a person into the special group of obedient servants of God who are the sole recipients of exceptional rewards.

The fifth ocean is the attribute of مُلْكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ God being the Master of the Day of Judgment. It is connected with the expression غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ 'Those who have not incurred Thy displeasure, and those who have not gone astray,' because the reality of God's wrath and man going astray shall be fully realized only on the Judgment Day. On that Day, God shall appear in His full glory with His rewards and retributions, and He shall make His authority manifest by bestowing honour on people, or by disgracing them.

Without any doubt, this summary of the teachings of Islam is unique and new in its own right. It contains an introduction to the concept of God; His attributes are interconnected and sequentially arranged; significance of worship and prayer is brought to our attention; motivation to remain on the right path is given through promise of rewards, and fear of punishments is instilled for going astray. The prayer is not limited to something material either belonging to this life or the next life; it is inclusive of both and refers to rewards belonging to this world as well as Hereafter. The essence of Islam and all the fundamentals taught in the Quran are summarized in this *Sūrah* in a few words, and nothing is left out.

Prayer and Worship

What are the methods to win God's nearness and to reach that special status? All religions claim that good deeds and obeying His commandments bring a man close to God but along with this it is said that man is weak. Jesus also said: 'The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak' (Mark 14:38). As such, how should one act upon commandments of God and make the spiritual advancement so as establish a perfect communion with God? To this, no answer is given by Jesus or anyone else. Islam was the first to explain this process; and began the Quran with it that the source of all bounties is God; to purify from sinfulness, and to fill the heart up with His love, is the work of the Powerful and Almighty God; so beg of Him alone. It teaches this prayer: 'Guide us in the right path—the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings' (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:6). As a result, God Himself will grant you that strength with which you shall be able to act upon His commandments; and He Himself shall remove all your weaknesses and shortcomings. A detailed account of this subject as contained in this *Sūrah* has been given above and has been compared with the teachings contained in the Bible.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} brought vast and all-inclusive teachings about prayer. Not only did he insist to pray at every occasion and in every matter, he also informed in detail how to make supplications and what to say during prayers. He taught how to supplicate when mounting a ride, how to supplicate when about to fall asleep, how to supplicate on waking up, how to supplicate on seeing the new moon, how to supplicate when starting a task. It is so elaborate that there is no occasion in life for

which a prayer has not been taught. The disciples of Jesus were so uninformed concerning the philosophy and teachings of prayer that when they failed in their effort, they asked Jesus the reason for their failure, and he had to tell them that all difficult tasks are accomplished with prayer. In other words, they were not praying when it was required to pray. (Mark 9:29)

In addition to prayer, Islam has outlined a vast system covering the acts of worship. Earlier religions did not tell why worship was necessary, nor did their modes of worship have any logical cohesion or purpose. For example, the Christians congregate in church on Sunday to praise God; but why? Is it because they are commanded to do so? It is also worth reflection as to what is its purpose, besides being a virtuous act? And why is it important to congregate for this purpose? It is possible that Christian scholars may invent some answers for these questions on their own, but their religious sources are definitely silent in this regard. The silence is so comprehensive that Jesus did not say anything even about the essential components of worship; and all the rituals of service were developed by the church fathers themselves later on.

Islam has explained that the acts of worship are for man's own benefit. The very purpose of man's creation is worship—that he should remain engaged in true service to God (*Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt*, 51:57). For this, to seek help and strength from God, worship is needed and the essence of worship is prayer (*Sunan Tirmidhī*, Tradition No. 3293). As a result, man is cleansed of sins through worship. It is like bathing in a stream (*Ibn Mājah*, Tradition No. 1387). Moreover, it is made obligatory for man to remain thankful to God (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:153); and one of the means to do so is the formal prayer. In addition to general worship which can

be carried out at any time in the form of prayer, some segments of time were fixed at which worship and prayer were specifically enjoined. The Holy Founder of Islam demonstrated to Muslims, by performing all acts of worship himself, how to perform it. He appointed their times; taught them the etiquette of worship. Likewise, he gave detailed instructions concerning worship during exceptional conditions such as illness, journey, and harsh weather, etc. (see chapters on subject of prayer and worship in various collections of *Aḥādīth*.)

Prior to Islam, other religions had confined even the worship. As such, specific congregational worship cannot be conducted at every place. Specific locations such as churches, synagogues or temples are designated for them. Islam declared the entire earth as acceptable place for worship of God (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:14), (Bukhārī, Tradition No. 419).

Before Islam, specific persons were appointed to conduct religious services. In Judaism, the priests had to belong to the progeny of Aaron; and in Christianity only the priests ordained by the Church could lead the services. Islam widened the circle in this respect also and freed it from the monopoly of any particular family or pastoral hierarchy. Hence, any Muslim can lead the prayer, conduct a marriage or perform the funeral service.

Means to Achieve Communion with God

The Quran describes eight means through which man can attain access to God and reach the goal of his life. These are as follows:

To have the right knowledge of God, and to have faith in the

true God, because an imaginary or a dead god cannot bestow any benefit on man. The Holy Quran has explicitly described this means in great detail. Unlike other religions, it does not suspend any of God's attributes, nor does it ascribe any imperfection or shortcoming in His person.

Love of God that comes by observing God's beauty and elegance. Beauty attracts man to itself, that's why the Quran has given a detailed description of God's attributes so that man may become aware of His sublime attributes. Unlike earlier religions, Islam does not restrict God's love of his creation to any specific nation.

To consider God's favours: other than beauty, benevolence is also such a thing that attracts man. That's why the Quran has described, in detail, God's favours to man that are innumerable and start even before his birth.

Prayer: To find God, one needs God's help. For this, prayer is an effective means. This method has been discussed above in some detail.

Endurance and Sacrifice: Another method for gaining nearness to God is striving hard and making sacrifices in His way. In this are included spending in the path of God and such other endeavours like fasting, pilgrimage, etc.

Perseverance: It is another means which is essential to achieve the real objective of life. Those who move towards God have to go through arduous trials and tribulations; and those who persevere succeed in the end.

Company of the Righteous: Another way to attain God's closeness described is the company of the righteous; because man

is in need of role models to follow and he learns and reforms himself by observing others.

Communication from God: The eighth means is God's communication that one receives in the form of revelations, dreams and visions. They assure him as to the accuracy of the path for his journey towards God, and enhance his hope and eagerness and enthusiasm.

Spiritual Conditions of Man and Guidance About Progress in Them

After discussing the means to attain God's nearness, it is essential to know different phases that one has to pass through so that he is aware of the stage of his journey and knows how much passage is left to be traversed. Awareness of the distance covered encourages him to move forward with greater enthusiasm and fervour and also gives him the feeling of humility and humbleness.

THE HOLY QURAN DESCRIBES THREE BASIC STATES OF MAN

Natural State: Its source is *Nafs-e-Ammārah*, the self that incites to evil. In this state man is basically removed from justice, and is tempted towards all sorts of evils, sins and errors. At this stage, he follows his natural instincts and immediate needs, and does not care for any moral discipline.

Moral State: Its source is *Nafs-e-Lawwāmāh*, the self-reproaching self. It gives birth to sense of morality in man, and

his Self rebukes him on committing any vice and makes him feel ashamed and he tries to redeem his mistakes.

Spiritual State: The Quran calls its source as *Nafs-e-Muṭma'innah*, the soul at rest. This is the final state. At this stage man's heart is fully content, and he starts flying fast towards God. He abhors all sin, and performs all that is good and righteous.

These three states are well connected with each other, and for the same reason the Holy Quran has provided guidance for all of these states in full detail. Therefore, the basic moral teachings related to eating and drinking, living, marriage, etiquette and fundamental ethical behaviour in daily life are taught, so that a person may enter the moral state. In addition, the Quran has given instructions for every occasion in life and some of them have already been discussed above. In this state, a person observes high morals at appropriate occasions, and becomes a good and well-behaved moral being. Then he advances to the spiritual state of *Nafs-e-Muṭma'innah*—the Soul at Rest—through constant efforts. At this final stage, his soul flows towards God naturally. The Quran gives guidance even for this condition so that man may seek further spiritual enhancement. Thus Islam's spiritual teachings makes a person a man of God, an image of God, the one who is lost in God.

Summary Comparison of Spiritual Teachings

	ISSUE	BIBLE	QURAN
1	Nearness to God	Only for Jews or Christians	For all human beings alike
2	Purpose of Prayer	To praise God	Seeking God's nearness
3	Purpose of Life	Unclear	Worship of God
4	Means for attaining the purpose of life	No Guidance	Prayer
5	Revelation	Ended in the past	Ongoing and continuous
6	Prayer	Vague teachings	Explicit with its philosophy
7	Worship	Limited in time and place	All times, at all places
8	Religious leaders	Specific persons	Open for everyone
9	Means to reach God	Imperfect guidance	Detailed directions
10	Spiritual status	Imperfect description	Explicit with its philosophy

In short, be it religious beliefs, the deeds or issues concerning spirituality, the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} is new in every respect. The special characteristics of this teaching

is that it is universal, for all nations, and for all times. Similarly all deficiencies and defects of previous religions have been eliminated. This teaching provides detailed and comprehensive guidance to man for every contingency.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community says:

For a seeker after truth, in order to compare the current religions and then to recognize a true religion, it is necessary to look at three matters. In the first place, one must see what is the teachings of a religion concerning God... Secondly, it is necessary that a seeker after truth should inquire what does a religion teach with regard to his own self and with regard to human conduct... Thirdly, it is necessary for a seeker after truth to satisfy himself that the God presented by a religion is not an imaginary God who is believed in on the basis of tales and stories and who is like a corpse... Hence, if anyone finds a religion superior than others by these three criteria, it shall be obligatory on him to accept that religion. (*Nasīm-e-Da'wat*, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 19, pp. 373–374)

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Please note that, in the translation that follows, words given in parentheses () are the words of the Promised Messiah^{as}. If any explanatory words or phrases are added by the translators for the purpose of clarification, they are put in square brackets []. Footnotes given by the publisher are marked '[Publisher]'.

References to the Holy Quran contain the name of the *sūrah* [i.e. chapter] followed by a chapter:verse citation, e.g. *sūrah al-Jumu'ah*, 62:4, and counts *Bismillāhbir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm* [In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful] as the first verse in every chapter it appears.

The following abbreviations have been used:

ṣas *ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, meaning 'peace and blessings of Allah be upon him', is written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{ṣas}.

as *'alaihis-salām*, meaning 'may peace be upon him', is written after the names of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{ṣas}.

- ra *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu/‘anhā/‘anhum*, meaning ‘may Allah be pleased with him/her/them’, is written after the names of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} or of the Promised Messiah^{as}.
- rta *raḥmatullāh ‘alaihi/‘alaihā/‘alaihim*, meaning ‘may Allah shower His mercy upon him/her/them’, is written after the names of those deceased pious Muslims who are not Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} or of the Promised Messiah^{as}.
- aba *ayyadahullāhu Ta‘ālā binaṣrihil-‘Azīz*, meaning ‘may Allah the Almighty help him with His powerful support’, is written after the name of the present head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V.

Readers are urged to recite the full salutations when reading the book. In general, we have adopted the following system established by the Royal Asiatic Society for our transliteration.

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a*, *i*, *u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word *honour*.
- ث *th* – pronounced like *th* in the English word *thing*.
- ح *h* – a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.
- خ *kh* – pronounced like the Scottish *ch* in *loch*.
- ذ *dh* – pronounced like the English *th* in *that*.
- ص *ṣ* – strongly articulated *s*.

- ض *d* – similar to the English *th* in *this*.
 ط *t* – strongly articulated palatal *t*.
 ظ *z* – strongly articulated *z*.
 ع ‘ – a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.
 غ *gh* – a sound similar to the French *r* in *grasseye*, and to the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the ‘gargling’ position to pronounce it.
 ق *q* – a deep guttural *k* sound.
 ء ’ – a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by:

- a* for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ (like *u* in *bud*).
i for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ (like *i* in *bid*).
u for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ (like *oo* in *wood*).

Long vowels by:

- \bar{a} for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ or $\bar{\text{—}}$ (like *a* in *father*).
 \bar{i} for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ or $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ (like *ee* in *deep*).
 \bar{u} for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ (like *oo* in *root*).

Other vowels by:

- ai* for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ (like *i* in *site*).
au for $\overset{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ (resembling *ou* in *sound*).

The consonants not included in the above list have the same

phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe. As noted above, the single quotation mark ‘ is used for transliterating ع which is distinct from the apostrophe ’ used for ء .

We have not transliterated some Arabic words which have become part of English language, e.g. Islam, Quran, Hadith, Mahdi, jihad, Ramadan, and ummah. The Royal Asiatic Society’s rules of transliteration for names of persons, places, and other terms, are not followed throughout the book as many of the names contain non-Arabic characters and carry a local transliteration and pronunciation style.

GLOSSARY

Aḥmadi A member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at. Plural is Aḥmadīs.

Aḥmadīs *see* Aḥmadi.

Aḥmadiyya The Divinely appointed name for the Muslim Community established by the Prophet of the Latter Days. The root, Ahmad, is based on a proper name of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Āmīn A term which literally means, 'so be it' and is used at the end of a supplication to pray that God may accept it. It is similar in meaning to 'amen'.

Anṣār Lit. 'Helpers'. Title accorded to the Muslims of Madinah who welcomed the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} upon his migration; *pl.* of Nāṣir.

Aḥādīth Plural of hadith.

Ḥaḍrat A term of respect used to show honour and reverence for a person of established righteousness and piety. Meaning include his/her Holiness, Worship, Eminence. It is also used for God in the superlative sense.

Ḥaq-Mahr The money [or gift] a husband either gives or promises to give to his wife; it is announced at the time of marriage.

Imām The Arabic word for a leader.

Jalsa Sālāna Annual convention or gathering.

Jamā'at 'Community'. Refers here to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Jihād The literal meaning of this word is "striving". The term is used to mean self-purification as well as religious wars in some instances.

Jizya A tax paid in lieu of military service by non-Muslims living in a Muslim State.

Ka'ba House of God in Makkah.

Khalifah Caliph is derived from the Arabic word *khalīfah*, which means 'successor'. In Islamic terminology, the term righteous *khalīfah* is applied to each of the first four *khulafā'* who continued the mission of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad^{sas}, the Holy Prophet of Islam. Aḥmādī Muslims refer to a successor of the Promised Messiah^{as} as Khalīfatul-Masīḥ. *pl. Khulafā'.*

Khalīfatul-Masīḥ *see* Khalifah.

Khilāfat The institution of succession in Islam

Mahdī 'The guided one.' This is the title given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} to the awaited Reformer of the Latter Days.

Maulawī 'My master'. Used for Muslim religious clerics. Plural is Maulawīs.

Maulawīs *see* Maulawī.

Mujāhid One who strives in the cause of faith.

Mullahs Plural of Mullah. A Mullah is a Muslim religious cleric.

Nafs A term in Arabic that literally means 'self'.

Quraish The leading tribe in Makkah during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}, who also belonged to the Quraish. They were also the most bitter in opposition to the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Quran The final and perfect Scripture revealed by Allah for the guidance of mankind for all times to come. It was revealed word-by-word to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} over a period of twenty-three years.

Raḥīm Means that Allah rewards good actions with gracious rewards and does not let anyone's efforts go waste. On account of this attribute, Allah is called *Raḥīm* and this attribute is called *Raḥīmīyyat*.

Raḥmān Means that before the coming into being of creatures and their actions, out of Allah's pure grace and in consequence of no action of anyone, He makes provision for the comfort of everyone; as for instance, He made the sun and the earth and all other things for our use before any action proceeded from us. This bounty is called in the Book of God *Raḥmānīyyat*, and on account of this attribute, God Almighty is called *Raḥmān*.

Raḥmāniyyat *see Raḥmān.*

Raḥīmiyyat *see Raḥīm.*

Shariah Islamic religious law

Sūrah A chapter of the Holy Quran.

Taqwā A term in Arabic that literally means 'righteousness'.

Zakāt 'That which purifies'. One of the five pillars of Islam; also referred to as almsgiving.

