

Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan attending the marriage procession of his eldest son Dara Shikoh

*In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful
There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is messenger of Allah*

ISLAMIC SOCIETY & CULTURE

Ethics, Human Rights, Adornments & Recreation

By Aftab Khan



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Foreword

The society & culture based upon Islamic principles is not the society of ascetics and hermits. Adornments, recreation and fine arts within limits of morality and decency are also for enjoyment of believers. Ethics and human rights are accorded high priority. Many such aspects projected as 'Dilemma' are nothing but 'Delusions'. Allah says:

*"Say: Who hath forbidden the adornment of God **ذِينَةَ اللَّهِ** which He has brought forth for His devotees, and the good things of His providing? Say: "All these things are for the enjoyment of the believers in the life of this world though shared by others; but these shall be exclusively theirs on the Day of Resurrection. Thus do We make Our revelations clear for those who understand. Say: The things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to God for which he hath given no authority; and saying things about God of which you have no knowledge."(Qur'an;7:32-33).*

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Islamic Society & Culture

Ethics, Human Rights, Adornments & Recreation

Introduction:

A group of human beings broadly distinguished from other groups by mutual interests, participation in characteristic relationships, shared institutions, and a common culture, is known to form a society. Broadly the society encompasses the totality of social relationships among human beings. The most common feature of human behavior is its dealing with questions such as: How should we live? Is it justified to kill someone who disagrees with your beliefs? Can we justify living in opulence while elsewhere in the world people are starving? Is it right to be dishonest in a good cause? What are our obligations to the other creatures with whom we share this planet and to the generations of humans who will come after us? The answers may be found through considering the fundamental issues for practical

decision making, and the major concerns include the nature of ultimate value and the standards by which human actions can be judged right or wrong. Hence the discipline dealing with: what is good and bad; moral duties, obligations, a set of moral principles or values, the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group is termed as 'Ethic', emphasized by most religions, especially in Islam.

While human work can not be perfect, the divine guidance, holding rational appeal to the human, is the only reliable source of ethics in the absolute sense of this word, which, in its turn, implies that the Last Testament, Qur'an is the ultimate source of all God-willed ethical and moral values, and thus an unchanging criterion of good and evil. (Qur'an;16:90, 98-105). Islam is not a racial faith, it believes in equality of human race, the only criteria of superiority of one over other is righteousness: (Qur'an;49:13). The motive force in Islamic ethics is the notion; "enjoin the good and forbid the evil"

(Qur'an;9:112, 22:41, 3:104) in all spheres of life (Qur'an;3:110). The Qur'an defines and sets the standards of social and moral values for Muslims at many places. Islam teaches nobler ethics for individuals and nations. A fine code of individual and social ethics, a ladder of spiritual development, open to all, the virtues of the true servants of God mentioned in Qur'an;25:63-75. The sacred duty of fulfilling all obligations of every kind, to Muslims and non Muslims, in public as well as private life, is a cardinal feature of Muslim ethics. Islam covers all aspects encompassing social, moral, public, business, trade and international relations preserved in Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). Family life and relations with other humans has an important position in the Islamic society; Islam strictly forbids adultery, homosexuality and other immoral acts. The equality and dignity of humanity was restored through a gradual process.

Islam emphasizes moderation and balance in every sphere. The society based upon Islamic

principles is not the society of ascetics and hermits, adornments of God, **ذينة الله**, recreation and enjoyment within limits of morality and decency are permissible. Ethics and human rights are accorded high priority. Many such aspects are projected as 'Dilemma' are nothing but 'Delusion'.

Islamic culture:

It is a contentious term. Muslims live in many different countries and communities, and it can be difficult to isolate points of cultural unity among Muslims, besides their adherence to the religion of Islam. Anthropologists and historians nevertheless study Islam as an aspect of, and influence on, culture in the regions where the religion is predominant. Islamic culture is a term primarily used in secular academia to describe the cultural practices common to historically Islamic peoples. As the religion of Islam originated in 7th century Arabia, the early forms of Muslim culture were predominantly Arab. With the rapid expansion of the Islamic empires,

Muslim culture has influenced and assimilated much from the Persian, Bangladeshi, Turkic, Pakistani, Mongol, Chinese, Indian, Malay, Somali, Berber, Egyptian, Indonesian, Filipino, Greek-Roman Byzantine, Spanish, Sicilian, Balkanic and Western cultures. Hence some of the cultural practices adopted by local Muslims like circumcision of females in some Arab & African countries, honour killing for marriage by choice, denying inheritance to women etc cannot be termed as Islamic culture but they are local in nature. Any cultural practice with the broad parameters of Islam are acceptable others rejected.

What Islam expects from the Muslims

- To inhere in their best civilization and matchless culture in a manner that they surpass all the civilized nations of the world. They should be the most prosperous of all as far as the different branches of knowledge are concerned. Invite the humanity towards Islam, by conveying the message with wisdom,

peacefully, in a logical and convincing way. They should argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.

- Not to kill the innocent people of any faith (including own self, through suicide) except by law, they don't have to create mischief on earth by creating anarchy or disturbing the peaceful coexistence. Warfare against injustice and oppression and self defence is permissible, to be declared by the Islamic State but the rules lay down for its conduct by Shari'a (Islamic Law) be strictly adhered to. Those who surrender or do not fight or remain neutral are not to be disturbed. The prisoners are to protected and provided peace and security.
- To use the right of retaliation to any injustice or oppression with equality, not exceeding the limits forgiveness and patience is however preferable.
- To fulfill all bilateral and international accords for peace and stability of humanity. To treat all

members of society with equality fairness and justice.

- Non Muslims in the Islamic society enjoy complete protections and freedom to practice their faith. The places of worship of other religions are to be protected.
- Islam does not demand form a Muslim to give up the world altogether.
- Nor does it require one to make the mosque a permanent abode, never to leave it. Islam also does not insist that one should live in a cave and spend his whole life there Not at all

The Political Philosophy of Islam:

In Islam the Sovereignty belongs to Allah, the power is exercised by the ruler, elected or chosen by Muslims through consultation (Shura) as representative (Khalifah) through Shari'a [Islamic law]. The Islamic political and social philosophy is based on the belief that all spheres of life, spiritual, social, political, and economic form an indivisible unity that must be thoroughly imbued with Islamic justice, ethics

and values. This ideal forms such concepts as "Islamic law" and the "Islamic state" and accounts for Islam's strong emphasis on social life and social duties. Even the cardinal religious duties prescribed in the five pillars of Islam have clear social implications therefore; religious authorities have had considerable political influence in the Muslim societies. Because the mission of the community is to "enjoin good and forbid evil" so that "there is no mischief and corruption" on earth. The Islamic system of government is based on consultation (Shura), equal justice, freedom of expression, and serving the interest of the community. A government that does not serve and protect the interests of the community is not Islamic even if it professes to believe in Islam and its system and values. [For details refer to book 'Khilafat: Redundant or Relevant?' <http://wp.me/PCgrB-IS>]

The Cardinal Principle of Peaceful Coexistence:

Today we are living in a Global Village; the humanity has to learn to live in peace as good neighbors by tolerating the divergent views of members of other Faiths. The Bible and Qur'an are unanimous:“.. Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself..”.[Matthew 22:39-40, similarly Leviticus 19:18],“..be good to your parents, kinfolks, orphans, the helpless, near and far neighbors who keep company with you..” [Qur'an;4:36]. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned that; "The Angel Gabriel has reminded me so often of the rights of a neighbor until I began to think that a neighbor may have a claim to inheritance."[Sunnah Abu Dawood.2446]. "Prophet said: You like for the people what you like for yourself, and you dislike for them what you dislike for yourself."[Al-Tirmidhi Hadith,11, 1334]. Islam brought revolutionary changes to restore human dignity, some mentioned here.

CHAPTER-1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

Abolition of Slavery:

Slavery - International System: When the message of Islam was preached, slavery was a very common practice in all-human societies, it was an international system. The Greeks, Romans, the ancient Germans whose legal and social institutions have mostly influenced the modern world, recognized and practiced all kinds of slavery, praedial servitude as well as household slavery. Slaves were generated in many ways, probably the most frequent and common was their capture in war, either by design, as a form of incentive to warriors, or as an accidental by-product, as a way of disposing of enemy troops or civilians. Other methods of slavery was kidnapping through slave-raiding or piracy expeditions. Many slaves were the offspring of slaves. Some people were enslaved as a punishment for crime or debt; others were sold into slavery by their parents, other relatives, or even spouses, sometimes to satisfy debts, sometimes to escape starvation. A variant on

the selling of children was the exposure, either real or fictitious, of unwanted children, who were then rescued by others and made slaves. Another source of slavery was self-sale, undertaken sometimes to obtain an elite position, sometimes to escape destitution. Although slavery existed almost everywhere, it seems to have been especially important in the development of two of the world's major civilizations, Western (including ancient Greece and Rome) and later Islamic civilization. There was no escape from this system where it had to be applied on the basis of 'an eye for an eye,' until the world could get rid of that system and replace it with something that does not involve enslaving anyone.

Slavery among Hebrews and Christianity:

Slavery as it existed under the Mosaic Law has no modern parallel. That law did not originate but only regulated the already existing custom of slavery: "As for your male and female slaves whom you may have: you may buy male and

female slaves from among the nations that are round about you. You may also buy from among the strangers who sojourn with you and their families that are with you, who have been born in your land; and they may be your property. You may bequeath them to your sons after you, to inherit as a possession for ever; you may make slaves of them, but over your brethren the people of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with harshness.”(Leviticus 25:44-46). (also Exodus;21:20-21,26-27; Joshua;9:6-27). The gospel in its spirit and genius is hostile to slavery in every form, which under its influence is gradually disappearing from among men. The Hebrews practiced two forms of slavery, the Israelites and non Israelite slaves. The Israelites were enslaved in bondage as a punishment of a crime or to clear debt, legally they could gain freedom after six years of servitude. The non Israelites captured in wars or purchased were not entitled to gain freedom and were maltreated. Christianity as a religion did not oppose slavery. Except general advice to the

masters to give due to the servants, the teachings of Jesus did not express disapproval of slavery. Christianity did nothing to eliminate slavery, even the Church held slaves and considered it to be a lawful system. The cruel treatment of locals & slaves in America is well known.



Gradual Elimination of Slavery by Islam:

Islam does not approve of slavery. Islamic legislation includes a variety of ways to ensure the reduction and eventual eradication of slavery. As the atonement for many offenses, granting freedom to a slave in addition to repentance was made obligatory. A portion of Zakah funds (Charitable donations) was also used to help anyone who could buy his own freedom in return for a sum of money, which he would pay to his master. Alternatively, slaves would be bought with Zakah funds and then set free by the Muslim authorities. According to Qur'an: "- - - Alms- - -For the freeing of people in bondage - - -This is a duty ordained by Allah, and Allah is All-knowing, Wise."(Qur'an;9:60). The institution of slavery was discouraged and the owners and other people were enjoined to give financial help to the slaves to earn their freedom under the law of Mukatabat and marriage with virtuous slaves. Allah says in Qur'an: "..And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing (to enable them to earn their

freedom for a certain sum) give them such a deed if ye know any good in them; yea give them something yourselves out of the means which Allah has given to you..."(Qur'an;24:33). "Marry those among you who are single or the virtuous ones among your slaves male or female.."(Qur'an;24:32).

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar; The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "There are three types of people whose prayer is not accepted by Allah: One who goes in front of people when they do not like him; a man who comes dibaran, which means that he comes to it too late; and a man who takes into slavery an emancipated male or female slave."(Sunan of Abu-Dawood Hadith 593). "A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said to him: 'Guide me to a deed that makes me close to Heaven and far from Hell.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Free a person and redeem a slave.' " (Fiqh-us-Sunnah Fiqh 3.67). Narrated by Abu Huraira; The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save

all the parts of his body from the (Hell) Fire as he has freed the body-parts of the slave." Said bin Marjana said that he narrated that Hadith to 'Ali bin Al-Husain and he freed his slave for whom 'Abdullah bin Ja'far had offered him ten thousand Dirhams or one-thousand Dinars.(Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith, 3.693). Narrated by Al Marur bin Suwaid; I saw Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak. We asked him about that (i.e. how both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied, "Once I abused a man and he complained of me to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked me, 'Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?' He added, 'Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do

so, help them (in their hard job)."(Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith, 3.721).

Like the nuisance of Riba (Usury), in the present time, the evil of slavery was so much ingrained in the society that its elimination had to come gradually as Muslim society developed. There was an important reason for that, which is to help slaves cope with their new status. Had Islam issued an order to free all slaves straightaway, that would have created social chaos, as many would not have been able to cope. This happened in the US when slavery was abolished by law. Many former slaves went back to their masters to serve them, because they could not earn a living without them. The Islamic approach to the eradication of slavery is a better one. However, the slavery continued in Muslim societies for much longer than what could have been expected because of historical and continuation of international slavery.

Views of Non Muslims Scholar: The renowned Orientalist Annemarie Schimmel in the book titled "Islam: An Introduction" has

comprehensively summarized the Slavery in Islam; “Slavery was not abolished by the Koran, but believers are constantly admonished to treat their slaves well. In case of illness a slave has to be looked after and well cared for. To free (manumit) a slave is highly meritorious; the slave can ransom himself by paying some of the money he has earned while conducting his own business. Only children of slaves or non-Muslim prisoners of war can become slaves, never a freeborn Muslim; therefore slavery is theoretically doomed to disappear with the expansion of Islam. The entire history of Islam proves that slaves could occupy any office, and many former military slaves, usually recruited from among the Central Asian Turks, became military leaders and often even rulers as in eastern Iran, India (the Slave Dynasty of Delhi), and medieval Egypt (the Mamluks).”

Prohibition of Riba (Usury):

History of Usury in Judaism & Christianity:

In modern law usury, is the practice of charging an illegal rate of interest for the loan of money. In Old English law, the taking of any compensation whatsoever was termed usury. With the expansion of trade in the 13th century, however, the demand for credit increased, necessitating a modification in the definition of the term. Except for Geneiss;23:9, Jeremiah;32:10, and Ruth; 4:8, Scripture makes no reference to transaction procedures. Interest is however prohibited in Bible: “Take no interest from him or increase, but fear your God; that your brother may live beside you. You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit.”(Leviticus;25:39-37 also Deuteronomy; 23:19-20). The violation of this law was viewed as a great crime (Psalms;15:5; Peter; 28:8; Jeremiah; 15:10). After the Return, and later, this law was much neglected (Nehemiah; 5:7,10). The Jews consider that

usury is prohibited with in Jews and that they could charge interest from gentiles: “Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.”(Deuteronomy;23:20). Thus the Jews became to be known as money lenders, hated by the masses in Europe due to their exploitation by Jews who charged the interest at exorbitant rates. In the Middle Ages the Christian Church attempted to enforce certain moral commands adverse to commercial transactions. The taking of interest for loans of money was considered income without true work and, therefore, sinful and prohibited. There was also an attempt to generalize the idea of a just price. Although both rules, and especially the former, influenced the law and the economy for centuries, neither of them finally prevailed in the secular world. The growth of finances, industry, and land estate ruled the rabbis to develop laws concerning contracts,

partnerships, and legal arrangements to circumvent the biblical prohibition against usury. A series of modes of transaction effecting the transfer and acquisition of property evolved. Usury then was applied to exorbitant or unconscionable interest rates. In 1545 England fixed a legal maximum interest; any amount in excess of the maximum was usury. The practice of setting a legal maximum on interest rates later was followed by most states of the United States and most other Western nations.

Prohibition of Riba in Islam:

Defining Usury (Riba): Riba (literally 'usury' or 'interest') is prohibited in Islam, for the principle is that any profit sought should be through own exertions and at our own expense, not through exploiting other people or at their expense. The Arabic term Riba is considered synonymous to 'usury' which has been defined in the writings of a number of very early Muslim scholars, it may help to understand its broader meanings. In his commentary on the Qur'an, Imam Al-Razi says:

"The usury based on time delay was the type commonly practiced in pre-Islamic days. A man would lend another person some money for a specified term stipulating that he would charge him a specified amount every month while the principal amount remained intact. When the agreed time arrived, the lender would request repayment. If the borrower cannot pay, he increases the monthly payment and the time of the loan." Al-Jassas says: "It is well known that usury in pre-Islamic days was simply a loan given for an appointed time with a stipulated increase. That increase compensated for delay. This is prohibited by Allah." Mujahid says: "In pre-Islamic days, when a man had borrowed money from another, he would come to him and say: I will pay you so and so if you allow me a longer period for repayment." Qatadah says: "The usury practiced in pre-Islamic days took the form of a sale made for a specified term. When payment is due and the buyer does not have the money to pay the seller, he agrees to pay him extra in return for a postponement."

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal defines usury in the same terms, saying: "If a man had lent money to another and the time of repayment was due, the lender would say to the borrower: You either pay me now or increase the amount to be paid. If he does not settle the debt then and there, one agrees to increase the amount and the other extends the time for repayment." All these definitions agree on the nature of usury. It is financial compensation for time delay. This is what is known as "increase in lieu of time extension." All scholars and all Muslim schools of thought are unanimous that this type of Riba is strictly forbidden. However as regards to the other explanations of Riba (Usury) there is room for difference of opinion. 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, (2nd rightly guided Caliph) according to Ibn Kathir, felt some difficulty in the matter, as the Apostle left this world before the details of the question were settled. Riba (Usury) was one of the three questions on which he wished he had more light from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Muslim scholars, ancient and modern,

have worked out a great body of literature on Riba, based mainly on economic conditions as they existed at the rise of Islam.

Increase in Lieu of Quality:

There is another type of Riba, which is known as "increase in lieu of quality". This takes the form of exchanging two quantities of the same kind, such as dates for dates, wheat for wheat, rice for rice. A person may offer 1.5 kilogram of dates or wheat or rice, etc. in return for one kilogram of the same type but of higher quality. There is no doubt that there may be several types of the same produce and their qualities differ immensely. Prices could range from the very cheap to the very expensive, with the latter being two or three or four times as much as the price of the former. It is conceivable that people would like to barter some of their produce for a smaller amount of a higher quality type. But this again is forbidden in Islam as evident from Hadith of Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him); Narrated by Abu Said al Khudri: Once Bilal

brought Barni (i.e. a kind of dates) to the Prophet and the Prophet asked him, "From where have you brought these?" Bilal replied, "I had some inferior type of dates and exchanged two Sa's (measurement of weight) of it for one Sa of Barni dates in order to give it to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to eat." Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Beware! Beware! This is definitely Riba! This is definitely Riba! Don't do so, but if you want to buy (a superior kind of dates) sell the inferior dates for money and then buy the superior kind of dates with that money." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith 3.506). Narrated by Ibn Umar: At an other occasion the Prophet (peace be upon him) said; "The selling of wheat for wheat is Riba except if it is handed from hand to hand and equal in amount. Similarly the selling of barley for barley, is Riba except if it is from hand to hand and equal in amount, and dates for dates is usury except if it is from hand to hand and equal in amount. (Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith 3.379).

Modern Banking Transactions:

While there are some differences between such usurious practices and banking transaction in today's world; but there are also essential similarities. In a loan obtained from a bank, a borrower pays a regular amount of interest, which does not affect the principal. This is similar to the practice of pre-Islamic days when a borrower used to pay every month a certain sum to the lender, while the principal remained the same. Moreover, in a banking transaction, when the loan is repaid over a longer period of time, the amount of interest charged is also higher, although its rate may remain the same.

Strict Prohibition of Riba in Qur'an:

It should be well understood that there is no case of prohibition stated in the Qur'an more forcefully than the prohibition of Riba. Allah warns the believers that they must desist from practicing usury or they would face a war declared on them by Allah and His messenger (peace be upon him): "O You who believe! Fear

Allah and waive what is still due to you from usury if you are indeed believers; or war shall be declared against you by Allah and His Apostle. If you repent, you may retain your principal, causing no loss to debtor and suffering no loss.”(Qur’an;2:278-279). However some eminent scholars have argued that banking transactions and the system of interest is different from Riba as called in Islam (?)

The Islamic law of transactions as a whole is dominated by the doctrine of prohibition of Riba. Basically, this is the prohibition of usury, but the notion of Riba was rigorously extended to cover, and therefore preclude, any form of interest on a capital loan or investment. And since this doctrine was coupled with the general prohibition on gambling transactions, Islamic law does not, in general, permit any kind of speculative transaction the results of which, in terms of the material benefits accruing to the parties, cannot be precisely forecast. The charging of interest is strongly prohibited according to Qur’an; “Those who devour usury

will not stand except as stands one whom the Evil One by his touch hath driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury but Allah hath permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord desist shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah (to judge); but those who repeat (the offence) are companions of the fire: they will abide therein (for ever)".(Qur'an;2:275). "Allah will deprive usury of all blessing but will give increase for deeds of charity: for He loveth not creatures ungrateful and wicked."(Qur'an;2:276). "That which ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people will have no increase with Allah: but that which ye lay out for charity seeking the Countenance of Allah (will increase): it is these who will get a recompense multiplied."(Qur'an;30:39). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reemphasized the abolishment of usury in his Last Sermon at Hajj, he said;" All usury transactions, which have been made in the past days of ignorance, are

hereby abrogated. You may claim only your capital, neither inflicting nor suffering any injustice. Allah has decreed that no usury is permissible. The first usury transactions I abrogate are those of my uncle, Al-Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib,”. In some Muslim countries efforts are being made to replace the ‘Interest’ with Islamic compliant substitutes.

Interpretations of Riba:

Owing to the fact that interest occupies a central position in modern economic life, and specially since interest is the very life blood of the existing financial institutions, a number of Muslims have been inclined to interpret it in a manner which is radically different from the understanding of Muslim scholars through last fourteen centuries and is also sharply in conflict with the categorical statements of the Prophet (peace be on him). According to Islamic teachings any excess on the capital is Riba (interest). Islam accepts no distinction, in so far as prohibition is concerned, between reasonable and exorbitant

rates of interest, and thus what came to be regarded as the difference between usury and interest; nor between returns on bonus for consumption and those for production purposes and so on. Hence the Islamic mode of Riba free banking, is gaining popularity. In Islam the basic principles of the law are laid down in the four root transactions of (1) Sale (bay'), transfer of the ownership or corpus of property for a consideration; (2) Hire (ijarah), transfer of the usufruct (right to use) of property for a consideration; (3) Gift (hibah), gratuitous transfer of the corpus of property, and (4) Loan ('ariyah), gratuitous transfer of the usufruct of property. These basic principles are then applied to the various specific transactions of, for example, pledge, deposit, guarantee, agency, assignment, land tenancy, partnership, and waqf foundations. Waqf is a peculiarly Islamic institution whereby the founder relinquishes his ownership of real property, which belongs henceforth to Allah, and dedicates the income or usufruct of the property

in perpetuity to some pious or charitable purpose.

Inflation:

Inflation is the very real problem, which makes it difficult for anyone to advance money to another for a period of time without making a loss on transaction. That not only applies to a loan given to another person, but also to money kept in a current account, which pays no interest. Any form of saving which does not give returns, is a losing value because of inflation. There must be no injustice, perpetrated or suffered. That is the divine order stated clearly in the Qur'an: "You shall inflict no injustice and shall suffer none."(Qur'an;2:279), "O my people! Give full measure and weight in all fairness. Do not defraud people of their goods and do not spread mischief in the land."(Qur'an;11:85). All this requires thorough study so that scholars are able to come up with answers to present-day problems, instead of applying the rulings of earlier scholars to later problems. Using interest

to offset the decrease in money value caused by inflation has some merit. Here the purpose is to maintain the real value of what a person has. The question is whether it is permissible to do that or not? This is a very difficult question and scholars have not come up with a definitive ruling on this point. The problem will remain until a satisfactory answer is found to ensure fairness to investor, lender and borrower, without exploitation.

Divergent Opinions:

There are scholars who argue that fixing a guaranteed rate of returns in advance is acceptable because it protects the interest of the individual investor. The rector of Al-Azhar has come strongly in favour of this method. Dr Riazul Hasan Gillani, holds doctorate from Al-Azhar University according to him: Certain kinds of Riba were considered undesirable (makrooh) but not prohibited according to Fatawa Alamgiry & Imam Abu Hanifa. There were three kinds of Riba, and with the exception of one form, the

remaining two were undesirable (makrooh) but not prohibited (haram). The three forms of Riba were Riba Uddain (Debt: Something owed, such as money, goods, or services) Ribaul Qarz (Loan: Something lent for temporary use) and Ribaul Fazal, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited Riba Uddain (Debt) through a decree but did not enforce it on the two forms which were declared undesirable (makrooh) but not prohibited (haram). Dr Gillani elucidates that under Islamic injunctions a woman's demand for divorce is undesirable (makrooh) but if she insists, it could not be denied to her. If somebody dealt in makrooh Riba, he was not committing a sin. The believers were advised to avoid makrooh Riba, but not prohibited as they were from Riba Uddain (Debt).

According to Sheikh Al-Azhar Dr. Syed Mohammad Tantawi, a prominent modern-day jurist opines that, the government savings schemes do not fall into the category of Riba at all, because these are investment schemes and not Qarz schemes. Among the other scholars

who think that the interest is different from usury, most notable is Dr. Ma'roof Ad-Dawaleebi, who is a scholar of high repute and who has been involved in politics, being former prime minister in Syria and an advisor to the king of Saudi Arabia for many years. Earlier he has been a professor of law in the University of Damascus. This has given him the very important mix of looking for practical solutions and a high standard of scholarship.

Eminent Pakistani scholar, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi in discussions opines usury to be an evil which is fully integrated in the present international financial system. It should be replaced by Islamic financial system at least in the Muslim societies, till then one should avoid it as far as possible. However, under unavoidable circumstances one has to live with this evil as was the case of slavery, which was gradually phased out. He argues that while there is prohibition of taking Riba, there is no restriction of paying extra on loan because the loan is taken under necessity or compulsion, according

to him, Qur'an and Hadith forbids taking Riba or assisting in collection of Riba. Taking lead from the Qur'anic doctrine of necessity, whereby the prohibited (Haram) becomes temporarily permissible under certain extreme conditions; "...But (even so) if a person is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits thy Lord is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." (Qur'an;6:145), he opines that the widows, orphans, sick, retired elders who have no other source of income may invest in government saving schemes to get subsistence to survive, though Islamic welfare government should look after them even without investment.

All Types of Interest, Riba Forbidden:

The majority of Islamic scholars still consider all types of interest as Riba, hence forbidden. "...There is none who can change His words.." (Qur'an;18:27). There is no doubt that Riba is prohibited, but there was some thing about Riba which even 'Umar bin Al-Khattab wanted to know more form Prophet (peace be

upon him) before he left the world. Till Ummah develops a consensus on the serious issue of defining the Riba, the advice of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) be followed, who advised the Muslims to consult their hearts after having studied a matter carefully. Allah knows the matters of heart well.

CHAPTER-2: EXTREMISM & VIOLENCE

Enjoining Good & Eschewing Evil:

The use of violence as means to enforce their version of Islam by the religious fanatics is not a new phenomenon. The most common pretext is the enforcement of the Qur'anic commandment: 'Enjoining Good & Eschewing Evil;' a noble cause, but evil means of violence and coercion. To achieve the political objectives rather than with sharing and alleviating their sufferings and aspirations, the name of Islam, so dear to the simple innocent but ignorant Muslims is exploited. It is high time that the exploitation of the religious feelings of socially and economic deprived simple people, who are ever ready to lay down their lives on the name of Islam be stopped. The methodology of implementation of Qur'anic commandment of 'Enjoining Good & Eschewing Evil' needs to be analyzed and understood in the overall teachings of Qur'an, Hadith, the historic context.

The state (include most of governments in Muslim countries) on its part has done nothing to towards implementation of Qur'anic commandment of 'Enjoining Good & Eschewing Evil', rather under the slogan of 'Enlightened Moderation' it appears to have resorted to 'Enjoining Evil & Eschewing Good' by implication if not deliberately. Qur'an says: "The hypocrite men and the hypocrite women, they are all alike. They enjoin what is evil, forbid what is just, and withhold their hands from doing good. They have forgotten Allah; so He has forgotten them. In fact the hypocrites are transgressors."(Qur'an;9:67). Obedience to rulers in only right matters not in evil (munkir): "..and that they will not disobey you (Muhammad) in what is right (ma'roof), then accept their allegiance and pray to Allah for the forgiveness. Surely Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful."(Qur'an;60:12). Muslims can develop and gain respect among the community of nations by adhering to their cultural values, which are inherently deep rooted in the Islamic

traditions. Just a simple look at the most common dress of women folk reveal that they are dressed in the moderate Islamic way since centuries, which besides meeting the religious requirements, is also convenient in the extreme weather conditions and the role rural women play in the economic and social life. The women dressed in semi naked western dress displayed in the media and advertisements is not the popular dress of ordinary Muslim women. Some forms of obscenity and vulgarity are condemned even in the most modern European culture. The pantographic web sites are routinely blocked to save the youth. They are condemned in media. Many countries, specially China has censor to block such web sites. Recently the Net Café have grown like mushrooms without any check. They are openly showing pornographic movies with impunity, destroying the moral fiber of youth. There is need to check this free for all degradation of morality under the garb of modernity. The development is required in the field of science, technology, industry, economy

and education, (religious as well as secular) to change the mindset, which require short term and long term measures.

Divine Purpose of Creation:

The Divine purpose of creation may be kept in view, which in short is to; Test the human during limited life span on earth, those who obey Him by their free will and live according to His guidance, will be rewarded for good deeds and those WHO DISOBEY WILL BE PUNISHED IN HEREAFTER. It is mentioned in Qur'an: "The One Who created death and life, so that He may put you to test, to find out which of you is best in deeds: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving."(Qur'an;67:2 also at 18:7, 2:155-157, 3:142). "Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial: to Us must ye return."(Qura'n;21:35). Allah says: "Mankind was one nation having one religion. Later when people invented other religions, Allah appointed Prophets as bearers of good news and warnings; and revealed to

them the Book with the True Guidance to settle the matters of dispute between mankind. But the very people to whom it was given, started disputes after the clear arguments had come to them, because of rivalry between one another. Allah has guided the believers by His will to the truth in those matters in which they had differences. Allah guides whom He pleases towards the Right Way.”(Qura’n;2:213).

Faith is a matter of personal conviction, which can not be forced upon others: “There is no compulsion in religion.” (Qur’an;2:256), "Truth has come and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood by its nature is bound to perish.”(Qur’an;17:81). “This is Paradise; you have inherited it by virtue of your past deeds.”(Qur’an;43:72). If He wanted all humanity could have been on true guidance. Allah does not want to force the belief upon human: “If your Lord had so willed, He would have certainly made mankind one single nation but that is not what He wants, so they will continue to differ except those on whom He has

bestowed His mercy; and that very freedom of choice and action is the whole purpose of their creation. That is how the Word of your Lord, that He will fill Hell with jinns and human beings all together, will be fulfilled.”(Qur’an;11:118-119). Man has been provided with guidance and endowed with intellect, so that he can use his reason and freedom of choice to either follow the true path or the evil way of devil : "Who hath ordained laws and granted guidance;" (Qur’an;87:3). “Say "The Truth is from your Lord": let him who will believe and let him who will reject (it)- -(Qur’an;18:29). “Notwithstanding that no human being can ever attain to faith otherwise than by God’s leave, and (that) it is He who lays the loathsome evil (of disbelief) upon those who will not use their reason?(Qur’an;10:100). “..whosoever follows My guidance will not lose his way nor fall into misery. But whosoever turns away from My Message verily for him is a life narrowed down and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.” (Qur’an;20:117-124).“When those

who believe in Our revelations come to you, say: "Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed mercy upon Himself. If anyone among you commits evil because of ignorance and thereafter repents and mends his ways; you will find Allah Forgiving, Merciful."(Qur'an;6:54); "He is the Forgiving, the Loving, (Qur'an;85:14). Hence while implementing the divine command of 'Enjoining Good & Eschewing Evil', the other commandments related with the divine plan of creation may be kept in view.

Muslims-As Moderate Community:

Inheritors of Qur'an and Legacy of Abraham: Though Judaism and Christianity claim their roots with Abraham (peace be upon him), it is Islam alone, which can truly declare to be the intact legacy of Abraham (peace be upon him). Allah says: "Jews and Christians say: "Be Jews or Christians, you shall then be rightly guided." (O Muhammad), say: "By no means! We follow the faith of Abraham, the upright one; and he joined not gods with Allah."(Qur'an;2:135), "(O

Muhammad), Say: Lo! As for me, my Lord has guided me unto a straight path, a right religion (din qiyam), the community of Abraham, the upright, who was no idolater.”(Qur’an;6:161), “Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to Allah), and he was not of the idolaters.”(Qur’an;3:67), “Say: Allah speaks truth. So follow the religion of Abraham, the upright. He was not of the idolaters.”(Qur’an;3:95). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last messenger of God, said: “..you (Muslims) are an heir to the heritage of Abraham”(Sunan Abu Dawood;770). Allah appointed Muslims to inherit Qur’an, but He categorizes them in to three groups: “We have given the Book (Qur’an) as an inheritance to those of Our servants (Muslims) whom We have chosen, among them there are some who WRONG THEIR OWN SOULS, some FOLLOW A MIDDLE COURSE and some, by Allah's leave, EXCEL IN GOOD DEEDS; which is the supreme virtue.”(Qur’an;35:32).

As inheritors of legacy of Abraham and Qur'an, Muslims have a great responsibility, Allah says: "We have made you a moderate (justly balanced) community so that you may be witness against the mankind and that your own Messenger may be witness against you..."(Qur'an;2:143). The essence of Islam is to avoid all extravagances and extremism on either side. It is a sober, practical balanced (wasat) religion. When two persons dispute, they advance extravagant claims. A just witness comes between them, and brings the light of reason to bear on them, pruning all their selfish extravagances. So the mission of Islam is to curb, for instance, the extreme formalism of the Mosaic law and the extreme "other-worldliness" professed by Christianity. Similarly use of violence is against the spirit of moderation. The witness must be unselfish, equipped with first-hand knowledge and ready to intervene in the cause of justice. Such is the position claimed by Islam among rival systems. Similarly, within Islam itself, the position of witness to whom

disputants can appeal is held by the last Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him). Qur'an advises patience in enjoining good and forbidding the evil, because the persuasion and preaching requires patience: "O my son! Be constant in prayer (Salah), enjoin good and forbid the evil. Endure with patience whatever befalls you, surely this shows your determination in conducting the affairs."(Qur'an;31:17). The scholars can draw their conclusion form advise to Children of Israel : "Why do not the Rabbis and the doctors of laws forbid them from their (habit of) uttering sinful words and eating things forbidden? Evil indeed are their works."(Qur'an;5:63).

Universal Responsibilities: The Muslims bear great responsibility with in themselves and then to the mankind, Allah says: "You (Muslims) are the best of peoples which has ever been raised for the guidance of mankind. You enjoin good, forbid evil, and believe in Allah."(Qur'an;3:110). Islam being the Universal Religion urges its adherents to realize their global responsibility

towards guidance of mankind, for Islam is just submission to the Will of Allah. This implies (1) Faith, (2) doing right, being an example to others to do right, and having the power to see that the right prevails, (3) avoiding wrong, being an example to others to eschew wrong, and having the power to see that wrong and injustice are defeated. Islam therefore lives, not for itself, but for the mankind as a whole.

Responsibilities of State, Law and Muslims:

The basic purpose of believers is the attainment of desires; happiness, in this world and the next; success; prosperity; freedom from anxiety, care, or a disturbed state of mind; as opposite to failure; misery; punishment or penalty; agony or anguish. To achieve this Allah says: “Let there arise from among you a band of people who should invite to righteousness, enjoin good and forbid evil; such are the ones who shall be successful.”(Qur’an;3:104). The ideal Muslim community is happy, untroubled by conflicts or doubts, sure of itself, strong, united, and

prosperous: because there has to be a group among themselves who should invite them to all that is good; enjoins the right; and forbids the wrong. Such arrangements should however be made under the state and with in the law of the land, to guard against anarchy and instability. Some people justify using force to eradicate vice and force goodness in the society by interpreting this verse with Sahih Muslim Hadith number 16, narrated by AbuSa'id al-Khudri; I heard the Messenger of Allah as saying: "He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart and that is the least of faith." Obviously if there is an overall degeneration in the society, then as small group is not in a position to force their decision upon the majority even with good intentions. In such circumstances Prophet (peace be upon him) has urged the believers to use their tongue, i.e.

preaching and persuasion through peaceful means (which was done during the initial 13 years at Makkah). This Hadith may also be understood with other Hadiths: Narrated Awf ibn Malik; The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The best of your rulers are those whom you love and who love you, who invoke God's blessings upon you and you invoke His blessings upon them. And the worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you and whom you curse and who curse you. It was asked (by those present): Shouldn't we overthrow them with the help of the sword? He said: No, as long as they establish prayer among you. If you then find anything detestable in them, you should hate their administration, but do not withdraw yourselves from their obedience."(Sahih Muslim Hadith number 861, similar Hadith number 860 has been narrated AbuSa'id al-Khudri). Narrated AbuSa'id al-Khudri; The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The best fighting (jihad) in the path of Allah is (to speak) a word of justice to an oppressive

ruler.”(Sunan of Abu Dawood No.2040). It is evident that instead of using force and violence against Muslim rulers, the use of words, advise and peaceful protest is the preferable option.

Narrated AbuTha'labah al-Khushani; AbuUmayyah ash-Sha'bani said: I asked AbuTha'labah al-Khushani: What is your opinion about the verse "Care for yourselves". He said: I swear by Allah, I asked the one who was well informed about it; I asked the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) about it. He said: “No, enjoin one another to do what is good and forbid one another to do what is evil. But when you see niggardliness being obeyed, passion being followed, worldly interests being preferred, everyone being charmed with his opinion, then CARE FOR YOURSELF, and leave alone what people in general are doing; for ahead of you are days which will require endurance, in which showing endurance will be like grasping live coals. The one who acts rightly during that period will have the reward of fifty men who act as he does. Another version has: He said (The

hearers asked:) Apostle of Allah, the reward of fifty of them? He replied: The reward of fifty of you.” (Sunan of Abu Dawood No.2037).

Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil – An Implementation Methodology:

The implementation methodology could be deduced from guidance provided by Allah: “Make due allowance for man’s nature, and enjoin the doing of what is right (amr bil a’rif); and leave alone all those who choose to remain ignorant.”(Qur’an;7:199). While explaining this verse Muhammad Asad writes: “According to Zamakhshari, khudh-al-‘awf means: ‘Accept what comes easily to thee (or ‘what is willingly accorded to thee’) of doings and the nature of men, and make things easy (for them), without causing them undue hardship (khulf); and do not demand of them efforts that may be too difficult for them.’ This interpretation – which has been adopted many other classical commentators as well—is based on the identical explanation of the phrase khudh al ‘awf by ‘Abd Allah ibn az-

Zubayr and his brother 'Urwah (Bukhari), as well as by A'ishah and, in the next generation, by Hihsam ibn 'Urwah and Mujahid (Reference; Tibri, Baghawai and Ibn Kathir). Thus, in accordance with the Qur'anic statements that "man has been created weak"(Qur'an;4:28) and that "God does not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear"(Qur'an;2:286, 6:152, 7:42 & 23:62), the believer is admonished to make due allowance for human nature and NOT TO BE TOO HARSH WITH THOSE WHO ERR. This admonition is the more remarkable as it follows immediately upon a discourse on the most unforgivable of all sins- the ascribing of divine powers or qualities to any one or anything but God." It may also be kept in view that the man is also under trial : "Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial: to Us must ye return."(Qura'n;21:35).

Islam granted the basic human right of individual privacy, 1400 ago once such freedom and personal liberty was unthinkable in any society:

“O believers! Avoid immoderate suspicion (guesswork), for in some cases suspicion is a sin. Do not spy on one another, nor backbite one another (to say something about another behind ones back that if one hears it, dislikes it). Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would abhor it. Fear Allah; for Allah is the Acceptor of repentance, Merciful.”(49:12). The implementation of these injunction by Caliph Umar is a good example of moderation in implementation of rule of law. On night Umar, the second Caliph, during his routine night watch hear some singing sound form a house. He climbed up the wall and found a man with wine and a woman. He asked him that how he could hide such immoral violation of commands of Allah? The man replied that the Caliph has already violated three command of Allah; first by spying on a believer (Qur’an;49:12), secondly, by not entering a house through door (Qur’an;2:189), and thirdly by entering the house without permission of the owner (Qur’an;24:27-28). The Caliph had no

answer and had to leave quietly however he took a promise from him not to indulge in such immoral activities in future. Not even the most civilized governments can grant such a freedom to their citizens even in this present era of civil liberties and human rights.

The other most common evil Slanders:

Slanders & scandals, are strictly prohibited, by Allah: “Those who love to spread foul slanders among the believers will have a painful punishment in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah knows and you do not know.”(24:19). This Qur’anic warning against foul slander and by obvious implication against any attempt at seeking out other people’s faults finds a clear echo in several well-authenticated sayings of the Prophet: “Beware of all guesswork (about one another) for behold, all (such) guesswork is most deceptive (akdhab al-Hadith); and do not spy upon one another, and do not try to bare (other people’s) failings: (Muwatta’ almost identical version of this Tradition have been

quoted by Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood); “Do not hurt those who have surrendered themselves to God (Muslims), and do not impute evil to them, and do not try to uncover their nakedness(i.e., their faults): and do not impute evil to them, and do not try to uncover their nakedness (on the day of judgment)” (Tirmidhi); and, Never does a believer draw a veil over the nakedness of another believer without God’s drawing a veil over his own nakedness on Resurrection Day” (Bukhari). All these injunctions have received their seal, as it were, in the Qur’anic exhortation: “Avoid immoderate suspicion (guesswork), for in some cases suspicion is a sin.”(49:12).

Hence the scholars are of the view that invitation towards righteousness, enjoining good and forbidding evil is to be done in the society by scholars and citizens through peaceful preaching, reason and wisdom as Allah says in Qur’an: “Call people to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and best advice, and reason with them, if you have to, in the most

courteous manner: for your Lord knows best who strays from His Way and He knows best who is rightly guided.”(Qur’an;16:125); “Good deeds are not equal to the evil ones. Repel other's evil deeds with your good deeds. You will see that he with whom you had enmity, will become your close friend.”(Qur’an;41:34). “Repel evil with good - We are fully aware of their slanders”(Qur’an;23:96). However under grave circumstances force may have to be applied appropriately against evil and mischief threatening the peaceful environments, with in the ‘ZONE OF AUTHORITY’ only by those people, charged with authority, like a father in his house, head of institution with in his organization and the government with in state: “These are the people who, if We establish them (in power, authority) in the land, will establish Salah and pay Zakah, enjoin justice and forbid evil; the final decision of all affairs is in the hands of Allah.”(Qur’an;22:41), “..enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and observe the limits set by Allah..”(Qur’an;9:112). “Verily Man is in loss.

Except such as have Faith and do righteous deeds and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth and of Patience and Constancy.”(Qur’an;103:2-3). Consequently while keeping in view divine plan of creation, the scholars and Muslim should preach to ‘Enjoin Good and Eschew Evil’ through peaceful means. Under no circumstances people should take law in to their own hands as it will create anarchy (fasad, fitna) and destabilize the state as happened in the initial days of Islam through the extremist and violent sect, the Khawarij.

Avoiding Reemergence of Fitnah:

The term Fitnah (‘trial,’ or ‘test’), is used in Islamic history, which refer to heretical uprisings, especially the first major internal struggle within the Muslim community (656-661 C.E), which resulted in both civil war and religious schism. During the reign of the third caliph, 'Uthman, certain rebellious groups accused the Caliph of nepotism and misrule, and the resulting discontent led to his

assassination. The rebels then recognized the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali, as ruler but later deserted him and fought against him, accusing him of having committed a grave sin in submitting his claim to the caliphate to arbitration, they are called Khawarij. The word kharaju, from which khariji is derived, means "to withdraw" and Khawarij were, therefore, believed in active dissent or rebellion against a state of affairs they considered to be gravely impious. The basic doctrine of the Khawarij was that a person or a group who committed a grave error or sin and did not sincerely repent ceased to be Muslim. According to them mere profession of the faith "there is no god but God; Muhammad is the prophet of God" did not make a person a Muslim unless this faith was accompanied by righteous deeds. In other words, good works were an integral part of faith and not extraneous to it. The second principle that flowed from their aggressive idealism was militancy, or jihad, which the Khawarij considered to be among the cardinal principles,

or pillars, of Islam. Contrary to the orthodox view, they interpreted the Qur'anic command about "enjoining good and forbidding evil"(Qur'an;3:104) to mean the vindication of truth through the sword. The placing of these two principles together made the Khawarij highly inflammable fanatics, intolerant of almost any established political authority. They incessantly resorted to rebellion and as a result were virtually wiped out during the first two centuries of Islam.

A moderate group of the Khawarij, the Ibadis, avoided extinction, and its members are to be found today in North Africa and in Oman and other parts of East Africa, including Zanzibar Island. The Ibadis do not believe in aggressive methods and, throughout medieval Islam, remained dormant. Because of the interest of 20th-century Western scholars in this sect, the Ibadis have become active and have begun to publish their classical writings and their own journals. Although till recently Chasidism has been considered essentially a story of the past,

which left permanent influence on Islam, because of reaction against it. It forced the religious leadership of the community to formulate a bulwark against religious intolerance and fanaticism. Positively, it has influenced the reform movements that have sprung up in Islam from time to time and that have treated spiritual and moral calmness and status quo with a quasi-Khawarij zeal and militancy.

Takfir:

The doctrine of Takfir; is being used in the modern era especially by Taliban, in sanctioning violence against leaders and simple Muslims who are deemed insufficiently religious. Takfir is a pronouncement to declare any (non practicing Muslim), to be an unbeliever (Takfir), apostate, (Murtad) hence liable to be killed. It has become a central ideology of militant groups such as those in Egypt, Iraq and across the world including so called 'Taliban', now also in Afghanistan and adjoining tribal areas of Pakistan. According to the 'Oxford Dictionary of

Islam', doctrine of Takfir is claimed to be derived from the ideas of Sayyid Qutab, Maududi, Ibn Tymiyyah and Ibn Kathir. Mainstream Muslims and Islamic groups reject the pseudo concept of 'Takfir' as a doctrinal deviation [bid'at], heresy. Leaders such as Hassan al-Hudaybi (died, 1977) and Yousf al-Qaradawi reject 'Takfir' as un-Islamic and marked by bigotry and zealotry. Such narrow mindedness has exacerbated the evil of sectarianism and the resulting intolerance among the masses has led to a dangerous trend towards sectarian militancy. Recently the Saudi scholars also condemned and strongly rejected the 'Takfir' doctrine. [For more details, read 'Takfir-doctrine of Terror @ <http://wp.me/PCgrB-il> and <http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0AUQfx8dX9TCvZGRyM3c0c21fMTE4ZGNzOGtnZDM&hl=en>]. It appears that; "We are chasing an Islamic order stripped of its humanism, aesthetics, intellectual quests and spiritual devotions.... concerned with power not with the soul, with the mobilization of people for political purposes

rather than with sharing and alleviating their sufferings and aspirations.”(Eqbal Ahmad). In order to avoid other Fitnah gaining roots in the Muslim Ummah, there is strong need to undertake short term and long term measures to satisfy the needs of morality, security, justice, social inequality and economic conditions of masses and level of education in religious institutions so that the unity and development of Muslims is not affected.

CHAPTER-3: HUMAN RIGHTS OF NON MUSLIMS

In communities which base their civil rights on brute strength, the weaker go to the wall, and public opinion expects nothing else. Even in modern democracies of the saner sort, it is often told that it is the fate of minorities to suffer; strength of numbers here becomes the passport to power and privilege. Islam, while upholding balanced views in general, enjoins the most solicitous care for the weak and oppressed. The minorities are treated with justice in every way—in rights of property, in social rights, and in the right to opportunities of development. The non-Muslim living under the protection of a Muslim state is referred as Dhimmi, a free non-Muslim subject. They are exempt from duties of Islam like military service and zakat, instead they are required to pay jizyah (poll-tax). Historically some Islamic governments paid this poll tax for poor non-Muslim subjects or reduced it to mere symbolic tax. If the State cannot protect those who paid jizyah, then the amount they paid is

returned to them. Islam guarantees full protection and security of the State including freedom of religion to all. The killing of innocent people is strictly prohibited, according to Qur'an: “..if anyone slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land it would be as if he slew the life of all mankind: and if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. Then although there came to them Our apostles with clear Signs yet even after that many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.”(Qur'an;5:32). Thus the notion that the minorities are treated as second class citizens in an Islamic state is based on malicious propaganda.

Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the main enforcer of human rights safeguarding the legitimate interests of minorities. The monks of Mount Sinai were provided protection. On

establishing the first Islamic state at Medina, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) entered into many alliances, treaties with the Muslims and the non-Muslims, securing peace and tranquility for the Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The Charter of Medina:

The Charter of Medina, in fact was the first ever written constitution in the history of mankind. This was based on the contract agreed upon by Muslims, Jews and others, stipulating that they all would be treated as equal citizens of Medina, giving the non-Muslims right of choosing a legal system they wished their affairs be governed by, be it Islamic or Jewish law or pre-Islamic Arab tribal traditions. This confirms the principle “no compulsion in religion”, freedom of expression and religious practice was open to everyone. It gave the right of protection, security, peace and justice; not only to Muslims, but also to the Jews who lived in the City of Medina, as well as the allies of Jews who were non-Muslims. The Jews

were recognized as a separate political and ethnic minority, and allowed to practice their religion quite freely. In fact, Jews were considered on an equal bases as Muslims under the Islamic State.

Safety, Security and Protection of Non Muslims:

Narrated Abdullah bin Amr : The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever killed a Mu'ahid (a person who is granted the pledge of protection by the Muslims) shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance can be smelt at a distance of forty years (of traveling)." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith:9.49). Narrated Amr bin Maimun: The second Caliph Umar (after he was stabbed by a man from minority), instructed (his would-be-successor) saying, "I urge him (i.e. the new Caliph) to take care of those non-Muslims who are under the protection of Allah and His Apostle (peace be upon him) in that he should observe the convention agreed upon with them, and fight on their behalf (to secure their safety)

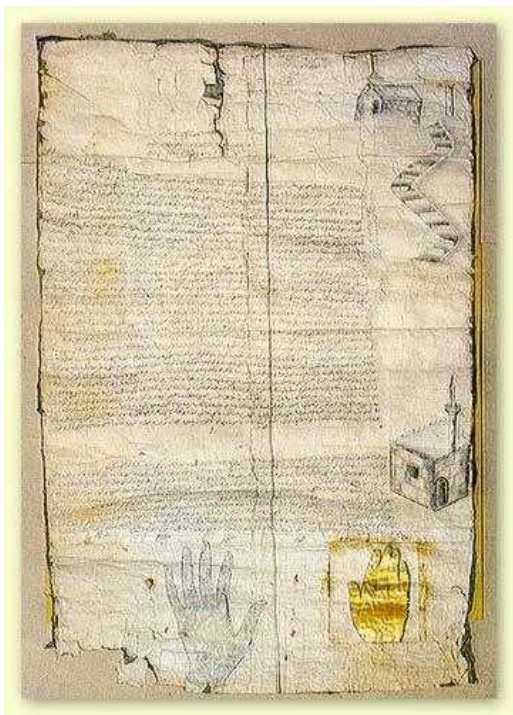
and he should not over-tax them beyond their capability." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith: 4.287).

Prophet Muhammad's Everlasting Promise to Christians:

In 628 AD, a delegation from St. Catherine's Monastery came to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and requested his protection. He responded by granting them a charter of rights, still available at St.Catherine's Monastery located at the foot of Mt. Sinai and is the world's oldest monastery. It possess a huge collection of Christian manuscripts, second only to the Vatican, and is a world heritage site. It also boasts the oldest collection of Christian icons. It is a treasure house of Christian history that has remained safe for 1400 years under Muslim protection.



The copy of this charter is reproduce below, also available at the website of monastery:



Freedom of Faith:

There are no forced conversions in Islam, the non Muslim subjects have the right to freely choose to convert to Islam or keep practicing their faith. But once a person converts to Islam, it is obligatory to practice his faith to be a good Muslim. Apostasy has always been considered as a capital offence in all the religions and political systems of the world, because it is considered as a high treason against the established norms of society. The Bible prescribes death by stoning for apostasy: "You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God.."(Deutrony;13:10). The pagan Romans brutally killed the early Christians on same ground. Subsequently this practice was repeated by the Christian Church against opposing Christians, who were killed and burnt alive. Death penalty for apostasy remained in force in England for long time. It was abolished due to social and cultural developments. In early Islam, the pagans of Makka, and Jews of

Medina used to indulge in this practice to gain intelligence and to demoralize the fragile expanding Muslim community of Median. Hence apostasy is considered as a major sin in Islam. Whether it is punishable by Islamic law is a debatable matter among Muslim scholars. Some believe that the apostate should be punished after trial because they consider this crime as a betrayal, high treason against the community, while others opine that if someone changes his faith and does not challenge the Islamic society, it is a matter between him and Allah, Who will punish him in hereafter. However, both opinions agree that it is a major worst form of sin punishable by Allah. As per Qur'an; "Those who turn back as apostates after Guidance was clearly shown to them the Evil One has instigated them and buoyed them up with false hopes."(Qur'an;47:25). Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, "The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three

cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits adultery and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith:9.17). Non-Muslims are allowed to teach their faith to their followers, but they are not allowed to go against the mainstream of the Muslim society.

Kindness and Equity:

Muslims are encouraged to act towards all the non-Muslims living in Islamic state with kindness and equity. As per Qur'an; "As for such (of the unbelievers) as do not fight against you on account of your faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, Allah does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity. Indeed, Allah loves those who act equitably"(Qur'an;60:8). There are numerous Hadiths, which encourage Muslims to be kind to other religious communities, especially those who constitute minorities in the Muslim State. As a result many deserving non Muslims were able to get very high positions in

the Muslim hierarchy. Islam does not forbid engagement in respectful and peaceful dialogue with others, especially the People of the Book, provided that neither side exploit the illiteracy or dire financial need of others so as to psychologically manipulate them in the name of outreach.

Legal and Dietary Freedom:

Islamic law also permits non-Muslim minorities to set up their own courts, which implement family laws drawn up by the minorities themselves. The rights of minorities are well protected in Islam. Another interesting fact in Islamic history is that although Muslims are prohibited from preparing, selling and consuming alcohol, whereas the ruling is not the same with non-Muslim. If non-Muslim minority in an Islamic state wish to do so, and do not involve Muslims, they would actually be given this right, they even consume pork, strictly prohibited for the Muslims. This points out that the concept of human rights in Islam has often

been given a much negative view. While throughout Europe and America, Muslims are not permitted to make the call to prayer (adhan) on loud speakers, church bells ring freely in the Muslim world.

Special Status of People of the Book: The Christians and Jews are called People of the Book in Qur'an. Muslims are asked to call upon the People of the Book for common terms that is to worship One Allah, and to work together for the solutions of the many problems in the society. "Those who believe (in the Qur'an) and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians (monotheistic followers of John the Baptist) and who believe in Allah and the last day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve."(Qur'an;2:62).

Equitable Muslim Rule of Spain: The history of Islam proves this, when Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together in dominant Islamic societies. The Spain was under the tyrannical,

suppressive and corrupt rule of King Roderick, who after death of King Witiza, in 710 through intrigue managed to become king. Roderick was a brute ruthless, tyrant and corrupt ruler, he faced a revolt of the Basques and was never recognized in the Northeast. He even did not spare the daughter of Count Julian the governor of Ceuta and raped her. Meanwhile, Witiza's family had made contact with the Muslims for assistance against oppressor rule of Roderick, Count Julian also requested Musa bin Nasir, the Muslim governor of North Africa for help. He after getting approval of Caliph sent Tariq bin Zyad to Spain in 711 C.E, by 713 C.E Spain was under Muslim control. This rapid success can be explained by the fact that Hispano-Visigoth society welcomed the end of tyrannical rule of Roderick. The Jews, harassed by the legal ordinances of Toledo, were particularly hostile toward the Christian government. Moreover, the Muslim conquest brought advantages to many elements of society: the burden of taxes was on the whole less onerous

than it had been in the last years of the Visigoth epoch; serfs who converted to Islam (mawali; singular: maula) advanced into the category of freedmen and enrolled among the dependents of some conquering noble. This group formed the majority of the population because during the first three centuries religious, social and economic motives induced a considerable number of natives to convert to Islam, there were no force conversions. Jews were no longer persecuted and were placed on an equal footing with the Hispano-Romans and Goths who still remained within the Christian fold. Thus, in the first half of the 8th century, there was born a new society in Muslim Spain.

In Spain under the Umayyads and in Baghdad under the Abbasid Khalifahs, Christians and Jews enjoyed a freedom of religion that they did not allow each other or anyone else. In contrast forced conversions to Catholicism have been documented at various points throughout history. The most prominently cited allegations are the conversions of the pagans during

Emperor Constantine (306-337 C.E); of Muslims, Jews and Eastern Orthodox during the Crusades(1095-1291 C.E) ; of Jews and Muslims during the Spanish Inquisition; and of the Aztecs by Hernando Cortes in South America.

The Jews which fled from Spain during the Inquisition, were welcomed by the Muslims and they settled in the heart of the Islamic Ottomans Caliphate. They enjoyed positions of power and authority. In contrast the Muslims who lived in Christian Spain were persecuted and prejudiced against on account of their faith. When the 2nd Caliph Omar took Jerusalem from the Byzantines in 634 C.E, he insisted on entering the city with only a small number of his companions. Proclaiming to the inhabitants that their lives and property were safe, and that their places of worship would never be taken from them, he asked the Christian patriarch Sophronius to accompany him on a visit to all the holy places. The Patriarch invited him to pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but he

preferred to pray outside its gates, saying that if he accepted the invitation to pray in church, later generations of Muslims might use his action as an excuse to turn it into a mosque. A mosque was built on the spot where Omar prayed. The Christians entrusted the Muslims, and as such the key of the Church in Jerusalem kept in the hands of the Muslims.

Freedom of Worship:

It is one function of Islamic law to protect the privileged status of minorities, and this is why non-Muslim places of worship have flourished all over the Islamic world. Muslims during their rule granted freedom of worship to all religious communities in the Holy City of Jerusalem. Throughout the Muslim world, churches, synagogues and missionary schools were built within the Muslim neighborhoods. These places were protected by Muslims even during the contemporary crises in the Middle East. As per Qur'an; "...Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another there would surely

have been pulled down monasteries churches synagogues and mosques in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause); for verily Allah is Full of Strength Exalted in Might (Able to enforce His Will).”(Qur’an;22:40)

Marriage with Chaste Women of People of the Book:

Islam is not exclusive faith, social intercourse, including food and inter-marriage, is permitted with the People of the Book. According to Qur’an: “This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers but chaste women among the People of the Book revealed before your time when ye give them their due dowers and desire chastity not lewdness nor secret intrigues. If anyone rejects faith fruitless is his work and in the Hereafter he

will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).” (Qur’an;5:5).

Racisms Rejected:

Any man or woman, of any race or faith, may, on accepting Islam, freely marry any Muslim woman or man, provided it be from motives of purity and chastity and not of lewdness. As always, food, cleanliness, social intercourse, marriage and other interests in life, are linked with the duty to Allah and faith in Him. Duty and faith are for individual’s own benefit, here and in the Hereafter.

Reward of Good Deeds of Non Believers:

Islam looks after the interest of non believers with justice, the good deeds of non-believer will not be wasted. Narrated Anas ibn Malik: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said about reward for a non-believer, that he would be made to taste the reward (of virtue in this world). (Sahih Muslim Hadith:1305). The children of minorities (non-Muslims), are similar to the children of

Muslims with respect to their entry into Paradise.(Fiqh-us-Sunnah, Fiqh 4.89a).

Social Courtesies:

There are other social courtesies which Muslims are urged to extend to non Muslims: like the respect is to be extended to the non Muslim deceased;(Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith:2.399). Condolences are desirable, even if the deceased was a non-Muslim. It is permissible for a Muslim to visit a sick non-Muslim person.(Fiqh-us-Sunnah, Fiqh 4.5). The strong emphasis placed on the need to behave with equity towards minorities has been heeded by Muslims throughout the ages. Minorities in the Muslim State have always enjoyed a fair and kind treatment by the Muslim majority. On the personal level, there is nothing to stop any Muslim from forging a friendship with non-Muslims who harbor no ill intentions against Islam or its followers.

Tolerance and Moderation:

Tolerance and moderation is the hallmark of Islam. Tolerance and moderation is the hallmark of Islam, Allah says :“We have made you (Muslims) a community of the middle way (keeping balance in extremes) so that you may testify against mankind and that your own Messenger may testify against you.”(Qur’an;2:143).. Human life of Muslims and non Muslims alike, has a very high place in Islam, Allah says: “whoever kills a person, except as a punishment for murder or mischief in the land (through judiciary), it will be written in his book of deeds as if he had killed the mankind and whoever will save a life shall be regarded as if he gave life to all the mankind.”(Qur’an;5:32). Killing is only permitted in state of war or through judiciary if some one commits some crime warranting such punishment. The English educationist and historian, Thomas Arnold observed: ‘During the Muslim rule, on the whole, the level of tolerance exhibited towards non Muslims was

missing in Europe till modern times'. Marmaduke Pickthall noted: "It was not until the Western nations broke away from their religious law that they became more tolerant, and it was only when the Muslims fell away from their religious law that they declined in tolerance".

Human Life:

Human life has very high value according to Qur'an ; "He who saved one life should be regarded as though he had saved the lives of all mankind."(Qur'an;5:32). Islam is the final message for the mankind for all times. It has the ability to meet the challenges posed by scientific developments.

CHAPTER-4: OTHER ISSUES

Permissible Food:

Muslims are allowed to eat everything which is good for the health and permissible. “O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and wholesome in the earth, and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Lo! he is an open enemy for you.”(Qur’an;2:168). The permissible (Halal) animals are to be slaughtered in Islamic way by reciting the name of Allah. There are certain prohibition in eating and drinking etc for the betterment of Muslims: “This Day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you”(Qur’an;5:5), “He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of Allah. but if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits,- then is He guiltless. for Allah is Oft-forgiving Most Merciful.” (Qur’an;2:173).

Similar prohibitions are also mentioned in Bible:

“That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”(Acts;15:29),“You shall not eat anything that dies of itself” (Deuteronomy;14:21), “Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”(Genesis;9:4) Leviticus 17:14-15, Deuteronomy 12:16, 1Samuel 14:33 and Acts 15:29 also at Revelation 2:14. Pork is also prohibited in Bible: “And the swine, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you.”(Leviticus;11:7-8) also Deuteronomy 14:8 & Isaiah 65:2-5. Consumption of alcohol and gambling is prohibited in Islam: “O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such

(abomination), that ye may prosper.”(Qur’an;5:90). According to Bible: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” (Proverbs;20:1),“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;” (Ephesians;5:18). Muslims are allowed to consume permissible (Halal) food from the people of the book (Jews and Christians).

Humanitarian Obligations:

Humanitarian obligations (Haqooq-ul-Ibad) are highly relevant in Muslim communities. Generally Haqooq Allah, the duties towards Allah (belief, rituals, prayers) are over emphasized while duties toward fellow human beings are given a low priority in practice, both at the individual and community level. Since a good balance is the main characteristic of Islam and its code of living so, the responsibilities toward other human beings are indeed given a very strong emphasis in Islam.

Bible on Human Obligations:

Obligations towards fellow humans have been emphasized in Bible at 'Romans; chapter 12: "love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor."(Romans;12:10), "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."(Romans;12:12), "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."(Romans;12:12), "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans;12:18-21).

Islamic Role Model:

The Sunnah of Prophet (peace be upon him) is the role model for the Muslims. The virtues like

justice, truthfulness, kind and courteous behaviour with fellow humans, fairness in trade, dealings, respect of life and property of others, helping underprivileged, oppressed and weak, Muslim or non Muslims alike are hall mark of Islam, the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is full of practical examples. The rights of parents and non Muslims have been elaborated separately due to their special significance. During his last address to the Muslims Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said; "O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you.....You know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal. Nobody has superiority over other except by piety and good action." He said that a Muslim has a "sanctity" which means that he must always be respected, well treated and immune from assault on his person, property

and integrity. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) defines the relationship of brotherhood between Muslims, and what it entails in practical life. He says that a Muslim is a brother to every Muslim: the one never treats the other unjustly, nor lets him down, nor tries to humiliate him." He also told that the "sanctity" of a believer is "in God's view, greater than the sanctity of the Ka'bah." The Hadith implies that all rights, minor or major, that belong to a Muslim must be always respected. A person at the receiving end of injustice is sure to have God's help. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that; "supplication by a person treated unjustly goes directly to God without any hindrance." This very statement should be sufficient to make anyone who exercises any degree of power to be on his guard lest he should treat anyone unjustly. Moreover, mutual help between members of a Muslim community is highly emphasized.

Helping Each Other:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: "Whoever helps his brother with a certain need shall have God helping him in accomplishing his own purpose." Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was the best example of extending a helping hand to all and sundry. Even the weakest member of the community could draw on an inexhaustible source of help from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Prophet (peace be upon him) was also the head of the Muslim state, would let even a slave make any demand on his time and service. It may be kept in view that the Arabian society in the pre-Islamic days was highly unjust to both women and slaves.

Charity: Islam places great emphasis on charity. Zakah (compulsory charity) is an important pillar of Islam, while Sadqah is the alms disburse voluntarily to help deserving poor and destitute over and above Zakah. Allah says: "Righteousness is not whether you turn your face towards East or West; but the righteousness is to believe in Allah, the Last

Day, the Angels, the Books and the Prophets, and to spend wealth out of love for Him on relatives, orphans, helpless, needy travelers, those who ask for and on the redemption of captives; and to establish Salah (prayers), to pay Zakah (alms), to fulfill promises when made, to be steadfast in distress, in adversity, and at the time of war. These people are the truthful and these are the pious.” (Qur’an;2:177). “They ask you what they should spend in charity. Say: “Whatever you spend with a good heart, give it to parents, relatives, orphans, the helpless, and travelers in need. Whatever good you do, Allah is aware of it.”(Qur’an;2:215). “The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain that sprouts into seven ears, each bearing one hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wishes. Allah has boundless knowledge.” (Qur’an;2:261). “Surely the charitable men and the charitable women, and those who give a goodly loan to Allah, shall be repaid manifold, and also be given a liberal reward besides it.” (Qur’an;57:18).“O believers!

Spend out of the sustenance which We have provided for you before the arrival of that Day when there will be no bargaining, friendship or intercession. It is the unbelievers who are wrongdoers.”(Qur’an;2:254). If charity is practiced with the true spirit of Islam there will be no poor person left in society. Narrated Haritha bin Wahb: I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "Give in charity because there will come a time on the people when a person will go out with his alms from place to place but will not find anybody to accept it." (Sahih Bukhari Hadith Number: 9.236)

Rights of Neighbors:

Qur’an and Bible are unanimous on the good treatment of neighbors (Qur’an;4:36, Leviticus;19:18, Mark;12:31). Prophet (peace be upon him) was also the best of neighbors and he emphasized that neighbors have a claim on our kindness. He mentioned that; "The Angel Gabriel has reminded me so often of the rights of a neighbor until I began to think that a

neighbor may have a claim to inheritance." ."[Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith Number:48 Volume:8]. This means that the status of a neighbor should be viewed as comparable to that of a family member.

Equality and Respect:

On the other hand, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard one of his companions say to Bilal (an African companion) during an argument, "You son of a black woman", he was very angry indeed. He said to that man: "You insult him on account of his mother? You certainly have not purged yourself from the values of an ignorant society." All that gives just an idea of the sort of emphasis Islam attaches to the rights of individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable in society.

Fair Treatment of Women:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) appreciated good treatment of women, he said: "The best among you are those who treat their wives best.

I am indeed the best of you in the way I treat my wives." When this is compared with the notion that prevails among the overwhelming majority of men in the Muslim world, it is found to be at variance with the Prophet's instructions. In his last address, Prophet (peace be upon him) said; "O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have right over you. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to commit adultery".

Treatment of Servants:

Prophet (peace be upon him) was very kind with his servants. Anas ibn Malik reports: "I served the Prophet (peace be upon him), for ten years and he never said to me: Why did you do this? or why did you omit that?" Delegations visiting

Medina often thought that Anas and his mother belonged to the Prophet's own family.

Lack of Human Obligations a Sin:

It should always be remembered that God may forgive all sins that relate to human obligations toward Him, but He will not forgive anything that is due to a human being (Humanitarian Obligations) until that person is ready to forgive it. Hence, the Muslims have to perform their obligations like worship and simultaneously be kind to the other human in the society, which is also a form of worship being part of Islamic duties.

Rights of Animals: Apart from human, a believer has to be kind with the animals: Narrated Sahl ibn al-Hanzaliyyah: The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) came upon an emaciated camel and said: "Fear Allah regarding these dumb animals. Ride them when they are in good condition and feed them when they are in good condition."(Sunnah Abu Dawood, Hadith.1065)

Obligations to Parents:

Islam attaches great importance to the human rights which include respect, love and obedience to the parents, and others living around in the society, specially the weak and underprivileged. The respect of parents has always been part of great civilizations, cultures and teachings of previous scriptures. It is mentioned in Qur'an; "And remember We took a covenant from the children of Israel (to this effect): worship none but Allah; treat with kindness your parents and kindred and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people;"(Qur'an;2:83). The ten commandments given to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) on Mt. Sinai, included respect of parents. The Commandments are recorded virtually identically in Exodus;20:2-17 and Deutronomy;5:6-21, it is mentioned; "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you." According to the New Testament, Jesus (peace be upon) said: "For God commanded,

Honour your father and mother: and, He who speaks evil of or mother, let him surely die.” (Mathew;15:4).

High Priority after Tawheed:

It may be noted that the respect and good behavior towards the parents have been mentioned immediately after belief in One Allah, in Qur’an: “Your Lord has decreed to you that: You shall worship none but Him, and you shall be kind to your parents; if one or both of them live to their old age in your lifetime, you shall not say to them any word of contempt nor repel them and you shall address them in kind words. You shall lower to them your wings of humility and pray: "O Lord! Bestow on them Your blessings just as they cherished me when I was a little child. Your Lord knows best what is in your hearts. If you do good deeds, certainly He is most forgiving to those who turn to Him in repentance.”(Qur’an;17:23-25). The spiritual and moral duties have been amalgamated here.

Individual Act of Piety:

The kindness to parents is an individual act of piety. Hence this matter must be approached with gentle humility: for the parental love, remind him of the great love with which Allah cherishes His creatures. There is something here more than simple human gratitude; it goes up into the highest spiritual region. The Muslim is asked to honor their father and mother, upon much higher and more universal grounds, such as befit a perfected revelation. In the first place, not merely respect, but cherishing kindness, and humility to parents, are commanded. In the second place, this command is bracketed with the command to worship the One True God. Parental love should be like a type of divine love: nothing can ever really compensate for that which have been received. In the third place the spiritual advancement is tested by this: no one should expect Allah's forgiveness if one is rude or unkind to the parents who unselfishly brought him up.

No Right in Deviation to Faith and Worship:

While there is deep respect for the parents but in the matters of faith and worship, they have no right to force their children. They cannot and must not hold up before them any worship but that of the One True God. Children and parents must all remember that they have all to go before Allah's tribunal, and answer, each for his own deeds. But even then, it does not mean that one should be arrogant or insolent. Allah says: "We have enjoined on man kindness to parents: but if they (either of them) strive (to force) thee to join with Me (in worship) anything of which thou hast no knowledge obey them not. Ye have (all) to return to Me and I will tell you (the truth) of all that ye did."(Qur'an;29:8). "And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command) "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal." But if they strive to make the join in worship with Me things of which thou hast no knowledge obey

them not; Yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration) and follow the way of those who turn to Me (in love): in the End the return of you all is to Me and I will tell you the truth (and meaning) of all that ye did." (Qur'an;31:14-15).

Qur'an on Kindness to Parents: Allah has repeatedly asked the children to be good and kind with parents, He says : "We have enjoined on man Kindness to his parents: in pain did his mother bear him and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years he says: "We have enjoined man to treat his parents with kindness. With much trouble his mother bore him, and much pain did she give him birth. His bearing and his weaning took thirty months. When he reaches the age of full strength and becomes forty years old, he says: "My Lord! Grant me the grace that I may thank you for the favors which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do good

deeds that will please You, and grant me good children. Surely I turn to You in repentance and surely I am of those who are Muslims. Such are the people from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and overlook their misdeeds. They shall be among the residents of paradise: true is the promise that has been made to them in this life. But those who rebukes his parents and say: " Fie upon you both! Do you threaten me with a resurrection, whereas many a generations have passed before me and none has come back from among them?" And they both cry for Allah's help and say: "Woe to you! Be a good believer. Surely the promise of Allah is true." But he replies: "This is nothing but tales of the ancients." (Qur'an;46:15-17). The respect to parents could result in great rewards as Allah says in Qur'an: "Those who believe and work righteous deeds from them shall We blot out all evil (that may be) in them and We shall reward them according to the best of their deeds." (Qur'an;29:7).

Traditions of Prophet (peace be upon him):

There are many traditions (Hadiths) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which emphasize the respect and high status of parents: Narrated by Mu'adh ibn Jabal; "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) instructed me to do ten things saying: (1). Do not associate anything with Allah even if you are killed and burnt on that account. (2). Don't be disobedient to your parents even if they command you to abandon your family and your property....." (Transmitted by Ahmad, Al-Tirmidhi Hadith: 61). Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: A woman was my wife and I loved her, but Umar hated her. He said to me: Divorce her, but I refused. Umar then went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and mentioned that to him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Divorce her.(Sunan of Abu-Dawood, Hadith Number.2437). Narrated by Abdullah bin Amr: A man said to the Prophet(peace be upon him),"Shall I participate in Jihad?" The Prophet(peace be upon him) said, "Are your parents living?" The man said,

"Yes." the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do Jihad for their benefit."(Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith:8.3). Narrated by Abdullah bin Amr: The Prophet(peace be upon him) said, "Al-Kaba'ir (the biggest sins) are: To join others (as partners) in worship with Allah, to be undutiful to one's parents,"(Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith: 9.9). Narrated by Anas : The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about the great sins He said, "They are:(1) To join others in worship with Allah. (2) To be undutiful to one's parents. (3) To kill a person (which Allah has forbidden to kill-murder). (4) And to give a false witness." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith:3.821).

Blood Transfusion and Organ Transplant:

With the advancements in medical sciences, new ethical issues like organ transplant and blood transfusion to save human lives came up. The Islamic scholars have resolved them through Ijtehad. Hence the blood transfusion and organ transplant are considered as permissible in Islam to save the human lives. To

use an organ from a living person for transplantation into another is permissible if this does not endanger his own life and the recipient or his family or the state or any other authority does not put the donor under any pressure to give away his organ. If someone donates his organ, he must do so out of his own free choice. It is not difficult to imagine a variety of situations where people are pressurized into donating their kidneys, or indeed forced to do so. In some countries, where political prisoners are subject to various methods of torture it is very easy for the authorities to rob them of various parts of their bodies. Pressure or the use of force in this respect is absolutely forbidden. The blood and organ donation also earn rich reward from Allah because, He attaches great values to the human life. Some times blood transfusion is the only way to save the life of a person badly injured in an accident, or needing blood for an operation. Some people with blood diseases need blood transfusion on regular basis. The medical science has not advanced to the level as yet,

where in the blood cannot be manufactured outside the human body. The only way to get blood is through donation and transfusion. Hence people are encouraged to donate blood. It is permitted for a Muslim to donate blood to a non-Muslim or vice versa on humanitarian grounds. It is also allowed to transplant organs between people of different faiths or to utilize the organs of animals (excluding pigs) for transplantation into human bodies if that is likely to prolong the life of the recipient.

Organ Donation:

If the kidney or an organ is donated after the death of the donor, the transplant is also permissible. Islam teaches us to respect the body of any dead person. Narrated Aysha, Ummul Mu'minin: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "To break the bone of a dead person is the same as breaking the bone of a living person." (Sunan of Abu Dawood, Hadith.1417). This means that Islam views any disfigurement of the corpse as a punishable crime. This idea

of respecting the dead body is well instilled in the minds of the Muslims so much so, that examples of any disfigurement of dead enemy soldiers is not found in the history of Islam, as often happens in wars. However this principle is overridden by a well-defined interest of the community. Leading scholars mention that if a person swallows something valuable which does not belong to him, say a diamond ring, and he dies afterward, it is permissible to open up his tummy in order to retrieve that diamond ring and give it back to its owner. Moreover, if a group of unbelievers fighting the Muslim state take a Muslim hostage or make use of him as a shield to protect themselves, it is permissible to kill that Muslim person if killing him is the only way to overcome those unbelievers. Working on these principles, contemporary scholars agree that organ transplant operations are permissible. The interest that such operations serve is quite obvious. Such operations do not involve any disrespect to the dead. Indeed they are done with the greatest respect to the donor. The

family of the deceased is considered the owner of his body. Their permission is necessary for using any part of the body of the dead person for transplantation, unless he has indicated during his life that he is willing for his body to be used for transplantation. In order to establish the cause of death and the possibility of any crime having been committed, postmortem is permissible. It is also acceptable that a postmortem is carried on a dead person if in the opinion of the qualified doctors such a postmortem may help in curing similar cases of illness.

Rest & Recreation:

People require rest and recreation. This is something completely natural. Without it, a person cannot be productive in life. The Companion Abû al-Dardâ' said: "I seek recreation in something that is neither useful nor unlawful, and this makes me stronger on the truth."

Islam is complete and comprehensive, addressing all aspects of our lives and all of our needs, including our need for diversions and for recreation. It provides for us lawful means to fulfill this need.

We read in the Qur'ân how the brothers of Joseph (peace be upon him) appealed to their father, the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him), on the basis of this fundamental human need. They said: "Send him along with us tomorrow so he may engage in revelry and play. We will indeed keep him safe." [Sûrah Yûsuf: 12]

The judge Abû Bakr b. al-'Arabî, commenting on this verse, observes:

There is no real objection to this type of recreation. A man engages in play with his family, as well as engaging in horse riding, archery, and in any other form of recreation sanctioned by the sacred texts. It is authentically related to us that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Jâbir when he married a mature widow: "Why did you not marry a virgin whom

you could play with and who would play with you?” [Sahîh al-Bukhârî and Sahîh Muslim] The recreation that these brothers were referring to was either foot racing or archery. This we can understand from the verse: “We went off to compete with each other.” [Sûrah Yûsuf: 17]

`A'ishah relates the following about her husband, the Prophet (peace be upon him):

I swear by Allah that I saw Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) standing at the door of my room while the Abyssinians were engaged in spear play in the mosque of Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him). He screened me with his cloak so I could watch them perform. He stood there for my sake until I decided that I had had enough. Now just imagine how much time a young girl eager for entertainment would stand there watching. [Sahîh al-Bukhârî and Sahîh Muslim]

At the end of this story, she relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “The Jews know that in the world there is time for rest. And I have been sent with the true and pure religion.”

Qarazah b. Ka`b and Abû Sa`ûd al-Ansârî both said: “The Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted us to engage in recreation during weddings.” [Sunan al-Nasâ’î]

In the Sunnah, we see the Companions participating in many different forms of lawful entertainment and play. They engaged in sports like footraces, horseracing, wrestling, and archery. They spent time in telling jokes and in lighthearted conversation.

Salmân al-Fârisî said to Abû al-Dardâ’: “Your own self has a right over you, your Lord has a right over you, your guest has a right over you, and your family has a right over you. So give everyone his due.” When the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard about what Salmân had said, he approved of it, saying: “Salmân has spoken the truth.” [Sahîh al-Bukhârî and Sunan al-Tirmidhî]

The scholars of Islam have attested to the importance of lawful recreation to the healthy

development of a person's character. Al-Ghazâli writes:

After completing his bookwork, a child should be allowed to play in a nice manner so that he can relax from the fatigue of his studies. His play should not tire him out. If the child is forbidden to engage in play and forced to spend his time in perpetual study, this will result in his heart dying, his intelligence waning, and his manner of living becoming so wretched that he will seek from it any escape he can find.

Ibn Miskawayh writes:

A child should be permitted on occasion to engage in nice play so that he can relax from the fatigue of his proper upbringing. His play should neither cause injury nor be very tiring.

Ibn Jamâ`ah observes:

There is nothing wrong with the student resting himself, his heart, his mind, and his eyes – if any of these grows tired or languid – with play and recreation. This will return him to his proper state so that his time will not be wasted. There is nothing wrong with it being strenuous and

exercising his body, for it has been said that this refreshes the metabolism, rids the system of excess toxins, and revitalizes the body.

Though recreation and entertainment is essentially lawful in Islam, it is necessary for us to keep the following in mind:

1. Time is precious. We must always be acutely aware of how valuable the time is that we have been given in our brief lives on Earth. Islam teaches us to place a premium on our time and to get as much out of it as we can, defining for us the various ways we can employ it.

Allah says: “It is He who has made the night and the day in succession for whoever desires to remember or show gratitude.” [Sûrah al-Furqân: 62]

Our lives should be spent in the remembrance of Allah and in thanks to Him. Indeed, Allah says: “I created neither humanity nor the jinn except to worship Me.” [Sûrah al-Dhâriyât: 56]

This is the ultimate purpose of life, and it should be what preoccupies our time. The Prophet

(peace be upon him) speaks to us about how much we lose when we waste our time, saying: “There are two blessings that many people squander: health and time.” [Sahîh al-Bukhârî] He also says as a warning to us: “Allah leaves no more excuses for a person once he has given him sixty years to live.”

We all know that we will be standing before Allah and questioned about how we spent our time. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “No one will be permitted to turn his two feet away on the Day of Resurrection until he is questioned about four matters: about his life, how he spent it; his youth, how he employed it; his work, what he did with it; and his wealth, how he earned it and spent it.” [Sunan al-Tirmidhî]

2. Our work and our efforts are important in Islam, and as Muslims, we are encouraged to be industrious. Allah says: “Say: Work, for Allah will see your deeds as will His Messenger and the believers.” [Sûrah al-Tawbah: 105]

Allah makes clear to us the effect that our works have on our recompense in the Hereafter. He says: “Are you recompensed except for the work that you used to do?” [Sûrah al-Naml: 90]

He also says: “Is the recompense for goodness anything but goodness?” [Sûrah al-Rahmân: 60]

There are many verses in the Qur’ân that mention good works in conjunction with faith. Moreover, the importance of diligence and being responsible in our work is specifically emphasized. Allah says: “O John, take the scripture with determination.” [Sûrah Maryam: 12]

He also says: “Take what We have given you with determination.” [Sûrah al-Baqarah: 63]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “The believer who is strong is better and more beloved to Allah than the believer who is weak.” [Sahîh Muslim]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: “Allah loves that when you engage in some work, you do so with proficiency.” [al-Bayhaqî, Shu`ab al-Imân]

He also emphasized the importance of continuing with our deeds throughout the duration of our lives, saying: “If the Final Hour arrives and one of you has a sapling in his hand, if he can finish planting it before standing up, then he should do so.” [al-Bukhârî, al-Adab al-Mufrid]

A Muslim alternates from his worldly work to his work for the Hereafter, being equally diligent in both. Allah says: “Therefore, when you are free from your immediate task, still labor hard. And strive to please your Lord.” [Sûrah al-Sharh: 7-8]

3. Islam stresses the importance of striving to reap benefits for both this world and the next. The life of this world is the harvesting ground for the Hereafter. It is but a passing phase and the life to come is the eternal abode. A Muslim, therefore, should expend his efforts for the sake of the Hereafter and at the same time bring about benefits in this world. He should excel in cultivating and developing the Earth while

gearing his efforts towards achieving felicity in the Hereafter.

Allah says: “And He has made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the Earth; it is all from Him. Lo! Herein are signs for a people who reflect.” [Sûrah al-Jâthiyah: 13]

Allah says: “He it is who has made the Earth subservient unto you, so traverse its paths and partake of His providence.” [Sûrah al-Mulk: 15]

The Muslim world today is behind everyone else in knowledge, enterprise, and productivity. One of the reasons for this is that Muslims are not making productive use of their time and generally do not have a positive work ethic. We must resolve to stop wasting time, to stop falling short in our work, and to put an end to our unproductive habits.

In light of all of this, we can place recreation and entertainment in the proper context: We must observe the following guidelines:

1. **Recreation** must never cause us to neglect our obligatory worship and our obedience to Allah.
2. **Recreation and entertainment** should not take up too much of our time. We should not engage in it to the point where it ceases to be beneficial.
3. It should not become our **habit** to perpetually seek recreation and diversion.
4. Recreation should **not keep us from activities that will benefit us** in our worldly or spiritual lives.
5. Our means of recreation and our entertainments must be completely **free from anything that is unlawful** in Islam.
[Source: <http://en.islamtoday.net>]

Fine Arts:

It is generally perceived that Islam is against 'Fine Art', which is concerned primarily with the creation of beauty and generally taken to include painting, printmaking, sculpture, and architecture, with literature, music, and dance sometimes being added. In its strict sense, fine

art is to be distinguished from such decorative arts and crafts as wall painting, pottery, weaving, metalworking, and furniture making, all of which have utility as an end; the architect being differentiated from the builder in this respect. Islam is the religion of moderation in harmony with the nature; it does not impose unnecessary restrictions on the adornments which God has created for the enjoyment and development of human faculties. Asceticism often means the negation of art and beauty, it has no necessary sanctity attached to it. God has laid down the broad guidelines of lawful and prohibitions in Qur'an:

“Say: Who hath forbidden the (zenah) adornment of God which He has brought forth for His devotees, and the good things of His providing? Say: "All these things are for the enjoyment of the believers in the life of this world though shared by others; but these shall be exclusively theirs on the Day of Resurrection. Thus do We make Our revelations clear for those who understand. Say: The things that my

Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to God for which he hath given no authority; and saying things about God of which you have no knowledge.”(Qur’an;7:32-33).

The beautiful and good things of life are really meant for, and should be the privilege of those with faith in God. If they do not always have them in this life, and if there is sometimes the semblance of others having them who do not deserve them, it should be kept in view that this is a test from God. In the life to come they will be purely for the faithful. The forbidden things are described in four categories: (1) What is shameful or unbecoming; the sort of things which have also legal and social sanctions, not of a local but of a universal kind; they may be called offences against society: (2) Sins against self and trespasses or excesses of every sort; these are against truth and reason; here would come in indiscipline, failure in doing intangible duties not clearly defined by law; selfishness or

self-aggrandizement, which may be condoned by custom and not punished by law, etc.- (3) Erecting fetishes or false gods; this is treason against the true God; and (4) Corrupting religion by debasing superstitions, saying things about God which are not true.

With in the parameters laid down by Qur'an; in broad-spectrum the Muslims have created such an immense variety of literatures, performing arts, visual arts, and music that it virtually defies any comprehensive definition. In the narrowest sense, the arts of the Muslims might be said to include only those arising directly from the practice of Islam; more commonly, however, the term is extended to include all of the arts produced by Muslim peoples, whether connected with their religion or not. It is difficult to establish a common denominator for all of the artistic expressions of the Muslims. Such a common denominator would have to be meaningful for miniature painting and historiography, for a musical mode and the form of a poem. The relationship

between the art of the Muslims and its religious basis is anything but direct. Islam is not against fine arts within the limits laid down by God and His last Messenger (peace be upon him).

Amusements, Music and Singing:

According to Fiqh us Sunnah Volume 2, Number; 153, "Recreation, amusements, and singing, if they stay within the moral bounds, are permissible on the days of Eid." Narrated Aysha: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) came to my house while two girls were singing beside me the songs of Buath (a story about the war between the two tribes of the Ansar, the Khazraj and the Aus, before Islam). The Prophet (peace be upon him) lay down and turned his face to the other side. Then Abu Bakr came and spoke to me harshly saying, "Musical instruments of Satan near the Prophet (peace be upon him)?" Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) turned his face towards him and said, "Leave them." When Abu Bakr became inattentive, I signaled to those girls to go out and they left. It was the day of

'Eid, and the Black people were playing with shields and spears; so either I requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) or he asked me whether I would like to see the display. I replied in the affirmative. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) made me stand behind him and my cheek was touching his cheek and he was saying, "Carry on! O Bani Arfida," till I got tired. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked me, "Are you satisfied (Is that sufficient for you)?" I replied in the affirmative and he told me to leave. (Sahih Al Bukhari Hadith number; 2:70). This Hadith is cited by scholars as evidence for the permissibility of singing, and some scholars cite it also in argument in favour of musical instruments, if with in Islamic values and principles. The traditional Ulema consider musical instruments totally forbidden (Haram). However some modernist think that the music, which encourages un-Islamic practices, is forbidden for that reason but the music which is not erotic, but relaxing and has a healthy effect on the listener, may be acceptable. Music,

differentiated as it may be in the countries between Morocco and India, follows: variations of highest subtlety on a comparatively simple given subject or theme.

Bible mentions about use of music by David (pbuh) while praising God: “Moreover four thousand were porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith.” (1Chronicles;23:5); “And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy endures for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.”(2Chronicles;7:6); “So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.”(2Samuel;6:15).

Pictures and Sculptures:



Making of statue existed in the time of David and Solomon, as indicated in Qur'an: "They worked for him (Solomon) as he desired: making arches, statue..."(Qur'an;34:13); but because the pagans used the pictures and idols for worship hence the Muslim scholars are in agreement about prohibition of statues, and

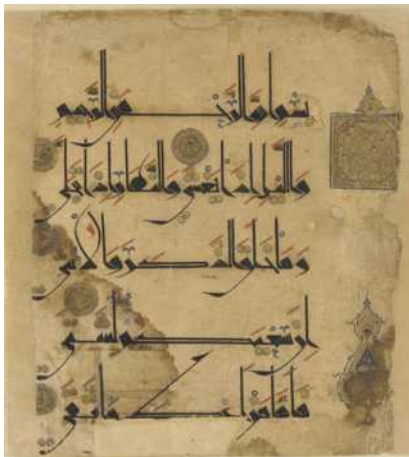
paintings of living creatures. However the Prophet (peace be upon him) once used a piece of cloth with pictures on it for prayers. After he finished, he expressed his dislike to that piece of cloth and said that it distracted him from his prayers. From this it may be deduced that it is discouraged to use such material for a prayer mat. Its use, however, does not affect the validity of prayer.



When the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned that pictures are strongly discouraged, he made the exception "unless

they be printed on material." This means material which is used for making clothes. So it may not be appropriate to say that photography, as it is used today, is forbidden, though some scholars hold opposite view. Indeed, it has numerous beneficial uses. If it is used for a bad purpose, as in the case of pornography or compromising individual privacy it becomes forbidden.

Calligraphy:



The centre of the Islamic artistic tradition lies in calligraphy, a distinguishing feature of this culture, in which the word as the medium of divine revelation (Qur'an) plays such an important role. After the 13th century a highly refined art of miniature developed, primarily in the non-Arab countries; it dwells, however, only rarely upon religious subjects. And a perfect harmony is reached in some of the miniature manuscripts of Iran, Muslim India, or Ottoman Turkey, which, in their lucid colours and fine details of execution, recall both the perfection of the calligraphy that surrounds them on delicate paper and the subtlety of the stories or poems that they accompany or illustrate.



Qutb Minar Minaret Delhi India

Arabesque & Architecture:



The typical expression of Muslim art is the arabesque, both in its geometric and in its vegetabilic form; one leaf, one flower growing out of the other, without beginning and end and capable of almost innumerable variations, only gradually detected by the eye -which never lose their charm.





The arabesques, were developed according to a strict ritual to a mathematical pattern and were refined until they reached a perfection of geometrical complicated figures, as in the dome of the Karatay Medrese in Konya (1251); it corresponds both to the most intricate lacelike Kufic inscriptions around this dome and to the poetical style of Jalāl ad-Dīn ar-Rūmī, who wrote in that very place and during those years.



According to a US study published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in its Journal on 21 February 2007; 'Designs on arabesque tiles in the Islamic world during the Middle Ages revealed their maker's understanding of mathematical concepts not grasped in the West until 500 years later. Many Medieval Islamic buildings walls have ornate geometric star and polygon or 'girih', patterns, which are often overlaid with a swirling network of lines - This girih tile method was more efficient and precise than the previous

approach, allowing for an important breakthrough in Islamic mathematics and design.’ An aversion to empty spaces distinguishes that art; neither the tile-covered walls of a mosque nor the rich imagery of a poem allows an unembellished area; and the decoration of a carpet can be extended almost without limit. The architecture of mosques with big halls, of Iran and adjacent countries; central buildings with the wonderfully shaped domes of the Ottoman Empire, and Muslim Spain are unique in elegance.

If any decoration was needed, it was the words of God, beautifully written or carved in the walls or around the domes.





At first connected with the mosques and later independent of them are schools, mausoleums, rooms for the students, and cells for the religious masters. The Mughals in India have left most beautiful buildings like Taj Mahal, mosques and gardens like Shalimar.

Poetry:

The aimless poetry with pagan inclinations is not approved in Islam, however there is no restrictions on good poetry: "Shall I tell you, O

people, on whom the devils descend? - They descend on every slandering sinner. Those who listen to hearsay - and most of them are liars and those poets who are followed by those who go astray. Do you not see, how aimlessly they wander in every valley, preaching what they do not practice themselves? However, an exception is made for those (poets) who believe, do good deeds, engage much in the remembrance of Allah and defend themselves when wronged, showing no vindictiveness. The unjust oppressors will soon find out what vicissitudes their affairs will take.”(Qur’an;26:221-227). Narrated Ubai bin Kab: Allah's Apostle said, "Some poetry contains wisdom." (Sahih Bukhari Hadith. Number;8.166). The ambiguity of Persian poetry, which oscillates between the worldly, the divine, and often the political level, is typical of Islamic writings. A similar characteristic even conditions innumerable historical works in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, which, especially in classical times, contain much valuable

information. The immortal mystical poems of Rumi comprise thousands of variations on the central theme of love. Although such a perfect congruency of poetry and fine arts is not frequently found, the precept about Persian art that "its wings are too heavy with beauty" can also be applied to Persian poetry. Thus, the tile work of a Persian mosque, which combines different levels of arabesque work with different styles of writing, is reminiscent of the way Persian poetry combines at least two levels of reality. The 20th century great Muslim poet, philosopher Muhammad Iqbal beautifully conveyed the divine message through his poetry, reviving the spirit among Muslims of India, resulting in creation of Pakistan.

Influence on Europe:

Europe has known art objects of Islamic origin since the early Middle Ages, when they were brought home by the crusaders or manufactured by the Arabs in Sicily and Spain. Much admired and even imitated, they formed part of the

material culture in those times, so much so that even the coronation robes of the German emperor were decorated with an Arabic inscription.



Saracen arches and Byzantine mosaics complement each other within the Palatine Chapel, Sicily.



*European depiction of the Persian doctor al-Razi, in Gerard of Cremona's *Receuil des traités de médecine* (1250–1260). Gerard de Cremona translated numerous works by Arabic scholars, such as al-Razi and Ibn Sina.*

At the same time, Islamic motives wandered into the belles lettres of Europe, and Islamic scientific books formed a basis for the development of Western science. Islamic culture as such, however, was rather an object of hatred than of admiration; a more objective

appreciation of both the works of art and of literature did not start until the mid-17th century, when travelers told of the magnificent buildings in Iran and Mughal India, and the first works from Persian literature were translated, influencing German classical literature. Indian miniatures inspired Rembrandt, Persian carpets were among the most coveted gifts for princes and princesses. A bias against the cultures of the East persisted, however, until after the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment; the indefatigable work of the British scholars at 'Fort William' at Calcutta brought new literary treasures to Europe, where they were studied carefully by specialists in the emerging field of Islamic studies. Poets such as Goethe in Germany in the early 19th century paved the way for a deeper understanding of Islamic poetry. Islamic literatures, however, continue to be known to the larger Western public almost exclusively by 'The Thousand and One Nights, or The Arabian Nights' Entertainment (translated first in the early 18th century), Omar Khayyam's rob'a'iyat,

and the lyrics of Hafez. Although the beauty of the Alhambra, for example, had already inspired European scholars and artists in the early 19th century, a thorough study of Islamic art as an independent field began only in the 20th century.



The Tabula Rogeriana, drawn by Al-Idrisi for Roger II of Sicily in 1154, one of the most advanced ancient world maps.

CONCLUSION:

Islamic society is governed through (Shura) consultation, based upon justice through Shari'a. When the message of Islam was preached, two menace; the slavery and usury were integral part of the societies internationally. Slavery it is sanctioned in Bible (Leviticus 25:44-46) while usury is prohibited. Islam does not approve of slavery, hence through variety of ways the reduction and eventual eradication of slavery was undertaken. Riba ('usury or interest) is prohibited in Islam, to avoid exploitation and develop economy. Muslims are allowed to eat everything (halal) which is good for the health and permissible. Similar prohibitions are also mentioned in Bible: Humanitarian obligations (Haqooq-ul-Ibad) are highly relevant in Muslim communities. It is totally baseless malicious propaganda to state that the minorities are not well treated in Islam. The Charter of Medina, in fact was the first ever written constitution in the history of mankind which gave the non-Muslims

right of choosing a legal system they wished their affairs be governed by, be it Islamic or Jewish law or pre-Islamic Arab tribal traditions. The Christians and Jews have special place in Islam, they are called People of the Book in Qur'an. The history of Islam proves this, when Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together in dominant Islamic societies in Spain, Baghdad and Ottomans empire. There are other social courtesies which Muslims are urged to extend to non Muslims.

Muslims are spread all around the world, all their local cultural practices like female circumcision, maltreatment of women etc cannot be called as part of Islamic culture. All Muslim practices may or may not be with in laid down Islamic principles. While attributing every action of Muslims, three broad categories, good Muslims, normal Muslims and bad Muslims like any other community or group should be kept in view. There are. Human life has very high value according to Qur'an. Islam, being the religion of moderation is in total harmony with the human

nature, it allows the fine arts, the adornments, which God has created **ذينة الله**, for the enjoyment and development of human faculties with in the bounds of decency and faith. Islam emphasizes moderation and balance in every sphere. The society based upon Islamic principles is not the society of ascetics and hermits. Ethics and human rights are accorded high priority. Many such aspects projected as 'Dilemma' are nothing but 'Delusion'. It good to conclude by repeating the unanimous e cardinal principle of peaceful coexistence of any society and humanity: "be good to your parents, kinfolks, orphans, the helpless, near and far neighbors who keep company with you.."(Qur'an;4:36), "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyselfs.."(Matthew 22:39-40, similarly Leviticus 19:18)

"O our Sustainer! Take us not to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong!" (Qur'an;2:286)

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