Globethics Repository



Islam in concept

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see https://www.globethics.net. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy.

Item Type	Book
Authors	Cooperative Office for Propagation, Guidance, and Warning of Expatriates in the city of Zelfi
Publisher	Islamic Book
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-11-13 13:08:45
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/211932

Islam

in

Concept

In The Name of Allah
Most Gracious Most Merciful

ISLAM At A Glance	What They Say About The ISLAM
What They Say About The QURAN	Who Is Prophet Of ISLAM
What They Say About MUHAMMAD	Moral System Of ISLAM
Life After Death	Prophet hood In ISLAM
Concept Of Worship In ISLAM	Concept Of GOD In ISLAM
Human Rights In ISLAM	The Sword Of ISLAM

MICHEAL H. HART in his recently published book on rating of men who contributed towards the benefit and upliftment of mankind writes: " My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels." (M.H. Hart, The 100: A ranking of the most influential persons in History `, New York, 1987, pp.33).

HERBERT HOBOHM: German Diplomat, Missionary and Social worker An intellectual, who has been serving the German Diplomatic Mission in various parts of the world. Presently working as Cultural Attaché in German Embassy in Riyadh. (Embraced Islam in 1941); He said: "I have lived under different systems of life and have has the opportunity of studying various ideologies, but have come to the conclusion that none is as perfect as Islam. None of the systems has got a complete code of a noble life. Only Islam has it; and that is why good men embrace it Islam is not theoretical; it is practical. It means complete submission to the Will of God."

AHMED HOLT: British Civil contractor Traveled extensively in search of the Divine truth. Spent time in research and comparative study of Judaism Christianity and Islam. (Embraced Islam in J975); He said: "The 'Sword of Islam' is not the sword of steel. I know this by experience, because the sword of Islam struck deep into my own heart It didn't bring death, but it brought a new life; it brought an awareness and it brought an awakening as to who am I and what am I and for what I am here?"

[This book explaines (in general) the concept of Islam in simple phrases especially for non-muslims. Also explains the concept of some terms related to Islam like, Almighty Allah, God, Quran, Muhammad, Jesus, life after death, moral system in Islam, worship in Islam, prophethood, Human rights in Islam, Status of woman in Islam, Prayer, fasting, Pilgrimage and much more ...]

If you possess a soft and tender heart and an open mind, do write to us for some basic information about the way of life called ISLAM. Do not believe in hearsay and learn from the direct sources. We are ready to help.

ISLAM AT A GLANCE

ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

The Arabic word Islam means peace, submission and obedience. The religion of Islam is the complete acceptance of the teachings and guidance of Allah as revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

A Muslim is one who believes in Allah and strives for total reorganization of his life according to His revealed guidance and the sayings of His Prophet. He also works for building human society on the same basis. "Muhammadanism" is a misnomer for Islam and offends its very spirit.

The word 'Allah' is the proper name of God in Arabic. It is the unique term because it has no plural form or feminine gender.

CONTINUITY OF MESSAGE

Islam is not a new religion. It is, in essence the same message and guidance which Allah revealed to all Prophets. The message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is Islam in its comprehensive, complete and final form.

Say, "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismael' Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets, from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in-Islam)." (Quran 3:84).

The Five Pillars of Islam

1. The declaration of faith: To bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger to all human beings till the Day of Judgment. The Prophethood of Muhammad obliges the Muslims to follow his exemplary life as a model.

2. Prayers: Daily prayers are offered five times a day as a duty towards Allah. They strengthen and enliven the belief in Allah and inspire man to a higher morality. They purify the heart and prevent temptation towards wrong-doings and evils.

3. Fasting the month of Ramadhan: The Muslims during the month of Ramadhan not only abstain from food, drink & sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset, but also from evil intentions and desires. It teaches love, sincerity and devotion. It develops a sound social conscience, patience, selfishlessness and will-power.

4. Zakat: To pay annually 2.5% of one's net saving on which a year has passed as a religious duty and purifying suns to be spent on poorer sections of the community.

5. Pilgrimage to Makkah: It is to be performed once in a lifetime, if one can afford it financially and physically.

Besides these pillars, every action which is done with the awareness that it fulfills the Will of Allah is also considered an act of worship.

Islam enjoins faith in the Oneness and Sovereignty of Allah, which makes man aware of the meaningfulness of the Universe and of his place in it.

This belief frees him from all fears and superstitions by making him conscious of the presence of the Almighty Allah and of his obligation towards Him. Faith alone is not enough. It must be expressed and tested in action, hence, the "five pillars of Islam" which are the manifestations of faith. Belief in one God requires that we look upon all humanity as one family under the universal Omnipotence of God - the Creator and Nourisher of all. Islam rejects the idea of a chosen people, making faith and good action as the only way to heaven. Thus, a direct relationship is established with God, without any intercessor.

MAN - The Free Agent:

Man is the highest creation of God. He is equipped with the highest of potentialities. He is left relatively free in his will, action and choice. Allah has shown him the right path, and the life of Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) provides a perfect example. Man's success and salvation lies in following both. Islam teaches the sanctity of the human personality and confers equal rights upon all without any distinction of race, sex or color.

The law of God, enunciated in the Quran and exemplified in the life of the prophet, is supreme in all cases. It applies equally to the highest and the lowest, the prince and the peasant, the ruler and the ruled.

Quran And Hadith:

The Quran is the last revealed word of Allah, the basic source of Islamic teachings and law. The Quran deals with the bases of creeds, morality, history of humanity, worship, knowledge, wisdom, God - man

relationship and human relationship in all aspects. Comprehensive teachings on which can be built sound systems of social justice, economics, politics, legislation, Jurisprudence, Law and international relations are the important contents of the Holy Quran. Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) himself was an unlettered man who could not read or write. Yet, the Holy Quran was committed to memory and writing by his followers under his supervision during his lifetime. The original and complete text of the Quran is available to everybody in Arabic, the language in which it was revealed. Translations of the meaning into many languages are widely used. HADITH, the teachings, sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), were -meticulously reported -and collected by his devoted companions, explain and elaborate the Quranic verses.

Concept of Worship:

Islam does not teach or accept mere ritualism. It emphasizes intention and action. To worship God is to know Him and love Him, to act upon His law in every aspect of life, to enjoin goodness and forbid wrongdoing and oppression, to practice charity and justice and to serve Him by serving mankind. The Quran presents-this concept in the following sublime manner.

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness - to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the messengers; and to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakat, to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and

patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all period of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing." (Quran 2:177).

Islamic Way of Life:

Islam provides definite guidelines for all peoples to follow in all walks of life. The guidance it gives is comprehensive and includes the social, economic, political, moral and spiritual aspects of life. The Quran reminds man of the purpose of his life on earth, of his duties and obligations towards himself, his kith and kin, his community, his fellow human beings and his Creator. Man is given fundamental guidelines about a purposeful life and then he is left with the challenge of human existence before him so that he might put these high ideals into practice. In Islam, man's life is a wholesome integrated unit and not a collection of fragmented competitive parts. The sacred and secular are not separate parts of man: they are united in the nature of being human.

Historical Prospective

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in the year 570 A.D. in the city of Makkah in Arabia. He came of a noble family; he received the first revelation at the age of forty. As soon as he started preaching Islam, he and his followers were persecuted and had to face severe hardships. He was, therefore, commanded by Allah to migrate to Madinah, another city in Arabia: During a short span of 23 years, he completed his mission of prophethood and died at the age of 63. He led a perfect life and set an example for all human beings as his life was the embodiment of the Quranic teachings.

Islam's Rational Appeal

Islam in its clear and direct way of expressing truth has a tremendous amount of appeal for any seeker of knowledge. It is a solution for all the problems of life. It is a guide towards a better and complete life, glorifying in all its phases, God, the Almighty Creator and the Merciful Nourisher.

Muslim Population At A Glance
(1995 Estimates).

Africa	322.85 Millions
Asia	828.45 Millions
Europe	29.00 Millions
North and South America & Australia	8.4 Millions
TOTAL	**1188.6 Millions**

Number of countries with over 50% Muslims is 53 Nos.

World Muslim Population - 2010

Continent Population *(in million)*	Total Population in 2010 *(in million)*	Muslim Percentage	Muslim Population in 2010 *(in million)*
Africa	1030.2	52.41 %	539.97
Asia	4166.6	31.98 %	1332.56
Europe	738.41	7.6 %	55.79
Oceania	33.54	1.49 %	0.5
North America	343.7	2.2 %	7.56
South America	585.1	0.42 %	2.45
Total	6694.89	28.96 %	1938.83

Muslim Population is increasing at **1.84%**.
The Muslim population in 2011 is **1,974.5** million.
Source: http://www.islamicpopulation.com

ISLAM - The Solution of Modern Problems:

The Brotherhood of Man: A major problem which advanced nations can send man to the moon but they cannot stop man from hating and fighting his fellow man. Islam, over the last 1400 years, has shown in practice how racism can be ended. Every year, during Hajj, the Islamic miracle of real brotherhood of all races and nations can be seen in action.

The Family: The family which is the basic unit of civilization is disintegrating in all western countries. Islam's family system brings into a fine equilibrium the rights of man, wife and children. Islam nourishes human unselfishness, generosity and love in a well- organized family system.

Unfragmented view of life: Humanbeings live according to their view of life the tragedy of secular societies is that they fail to connect the different aspects of life. The secular and religious, the scientific and the spiritual seem to be in conflict. Islam puts an end to this conflict and brings harmony to man's vision of life

What they say about

THE QURAN

Humanity received the Divine guidance only through two channels: firstly the word of Allah; secondly the Prophets who were chosen by Allah to communicate His Will to human beings. These two have always been going together and attempt to know the Will of Allah by neglecting either of these two has always been misleading.

The Hindus neglected their prophets and paid attention to their books that proved only word puzzles which they ultimately lost.

Similarly, the Christians in total disregard to the Book of Allah attached all importance to Jesus Christ and they not only elevated him to Divinity, but also lost the very essence of TAWHEED (Monotheism) contained in the Bible. As a matter of fact, the main scriptures revealed before the Quran, i.e., the Old Testament and the Gospel, came in book-form long after the days of the Prophets and also the translation. This was because the followers of Moses and Jesus made no considerable efforts to preserve these Revelations during the life of their Prophets. Rather they were written long after their disappearance. Thus, what we now have is in the form of the Bible (i.e., the Old and the New Testament) which is translations of individuals' accounts of the original revelations which contain additions and deletions made by the followers of the said Prophets.

On the contrary, the last revealed Book, the Quran is extant in its original form. Allah Himself guaranteed

its preservation and that is why the whole of the Quran was written during the life time of the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) though on separate pieces of palm leaves, parchments, bones, etc. Moreover, there were tens of thousands of the companions of the Prophet who memorized the whole Quran and the Prophet used to recite it to the angel Gabriel once a year and twice when he was about to die. Then the first Caliph Abu Bakr entrusted the collection of the whole Quran in one volume to Prophet's scribe Zaid lbn Thabit. This volume was with Abu Bakr till his death. Then it was with the second Caliph Umar and after turn it came to Hafsa, the Prophet's wife. It was from this original copy that the third Caliph Uthman prepared several other copies and sent them to different Muslim territories.

The Quran was so meticulously preserved because it was to be the Book of guidance for humanity for all times to come. That is why it does not address the Arabs alone in whose language it was revealed. It speaks to man as a human being. "O Man! What has seduced you from your Lord." The practicability of the Quranic teachings is established by the examples of Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and the good Muslims throughout the ages. The distinctive approach of the Quran is that its instructions are aimed at the general welfare of man and are based on the possibilities within his reach. In all its dimensions the Quranic wisdom is conclusive. It neither condemns nor tortures the flesh nor does it neglects the soul. It does not humanize Sod or does it deify man. Everything is carefully placed where it belongs in the total scheme of creation. Actually, the scholars who allege that Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was the author of the Quran claim something which is humanly impossible.

Firstly, could any person of the sixth century C. E. utter such scientific truths contained in the Quran? Could such person describe the evolution of the embryo inside the uterus, so accurately as we find it in modern science?

Secondly, is it logical to believe that Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), who up to the age of forty was marked only for his honesty and integrity, began all of a sodden the authorship of a book matchless in literary merit and the equivalent of which the whole legion of the Arab poets and orators of highest caliber could not produce?

Lastly, is it justified to say that Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) who was known as AL-AMEEN (The trustworthy) in his society and who at the same time admired by the non-Muslim scholars for his honesty and integrity, came forth with a false claim and on that falsehood could train thousands of men of character. Integrity and honesty which were able to establish the best human society on the surface of the earth? Surely, any sincere and unbiased searcher of truth will come to believe that the Quran is the revealed Book of Allah.

Without necessarily agreeing with all what they said, we furnish here some opinions of important non-Muslim scholars about the Quran. Readers can easily see how the modern world is coming closer to reality regarding the Quran We appeal to all open-minded scholars to study the Quran in the light of aforementioned points. We are sure that any such attempt will convince the reader that the Quran could never be written by any human being.

However often we turn to it [the Quran] at first disgusting us each time afresh, it soon attracts, astounds and in the end enforces our reverence… Its style in

accordance with its contents and aim is stern, grand, terrible -ever and anon truly sublime. Thus this book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence.-Goethe, quoted in T. P. Hughes, Dictionary of Islam' p.526.

The Koran admittedly occupies an important position among the great religious books of the world. Though the youngest of the epoch-making works belonging to this class of literature, it yields to hardly any in the wonderful effect which it has produced large masses of men. It has created an all but new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character. It first transformed a number of heterogeneous desert tribes of the Arabian Peninsula into a nation of heroes, and then proceeded to create the vast politico-religious organizations of Muhammadan world which are one of the great forces with which Europe and the East have to reckon today. - G. Margoliouth, Introduction to J M. Rodwell's, The Koran, New York: Everyman's Library, 1977, p. VII.

A work, then, which calls forth so powerful and seemingly incompatible emotions even in the distant reader - distant as to time, and still more so as mental development - a work which not only conquers the repugnance which he may begin its perusal, but changes this adverse feeling into astonishment and admiration, such a work must be a wonderful production of the human mind indeed and a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind Dr. Steingass, quoted in T. P. Huges', Dictionary of Islam,pp.526-7

The above observation makes the hypothesis advanced by those who see Muhammad as the author of the Quran untenable. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merits, in the whole of Arabic literature? How

could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at that time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncement on the subject? - Maurice Bucaille, The Bible, the Quran and Science, 1978, p.125

Here, therefore, its merits as a literary production should perhaps not be measured by some pre-conceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad's contemporaries and fellow countrymen. If he spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact well organized body, animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history - Dr. Streingass, quoted in Hughes', Dictionary of Islam, p.528

In making the present attempt to improve on the performance of my predecessors and to produce something which might be accepted as echoing however faintly the sublime rhetoric of the Arabic Koran, I have been at pain to study the intricate and richly varied rhythms which - apart from the message itself - constitute the Koran's undeniable claim to rank amongst the greatest literary masterpieces of mankind. . . This very characteristic feature - 'that inimitable symphony,' as the believing Pickthall described his Holy Book, 'the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy' - has been almost totally ignored by previous translators; it is therefore not surprising that what they have wrought sounds dull and flat indeed in comparison with the splendidly decorated original. - Arthur J. Arberry, The koran interpreted, London : Oxford University Press, 1964, P.X.

A totally objective examination of it [the Quran] in the light of modern knowledge, leads us to recognize the agreement between the two, as has been already noted on repeated occasions. It makes us deem it quite unthinkable for a man of Muhammad's time to have been the author of such statements on account of the state of knowledge in his day. Such considerations are part of what gives the Quranic Revelation its unique place, and forces the impartial scientist to admit his inability to provide an explanation which calls solely upon materialistic reasoning. - Maurice bucaille, The Ouran and Modern Science, 1981, P.18.

What they say about

THE ISLAM

The Islam that was revealed to Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), is the continuation and culmination of all the preceding revealed religions and hence it is for all times and all peoples. This status of Islam is sustained by glaring facts.

Firstly, there is no other revealed book extant in the same form and content as it was revealed.

Secondly, no other revealed religion has any convincing claim to provide guidance in all walks of human life for all times. But Islam addresses humanity at large and offers basic guidance regarding all human problems. Moreover, it has withstood the test of fourteen hundred years and has all the potentialities of establishing an ideal society as it did under the leadership of the last Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

It was a miracle that Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) could win even his toughest enemies to the fold of Islam without adequate material resources. Worshippers of idols, blind followers of the ways of forefathers, promoters of tribal feuds, abusers of human dignity and blood, became the most disciplined nation under the guidance of Islam and its Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Islam opened before them vistas of spiritual heights and human dignity by declaring righteousness as the sole criterion of merit and honour. Islam shaped their social, cultural, moral and commercial life with basic laws and principles which are in conformity with human nature and hence applicable in all times as human nature does not change.

It is so unfortunate that the Christian West instead of sincerely trying to understand the phenomenal success of Islam during its earlier time, considered it as a rival religion. During the centuries of the Crusades, this trend gained much force and impetus and huge amount of literature was produced to tarnish the image of Islam. But Islam has begun to unfold its genuineness to the modern scholars whose bold and objective observations on Islam belie all the charges leveled against it by the so-called unbiased-orientalists.

Here we furnish some observations on Islam by great and acknowledged non-Muslim scholars of modern time. Truth needs no advocates to plead on its behalf. But the prolonged malicious propaganda against Islam has created great confusion even in the minds of free and objective thinkers.

We hope that the following observations would contribute to initiating an objective evaluation of Islam.

It (Islam) replaced monkishness by manliness. It gives hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind and recognition of the fundamental facts of human nature. Canon Taylor, Paper read before the Church Congress at Walverhamton, Oct.7,1887 Quoted by Arnold in The Preaching of Islam , pp. 71-72.

Sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as l read in the Quran I find those dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world.Sarojini Naidu, Lectures on "The Ideals of Islam" see Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, Madras, 1918 p.167.

History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated. De Lacy O'Leary, Islam at the Crossroads, London, 1923 p.8.

But Islam has a still further service to render to the cause of humanity. It stands after all, nearer to the real East than Europe does, and it possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and cooperation. No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavors so many and so various races of mankind... Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of East and West is to be replaced by cooperation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problem with which Europe is faced in its relation with East. If they unite, the hope of a peaceful issue is immeasurably enhanced. But if Europe, by rejecting the cooperation of Islam, throws it into the arms of its rivals, the issue can be disastrous for both. H. A. R. Gibb, Whither Islam, London, 1932, p.379.

I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself an appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity. 1 believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would

bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today. G.B. Shaw, The Genuine Islam, Vol.1, No.81936.

The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.. A.J.Toynbee, Civilization on Trial, New York, 1984, p.205.

The rise of Islam is perhaps the most amazing event in human history. Springing from a land and a people like previously negligible, Islam spread within a century over half the earth, shattering great empires, overthrowing long-established religions, remolding the souls of races, and building up a whole new world - the world of Islam. The closer we examine this development the more extraordinary does it appears. The other great religions won their way slowly, by painful struggle and finally triumphed with the aid of powerful monarchs converted to the new faith. Christianity had its Constantine, Buddhism its Asoka, and Zoroastrianism its Cyrus, each lending to his chosen cult the mighty force of secular authority. Not so Islam. Arising in a desert land sparsely inhabited by a nomad race previously undistinguished in human annals, Islam sallied forth on its great adventure with the slenderest human backing and against the heaviest material odds. Yet Islam triumphed with seemingly miraculous ease, and a couple of generations saw the Fiery Crescent borne victorious from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas and from the desert of Central Asia to the desert of Central Africa. A. M. L. Stoddard, quoted in "Islam: The Religion of All Prophets" Begum Bawani Waqf Karachi Pakistan, p.56.

Islam is essentially a rationalistic religion in the widest sense of the term when viewed etymologically and historically. The definition of rationalism as a system bases religious belief on principles enunciated in the Sacred Book of Islam - the Quran, and the sayings and actions exemplified by the prophet which explains its principles...

The teachings of the Quran has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur, a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam. This fidelity to the fundamental dogma of the religion, the elemental simplicity of the formula in which it is enunciated, the proof that it gains from the fervid conviction of the missionaries who propagate it, are so many causes to explain the success of Muhammadan missionary efforts. A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men. Edward Montet, "La Propagande Chretienn et ses Adversaries Musulmans", Paris, 1890, quoted by T.W. Arnold in The Preaching of Islam, London, 1913, pp 413-414.

I am not a Muslim in the usual sense, though I hope I am a "Muslim" as "one surrendered to God," but I believe that embedded in the Quran and other expressions of the Islamic vision are vast stores of divine truth from which I and other occidentals have still much to learn, and "Islam is certainly a strong contender for the supplying of the bask framework of the one religion of the future.W.MontgomeryWatt, Islam and Christianity Today, London, 1983, p. IX.

What they say about

MUHAMMED sallallahu alaihi wasallam

During the centuries of the crusades, all sorts of slanders were invented against the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam – peace be upon him). But with the birth of the modern age, marked with religious tolerance and freedom of thought, there has been a great change in the approach of Western authors in their delineation of his life and character. The views of some non-Muslim scholars regarding Prophet Muhammad, given at the end, justify this opinion.

But the West has still to go a step forward to discover the greatest reality about Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and that is his being the true and the last Prophet of God for the whole humanity. In spite of all its objectivity and enlightenment there has been no sincere and objective attempt by the West to understand the Prophethood of Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). It is so strange that very glowing tributes are paid to him for his integrity and achievement but his claim of being the Prophet of God has been rejected explicitly or implicitly. It is here that a searching of the heart is required, and a review of the so-called objectivity is needed. The following glaring facts from the life of Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) have been furnished to facilitate an unbiased, logical and objective decision regarding his Prophethood.

Upto the age of forty years Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was not known as a statesman, a preacher or an orator. He was never seen discussing the principles of metaphysics, ethics, law, politics,

economics or sociology. No doubt he possessed an excellent character, charming manners and was highly cultured. Yet there was nothing so deeply striking and so radically extraordinary in him that would make men expects something great and revolutionary from him in the future. But when he came out of the Cave (HIRA) with a new message, he was completely transformed. "Is it possible for such a person of the above qualities to turn all of a sudden an impostor' and claimed to be the Prophet of Allah and invited all the rage of his people?" One might ask:"for what reason did he suffer all those hardships?" His people offered to accept him as their King and to lay all the riches of the land at his feet if only he would leave the preaching of his religion. But he refused their tempting offers and went on preaching his religion single-handedly in face of all kinds of insults, social boycott and even physical assault by his own people. "Was it not only God's support and his firm will to disseminate the message of Allah and his deep-rooted belief that ultimately Islam would emerge as the only way of uplift for the humanity, that he stood like a mountain in the face of all oppositions and conspiracies to eliminate him?" "Furthermore, had he come with a design of rivalry with the Christians and the Jews, why should he believed in Jesus Christ and Moses and other Prophets of God (peace be upon them), which is a basic requirement of faith without which no one could be a Muslim?"

"Is it a clear proof of his Prophethood, that in spite of being unlettered and having led a very normal and quiet life for forty years, when he began preaching his message, all of Arabia stood in awe and wonder and was bewitched by his wonderful eloquence and oratory?" It was so matchless that the whole legion of Arab poets, preachers and orators of highest calibers failed to bring

forth its equivalent. "And above all, how could he then pronounced proof of scientific truths contained in the Quran that no other human-being could possibly have acquired at that time?"

Last, but not the least, why did he lead a hard life even after gaining power and authority? Just ponder over the words he uttered while dying:" We the community of the Prophets are not inherited. Whatever we leave is for charity" As a matter of fact, Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), is the last link of Prophets sent in different lands and times since the beginning of the human life on earth.

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls ... his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an impostor but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words.

Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, i.e., Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he? Lamartine, Histoire de IA Turquie, Paris 1854 Vol.11, pp.276-77.

It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder; the same pure and' perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran... The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imaginations of man.? Believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God', is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol;' the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion. Edward Gibbon & Simon Ocklay, History of the Saracen Empire, London 1870, p.54.

He was Ceasar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretentions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. Bosworth Smith, Mohammad and Mohammadanism, London 1874, p.92.

It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher. Annie Besant, The lift and Teachings of Muhammad, Madras 1932, p.4

His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad. W.Montgomery, Mobrumad at Mecca Oxford, 1953, p.52

Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about A.D. 570 into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan1 the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty five, his employer recognizing his merit, proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years older, he married her, and as long as she lived remained a devoted husband. Like almost every major prophets before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the, transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded 'Read'. So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but

he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth; there is one God".

In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumors of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, 'An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human-being'. At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history : 'If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives far ever. James A. Michener, "Islam The Misunderstood Religion", In the Reader's Digest (American Edition) for may, 1955, pp.68-70

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level. Michael H. Hart, "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History", New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc. 1987, p.33

MORAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

Islam has laid down universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances. To achieve these rights Islam provides not only legal safeguards but also a very effective moral system. Thus whatever leads to the welfare of the individual or the society is morally good in Islam and whatever is injurious is morally had. Islam attaches so much importance to the love of God and love of man that it warns against too much of formalism.

We read in the Quran; "It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness- to believe in 'Allah and the last day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakah, to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing." (2:177)

We are given a beautiful description of the righteous and God-fearing man in these verses. He should obey salutary regulations, but he should fix his gaze on the love of God and the love of his fellow-men. We are given four heads:

a. Our faith should be true and sincere;
b. We must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellowmen.
c. We must be good citizens, supporting social organizations.

d. Our own individual soul must be firm and unshakable in all circumstances.

This is the standard by which a particular mode of conduct is judged and classified as good or bad. This standard of judgment provides the nucleus around which the whole moral conduct should revolve. Before laying down any moral injunctions Islam, seeks to firmly implant in man's heart the conviction that his dealings are with God who sees him at all times and in all places; that he may hide himself from the whole world but not from Him; that he may deceive everyone but cannot deceive God; that he can flee from the clutches of anyone else but not from God's.

Thus, by setting God's pleasure as the objective of man's life, Islam has furnished the highest possible standard of morality. This is bound to provide limitless avenues for the moral evolution of humanity. By making Divine revelations as the primary source of knowledge, it give permanence and stability to the moral standards which afford reasonable scope for genuine adjustments; adaptations and innovations though not for perversions, wild variation, atomistic relativism or moral fluidity. It provides a sanction to morality in the love and fear of God which will impel man to obey the moral law even without any external pressure. Through belief in God and the Day of Judgment it furnishes a force which enables a person to adopt the moral conduct with earnestness and sincerity, with all the devotion of heart and soul.

It does not, through a false sense of originality and innovation, provide any novel moral virtues nor does it seek to minimize the importance of the well known moral norms, nor does it give exaggerated importance to some and neglect others without cause. It takes up all the

commonly known moral virtues and with a sense of balance and proportion it assigns a suitable place and function to each one of them in the total scheme of life. It widens the scope of man's individual and collective life - his domestic associations, his civic conduct and his activities in the political, economic, legal, educational and social relations. It covers his life from home to society, from the dining-table to the battle-field and peace conferences, literally from the cradle to the grave. In short; no sphere of life is exempt from the universal; and comprehensive application of the moral principles of Islam. It makes morality reign supreme and ensures that the affairs of life, instead of dominated by selfish desires and petty interests, should be regulated by norms of morality

It stipulates for man a system of life which is based on Thai good and is free from all evil. It invokes the people, not only to practice virtue, but also to establish virtue and eradicate vice, to bid good and to forbid wrong. It wants that the verdict of conscience should prevail and virtue must not be subdued to play second fiddle to evil. Those who respond to this call are gathered together into a community and given the name Muslim. And the singular object underlying the formation of this community (Ummah) is that it should make an organized effort to establish and enforce goodness and suppress and eradicate evil.

Here we furnish some basic moral teachings of Islam for various aspects of a Muslim's life. The cover the broad spectrum of personal moral conduct of a Muslim as well as his social responsibilities.

God-Consciousness

The Quran mentions it as the highest quality of a Muslim: "The most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteousness of you" (49:13)

Humility, modesty, control of passion and desires, truthfulness, integrity, patience, steadfastness, and fulfilling one's promises are moral values which are emphasized again in the Quran. We read in the Quran: "And God loves those who are firm and steadfast" (3:146)

"Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your lord and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous,- Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and par-don (all) men;- For Allah lover those who do good:"-(3:133-134)

"O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct) of affairs." "And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men. Nor walk in insolence through the earth, Allah like not each arrogant boaster." "And be moderate in the pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass." (31:17-19)

In a way which summarizes the moral behavior of a -Muslim, the prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said: "My Sustainer has given me nine commands: to remain conscious of God, weather in private or in public; to speak justly, whether angry or pleased; to show moderation both when poor and when rich; to reunite

friendship with those who have broken it off with me; to give to him who refuses me; that my Silence should be occupied with thought; that my looking should be an admonition; and that l should command what is right."

Social Responsibilities: The teaching of Islam concerning social responsibilities are based on kindness and consideration of others. Since a broad injunction to be kind is likely to be ignored in specific situations; Islam lays emphasis on specific acts of kindness and defines the responsibilities and rights of various relationships. In a widening circle of relationship, then, our first obligation is to our immediate family- parents; husband or wife and children, then to other relatives; neighbors, friends and acquaintances, orphans and widows, the needy of the community, our fellow Muslims,: all our fellow human beings and animals.

Parents: Respect and care for parents is very much stressed in the Islamic teaching and is a very important part of a Muslim's expression of faith. "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents, Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them but address then, in terms of honor. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say: My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy, even as they cherished me in childhood "(17:23-24)

Other Relatives: "And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift." (17:26)

Neighbors: The Prophet Muhammed (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) has said: "He is not a believer who eats his fill when his neighbor beside him is hungry; and: He does not believe whose neighbors are not safe from his injurious conduct

Actually, according to the Quran and Sunnah a Muslim has to discharge his moral responsibility not only to his parents, relatives and neighbors but to the entire mankind, animals and useful trees and plants.

For example, hunting of birds and animals for the sake of game is not permitted. Similarly, cutting trees and plants which yield fruit is forbidden .unless there is a very pressing need for it.

Thus, on the basic moral characteristics, Islam builds a higher system of morality by virtue of which mankind can realize its greatest potential. Islam purifies the soul from self-seeking egotism, tyranny, wanton-ness and indiscipline. It creates God-fearing men, devoted to their ideals possessed of piety, abstinence: and discipline and uncompromising with falsehood. It induces feelings of moral responsibility and fosters-the capacity for self-control. Islam generates kindness, generosity, mercy, sympathy, peace, disinterested goodwill, scrupulous fairness and truthfulness towards all creation in all situations. It nourishes noble qualities from which only good may be expected.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

The question whether there is a life after death does not fall under the jurisdiction of science as science is concerned only with classification and analysis of sense data. Moreover, man has been busy with scientific inquiries and research, in the modern sense of the term, only for the last few centuries, while he has been familiar with the concept of life after death since times immemorial. All the prophets of Allah called their people to worship Him and to believe in life after death. They laid so much emphasis on the belief in life after death that even a slight doubt in it meant denying God and made all other beliefs meaningless. The very fact that all the prophets of God have dealt with this metaphysical question of life after death so confidently and so uniformly - the gap between their ages being thousands of years- goes to prove that the source of their knowledge of life after death as proclaimed by them all, was the same, i.e., Divine revelation. We also know that these prophets of God were greatly opposed by their people, mainly on the issue of life after death as their people thought it impossible. But in spite of opposition the prophets won so many sincere followers. The question arises what made those followers forsake the established beliefs, traditions and customs of their forefathers notwithstanding the risk of being totally alienated from their own community? The simple answer is: they made use of their faculties of mind and heart and realize the truth. Did they realize the truth through perceptual consciousness? Not so as perceptual experience of life after death is impossible. Actually God has given man besides perceptual consciousness rational aesthetic and moral consciousness too. It is this consciousness that guide man regarding realities that

can't be verified through sensory data. That is why all the prophets of God and life after death appeal to the aesthetic, moral and rational consciousness of man. For example when the idolaters of Makkah denied even the possibility of their stand by advancing very logical and rational arguments in support of it:

"And he makes comparisons for us and forgets his own (origin and) Creation: He says Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?" Say, "He will give them life who created them for the first time! For He frilly knows all creation. "The same Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! Ye kindle there with (your own fires)! "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof?" Yea, indeed! For He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite)! (36:78-81)

At another occasion the Quran very clearly says that the disbelievers have no sound basis for their denial of life after death. It is based on pure conjectures: "And they say: "What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time can destroy us." But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture: And when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, their argument is nothing but this: they say, "Bring (back) our forefathers, if what ye say is true!" (45:24-25)

Surely God will raise all the dead. But God has His own plan of things. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and then again the dead will be resurrected to stand before God. That day will be the beginning of the life that will never end, and that day every person will be accounted by God according to his her good or evil deed.

The explanation that the Quran gives about the necessity of life after death is what moral consciousness of man demands .Actually, if there is no life after death, the very belief in God becomes irrelevant or even if one believes In God: having once created man not concerned with his fate. Surely, God is just. He will punish the tyrants whose crimes are beyond count: having killed hundreds of innocent persons, created great corruption in the society, enslaved numerous persons to serve their whims, etc. Man having a very short span of life in this world, and this physical world too being not eternal, punishments or rewards equal to the evil or noble deeds of persons are not possible here. The Quran very emphatically states that the day of judgment must come and God will decide about the fate of each soul according to his or her record of deeds:"Tire Unbelievers say, "Never to us will come the Hour": say, "Nay! But must surely, by My Lord, it will come upon you" (34:3)

The day of Resurrection will be the Day when God's attributes of Justice and Mercy will be in full manifestation. God will shower His mercy on those who suffered for His sake in the worldly life, believing that an eternal bliss was awaiting them. But those who abused the bounties of God, caring nothing for the life to come, will be in the most miserable state. Drawing a comparison between them, the Quran says: "Are (these two) alike? One to whom We have made a goodly promise, and who is going to reach its fulfillment), and one to whom We have given the good things of this lift, but who, on the Day of Judgment, is to be among those brought up for punishment)?" (28:61)

The Quran also states that this worldly life is a preparation for the eternal life after death. But those who deny it become slaves of their passions and desires, make

fun of virtuous and God-conscious persons. Such persons realize their folly only at the time of their death and wish to be given a further chance in the world but in vain. Their miserable state at the time of death and the horror of the Day of Judgment, and the eternal bliss guaranteed to the sincere believers are very beautifully mentioned in the following verses of the Holy Quran:

"Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: "O my Lord! Send me back (to life),- "In order that I may work righteousness in the things 1 neglected. By no means! It is but a word he says". Before them is a Partition till the Day they are raised up. Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more relationships between them that day, nor will one ask after another! Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will be successful. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lair their souls; in Hell will they abide. The Fire will burn their faces, and they will therein grin, with their lips displaced." (23:99-104)

The belief in the life after death not only guarantees success in the hereafter but also mikes this world full of peace and happiness by making individuals most responsible and dutiful in their activities.

Think of the people of Arabia Gambling, Wine, tribal feuds, plundering and murdering were their main traits when they had no belief in life after death. But as soon as they accepted the belief in the One God and life after death they became the most disciplined nation of the world. They gave up their vices, helped each other in hours of need, and settled all their disputes on the basis of justice and equality. Similarly the denial of life after death has its consequences not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. When a nation as a whole denies it, all

kinds of evils and corruption become rampant in that society and ultimately it is destroyed. The Quran mentions the terrible end of Aad, Thamud and the Pharaoh in some detail:

"(The tribes of) Thamud and Ad, disbelieved in the judgment to come. As for Thamud, they were destroyed by the lighting, and as for Aad, they were destroyed by a fierce roaring wind, which He imposed on them for seven long nights and eight long days so that you might see the people laid prostrate in it as if they were the stumps of fallen down palm trees. Now do you see remnant of them? Pharaoh likewise and those before him and the subverted cities. They committed errors and they rebelled against the Messenger of their Lord, and He seized them with a surpassing grip. Lo, when the waters rose, We bore you in the running ship that We might make it a reminder for you and for heeding ears to hold. So When the trumpet is blown with a single blast and the earth and the mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single blow, then on that day, the Terror shall come to pass, and the heaven shall be split for upon that day it shall be very frail Then as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall say: "Here take and read my book! Certainly I thought that I should encounter my reckoning." So he shall be in a pleasing lift in a lofty garden, its clusters night to gather."Eat and drink with wholesome appetite for that you did long ago, in the days gone by". But as for him who is given his book in his left hand, he shall say: Would that 1 had not been given my book and not known my reckoning! Would it had been the end! My wealth has not availed me, my authority is gone from me' " (The Quran 69:4-39)

Thus there are very convincing reasons to believe in life after death.

Firstly, all the prophets of Allah have called their people to believe in it.

Secondly, Whenever a human society is built on the basis of this belief, it has been the most ideal and peaceful society, free of social and moral evils.

Thirdly, history bears witness that whenever this belief is rejected collectively by a group of people in spite of the repeated warning of the prophet, the group as a whole has been punished by Allah even in this world.

Fourthly, Moral, aesthetic arid rational faculties of man endorse the possibility of life after death.

Fifthly, Allah's attributes of Justice and Mercy have no meaning if there is no life after death.

PROPHETHOOD IN ISLAM

Prophethood is not unknown to heavenly revealed religions, such as Judaism and Christianity. In Islam, however, it has a special status and significance.

According to Islam, Allah created man for a noble purpose: to worship Him and lead a virtuous life based on His teachings and guidance. How man would know his role and the purpose of his existence unless he received clear and practical instructions of what Allah wants him to do? Here comes the need for prophethood. Thus Allah had chosen from every nation a prophet or messenger to convey His Message to people.

One might ask: How were the prophets chosen and who were entitled to this great honor? Prophethood is Allah's blessing and favor that He may bestow on whom He wills. However, by surveying the various messengers throughout history, three features of a prophet may be recognized:

1. He is the best in his community morally and intellectually. This is necessary because a prophet's life serves as a model for his followers, His personality should attract people to accept his message rather than drive them away by his imperfect character. After receiving the message he is infallible. That is, he would not commit any sin. He might perpetuate some minor mistakes which are usually corrected by revelation.

2. He is supported by miracles to prove that he is not an impostor. Those miracles are granted by the power and permission of Allah and are usually in the field in which his people excel which are recognized as superiors. We

might illustrate this by quoting the major miracles of the three prophets of the major world religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Moses' contemporaries were excellent in magic. So, his major miracle was to defeat the best magicians of Egypt of his days. Jesus' contemporaries were recognized as skillful physicians. Therefore, his miracles were to raise the dead and cure the incurable diseases. The Arabs, the contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), were known for their eloquence and magnificent poetry. So, Muhammad's major miracle was the Quran, the equivalent of which the whole legion of the Arab poets and orators could not produce despite the repeated challenge from the Quran itself Again, Muhammad's miracle has something special about it. All previous miracles were limited by time and place, i.e., they were shown to specific people at a specific time. Not so, the miracle of Muhammad - the Quran. it is a universal and everlasting miracle. Past and present generations witnessed it and future generations will witness its miraculous nature in term of its style, content ad spiritual uplifting. These still can be tested and will thereby prove the divine origin of the Quran.

3. Every prophet states clearly that what he receives is from Allah, but is not of his own, it is for the well-being of mankind. He also confirms what was revealed before him and what may be revealed after him. A prophet does this to show that he is simply conveying the message which is entrusted to him by the One True God of all people in all ages. So the message is one in essence and for the same purpose. Therefore, it should not deviate from what was revealed before him or what might come after him.

Prophets are necessary for conveying Allah's instructions and guidance to mankind. We have no way of knowing why we were created? What will happen to us after death? Is there any life after death? Are we accountable for our actions? In other words, is there any reward or punishment for our deeds in this life? These and so many other questions about God, angels, paradise, hell etc., can't be answered without direct revelation from the Creator and Knower of the unseen. Those answers must be authentic and must be brought by individuals whom we trust and respect. That is why; messengers are the select of their societies in terms of moral conducts and intellectual abilities.

Hence, the slanderous Biblical stories about some of the great prophets are not accepted by Muslims. For example, when Lot is reported to have committed fornication while drunk with his daughters or that David sent one of his leaders to death to be able to marry his wife. Prophets to Muslims are greater than what these stories indicate. These stories can't be true from the Islamic point of view. The prophets are also miraculously supported by God and instructed by Him to affirm the continuity of the message.

The content of the prophets' message to mankind can be summarized as follows:

a. Clear concept about God: His attributes, His creation, what should and should not be ascribed to Him.

b. Clear idea about the unseen world, the angles, jinn (spirits), Paradise and Hell.

c. Why has God created us? What does he want from us and what is the reward or punishment for obeying or disobeying Him?

d. How to run our societies according to His Will? That is clear instructions and laws when applied correctly and honestly, will result into a happy and ideal society.

It is clear from the above discussion that there is no substitute for prophets. Even today with the advancement of science, the only authentic source of information about the supernatural world is revelation. Guidance can be obtained neither from science nor from mystic experience. The first is too materialistic and too limited; the second is too subjective and frequently too misleading.

Now, one might ask:

How many prophets had God sent to humanity? We do not know for sure. Some Muslim scholars have suggested 240 thousand prophets. We are only sure of what is clearly mentioned in the Quran, that is, God has sent one messenger (or more) to every nation. It is because one of God's principles is that, He will never call a people to account unless He has made clear to them what to do and what not to do. The Quran mentions the names of 25 prophets and indicates that there have been others who were not mentioned to the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). These 25 include Noah, the man of the Ark, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, peace be upon them.. These five are the greatest among God's messengers. These are called 'the resolute' prophets.

An outstanding aspect of the Islamic belief in prophethood is that Muslims believe in and respect all the messengers of God with no exceptions. Since all the prophets came from the same One God and for the same purpose which is to lead mankind to Him, therefore,

belief in all the prophets is essential and logical. Accepting some and rejecting others, definitely, presupposes misconception of the prophets' role or on racial bias. The Muslims are the only people in the world who consider the belief in all the prophets of God an article of faith. Thus the Jews reject Jesus Christ and Muhammad; the Christians reject Muhammad which in reality is tantamount to a rejection of Moses because they do not abide by his laws. The Muslims accept them all as messengers of God who brought guidance to mankind. However, the revelation which those prophets brought from God had been tampered with, in one way or the other. The belief in all the messengers of God is enjoined on the Muslims by the Quran: Say ye: "We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them: and we submit to Allah." (2:136)

The Quran continues in the following verses to instruct the Muslims that this is the true and impartial belief. If other nations believe in the same, they are following the right track. If they do not, they only follow their own whims and biases which, ultimately, God will take care of them. Thus we read: "So if they believe as ye believe, they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism; but Allah will suffice thee as against them, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. (Our religion) takes its hue from Allah and who can give a better hue than Allah. It is He, Whom we worship." (2:137-38) There are, at least, two important points related to prophethood that need to be clarified. These points concern the roles of Jesus and

Muhammad, peace be upon them, as prophets who are unusually misunderstood.

The Quranic account of Jesus (alaihissalam) emphatically rejects the concept of his 'Divinity' and 'Divine Sonship' but presents him as one of the great prophets of God. The Quran makes it clear that the birth of Jesus without a father does not elevate him as son of God and it mentions in this respect Adam who was created by God without a father and mother: "Verily, the likeness of Jesus in Allah's sight is the likeness of Adam, He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: "Be" and he was."(3:59)

Like other prophets, Jesus (Eisa alaihissalam) also performed miracles. For example, he raised the dead and cured the blind and the lepers, but while showing these miracles he always made it clear that it was all from Almighty Allah.

Actually, the misconceptions about the personality and mission of Jesus found its way among his followers because the Divine message that he preached was not recorded during his presence in the world, rather, it was recorded after a lapse of about hundred years. According to the Quran he was sent to the children of Israel. He confirmed the validity of the Taurat which was revealed to Moses and he also brought the Glad Tidings of a final messenger after him "And remember Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Taurat (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad."(61:6)

Note: Ahmad or Ahmed which means "the praise one" is Muhammad's name.

However, the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus' ministry. They plotted against his life and in their opinion crucified him. But the Quran refutes this opinion and says that they neither killed him nor crucified him, rather, he was raised-up to God. There is a verse in the Quran which implies that Jesus will come back and all the Christians and Jews will believe in him before he dies. This is also supported by authentic sayings of the prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

The last prophet of God, Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), was born in Arabia in the sixth century C.E. Up to the age of forty, people of Makkah knew him only as a man of excellent character and cultured manners and called him AL-AMEEN (the trustworthy). He also did not know that he was soon to be made a prophet and receiver of revelation from God. He called the idolaters of Makkah to worship the Only One God and accept him as His prophet. The revelation that he received was preserved in his life-time in the memory of his companions which was also recorded on pieces of leather, wood etc. Thus, the Quran that is found today is the same that was revealed to him, not a syllable of it has been altered as God Himself has guaranteed its preservation. This Quran is the book of guidance for the whole humanity for all times, and mentions Muhammad as the last prophet of God.

WORSHIP IN ISLAM

The concept of worship in Islam is misunderstood by many people including some Muslims. Worship is commonly taken to mean performing ritualistic acts such as prayers, fasting, charity etc. This limited understanding of worship is only one part of the meaning of worship in Islam. That is why the traditional definition of worship in Islam is a comprehensive definition that includes almost everything in any individual's activities. The definition goes something like this: "Worship is an all inclusive term for all that God loves of external and internal sayings and actions of a person." In other words, **worship is everything one says or does for the pleasure of Allah**. This of course, includes rituals as well as beliefs, social activities, and personal contributions to the welfare of one's fellow human beings.

Islam looks at the individuals as a whole. He is required to submit himself completely to Allah, as the Quran instructed the prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) to do: "Say (O Muhammad) my prayers, my sacrifice, my life and my death belong to Allah; He has no partner and l am ordered to be among those who submit, i.e.; Muslims."(6:162-163) The natural result of this submission is that all one's activities should conform to the instructions of the one to whom the person is submitting. Islam being a way of life, requires that its followers model every aspect of their life according to its teaching, religious or otherwise: This might sound strange to some people who think of religion as a personal relation between the individual and God, having no impact on one's activities outside rituals.

As a matter of fact, Islam does not think much of mere rituals when they are performed mechanically and have no influence on one's inner life. The Quran addresses the believers and their neighbors from among the people of the Book who were arguing with them about the change of the direction of Qibla in the following verse: "It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your Kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakat, to fulfil the contract which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing" (2:177)

The deeds in the above verse are the deeds of righteousness and they are only a part of worship. The prophet told us about faith, which is the basis of worship, that it "is made up of seventy and some branches: the highest of which is the belief in the Oneness of Allah, (i.e., there is no God but Allah) and the lowest in the scale of worship is removing obstacles and dirt from people's way.."

Decent work is considered in Islam a type of worship. The prophet said: "Whoever finds himself at the night-fall tired of his work, God will forgive his sins." Seeking knowledge is one of the highest types of worship. The prophet told his companions that "seeking knowledge is a (religious) duty on every Muslim." Social courtesy and cooperation are part of worship when done for the sake of Allah as the prophet told us: "Receiving

your friend with a smile is a type of charity and putting some water in your neighbor's bucket is a charity"

It is worth nothing that even performing one's duties is considered a sort of worship. The prophet told us that whatever one spends for his family is a type of charity; he will be rewarded for it if he acquires it through legal means. Kindness to the members of one's family is an act of worship as when one puts a piece of food in his spouse's mouth as the prophet informed us. Not only this but even the acts we enjoy doing very much, when they are performed according to the instructions of the prophet, they are considered as acts of worship. The prophet told his companions that they will be rewarded even for having sexual intercourse with their wives. The companions were astonished and asked: "How are we going to be rewarded for doing something we enjoy very much?" The prophet asked them:"Suppose you satisfy your desires illegally, don't you think that you will be punished for that?" They replied, "yes" So, he said: "by satisfying it legally with your wives you are rewarded for it."This means they are acts as worship. Thus Islam does not consider sex a dirty thing that one should avoid. It is dirty and sin only when it is satisfied outside marital life.

It is clear, from the previous discussion that the concept of worship in Islam is a comprehensive concept that includes all the positive activities of the individual. This of course is in agreement with the all inclusive nature of Islam as a way of life. ISLAM regulates the human life on all levels: the individual, the social, the economic, the political and the spiritual; That is why Islam provides guidance to the smallest details of one's life on all these levels. Thus following these details is following Islamic instructions in that specific area. It is a

very encouraging element when one realizes that all his activities are considered by God as acts of worship. This should lead the individual to seek Allah's pleasure in his actions and always try to do them in the best possible manner whether he is watched by his superiors or he is alone. There is always the permanent supervisor, Who knows, hears and sees everything namely, Allah.

Discussing the non-ritual worship in Islam first does not mean under-evaluating the importance of the ritual ones. Actually ritual worships, if performed in true spirit, elevate man morally and spiritually and enable him to carry on his activities in all walks of life according to the Guidance of God. Among ritual worships, Salah (ritual prayer) occupies the key position for two reasons. Firstly, it is the distinctive mark of a believer. Secondly, it prevents an individual from all sorts of abominations and vices by providing him chances of direct communication with his creator five times a day, wherein he renews his covenant with God and seek His guidance again and again:"In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Praise be to Allah the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we sect " (1:4-5)

Actually Salah is the first practical manifestation of Faith and also the foremost of the basic conditions for the success of the believers: "Successful indeed are the Believers, those who humble themselves in their prayers." (23:1-2) The same fact has been emphasized by the prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) in a different way. He says:"Those who offer their Salah with great care 'and punctuality will find it a light, a proof of their faith and cause of their salvation on the Day of Judgment."

Zakah (poor-due) is an important pillar of Islam. In the Quran Salah and Zakah mostly have been mentioned together. Like Salah, Zakah is manifestation of faith which affirms that God is the sole owner of everything in the universe, and what men hold is a trust in their hand over which God made them trustees to discharge it as He has laid down: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend (in charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs "(57:7)

In this respect Zakah is an act of devotion which, like prayer, brings the believer nearer to his Lord. Apart from this, Zakah is a means of redistribution of wealth in a way that reduces differences between classes and groups. It makes a fair contribution to social stability. By purging the soul of the rich from selfishness and the soul of the poor from-envy and resentment against society, it closes down the channels leading to class hatred and makes it possible for the springs of brotherhood and solidarity to gush forth. Such stability is not merely based on the personal feelings of the rich: it stands on a firmly established right which, if the rich denied it, would be exacted by force, if necessary.

Siyam (fasting during the day time of the month of Ramadan) is another pillar of Islam. The main function of fasting is to make the Muslim pure from "within" as other aspects of Islam make him pure from "without". By such purity he responds to what is true and good and shuns what is false and evil. This is what we can perceive in the Quranic Verse: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (leant) self-restraint" (2:183).

In an authentic tradition, the prophet reported Allah as saying: ""He suspends eating, drinking, and

gratification of his sexual passion for My sake." Thus his reward is going to be according to 'God's great bounty.

Fasting, then, awakens the conscience of the individual and gives it scope for exercise in a joint experience for all societies at the same time, thus adding further strength to each individual. Moreover, fasting offers a compulsory rest to the duration of one full month. Similarly, fasting reminds an individual of those who are deprived of life necessities throughout the year or throughout life. It makes him realize the suffering of others, the less fortunate brothers in Islam, and thus promotes in him a sense of sympathy and kindness to them.

Lastly, we come to The Hajj (pilgrimage to the House of God in Makkah). This very important pillar of Islam, manifests a unique unity, dispelling all kinds of differences. Muslims from all corners of the world. wearing the same dress, respond to the call of Hajj in one voice and language: **LABBAIK ALLAHUMMA LABBAIK** (Here I am at your service O Lord!). In Hajj there is an exercise of-strict self-discipline and control where not only sacred things are revered, but even the life of plants and birds is made inviolable so that everything lives in safety: "Whoever honors the sacred Rites of Allah, for him it is good in the sight of his Lord...' (22:30), " And whoever holds in honor the Rites of Allah, (in the sacrifice of animals), such (honor) should come truly from piety of heart "(22:32)

Pilgrimage gives an opportunity to all Muslims from all groups, classes, organizations, and governments from all over the Muslim world to meet annually in a great congress. The time and venue of this congress has been set by their one God. Invitation to attend is open to

every Muslim. No one has the power to bar anyone. Every Muslim who attends is guaranteed full safety and freedom as long as he himself does not violate its safety.

Thus worship in Islam, whether ritual or non-ritual, trains the individual in such a way that he loves his Creator most and thereby gains an unyielding will and spirit to wipe out all evil and oppression from the human society and make the word of God dominant in the world.

CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM

It is a known fact that every language has one or more terms that are used in reference to God and sometimes to lesser deities. This is not the case with Allah. Allah is the personal name of the One true God. Nothing else can he call Allah. The term has no plural or gender. This shows its uniqueness when compared with the word god which can he made plural, gods or feminine, goddess. It is interesting to note that Allah is the personal name of God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus (alaihissalam) and a sister language of Arabic.

The One true God is a reflection of the unique concept that Islam associates with God. To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, who is similar to none and nothing is comparable to Him. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) "'as asked by his contemporaries about Allah; the answer came directly from God Himself in the form of a short chapter of the Quran, which is considered the essence of the Oneness of God or the motto of monotheism. This is chapter 112 which reads:"In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most merciful, Say: He is Allah, the One; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him." (112:14)

Some non-Muslims alleged that God in Islam is a stern and cruel God who demands to be obeyed fully. He is not loving and kind. Nothing can be further from truth than this allegation. It is enough to know that with the exception of one, each of the 114 chapters of the Quran begins with the verse: "In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.." In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)) we are

told that: "God is more loving and kinder than a mother to her dear child." But God is also Just. Hence evildoers and sinners must have their share of punishment and the virtuous his bounties and favors. Actually, God's attribute of Mercy has full manifestation in his attribute of Justice. People suffering throughout their life for his sake and people oppressing and exploiting other people all their life should not receive similar treatment from their Lord. Expecting similar treatment for them will amount to negating the very belief in the account-ability of mail in the hereafter and thereby negating all the incentives for a moral and virtuous life in this world. The following Quranic verses are very clear and straight forward in this respect."Verily, for the Righteous are gardens of Delight in the Presence of their Lord. Shall we then treat the people of Faith like the people of Sin? What is the matter with you? How judge you?" (68:34-36)

Islam rejects characterizing God in any human form or depicting him as favoring certain individuals or nations on the basis of wealth, power or race. He created the human beings as equals. They may distinguish themselves and get his favor through virtue and piety only.

The concept that God rested in the seventh day of creation, that God wrestled with one of his soldiers, that God is an envious plotter against mankind, or that God is incarnate in any human being are considered blasphemy from the Islamic point of view.

The unique usage of Allah as personal name of God is a reflection of Islam's emphasis of the purity of the belief in God which is the essence of the message of all God's messengers. Because of this Islam considers

associating any deity or personality with God as a deadly sin which God will never forgive, despite the fact, He may forgive all other sins.

The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if He is of the same nature as they are, He will be temporal and will therefore need a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him If the maker is not temporal, then He must eternal. But if He is eternal, He cannot be caused, and if nothing caused Him to come into existence, nothing outside Him cause Him to continue to exist, which means that He must be self-sufficient. And if He does not depend on anything for the continuance of His own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal and everlasting:"He is the first and the last."

He is self-sufficient or self-subsistent or, to use a Quranic term, Al-Qayyum. The Creator does not create only in the sense of bringing things into being, He also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

God is the Creator of everything. He is the guardian over everything. Unto Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth.

No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on God. He knows its lodging place and its repository.

God's Attributes: If the Creator is eternal and everlasting, then his attributes must also be eternal and everlasting He should not lose any of His attributes nor acquire new ones. If this is so, then His attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one Creator with such

absolute attributes? Can there be for example, two absolutely powerful Creators? A moment thought shows that this is not feasible. The Quran summarizes this argument in the following verses: "God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him: For then each god would have taken off that which he created and some of them would have risen up over other. And why, were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin."

The Oneness of God: The Quran reminds us of the falsity of all alleged gods. To the worshippers of man-made objects it asks: "Do you worship what you have carved yourself or have you taken unto you others beside Him to be your protectors. Even such as have no power to protect themselves?"

To the worshippers of heavenly bodies it cites the story of Abraham: When night outspread over him he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord." But when it set he said. "I love not The setters." When he saw moon rising, he said, "This is my Lord." But when it set he said: "If my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be of the people gone astray." when he saw the sun rising, he said, "This is my Lord; this is greater." But when it set he said. "O my people. surely I quit that you associate. I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth: a man of pure faith. I am not of the idolaters. "

The Believer's Attitude: In order to be a Muslim (i.e., to surrender oneself to God), it is necessary to believe in the Oneness of God, in the sense of His being the only Creator, Preserver, Nourisher, etc. But this belief - later on called Tawhid Al-Rububiyyah is not enough. Many of the idolaters knew and believed that only the Supreme

God could do all this. But that was not enough to make them Muslims. To Tan'hid ar-rububiyyah one must add tawhid al- uluhiyyah i.e., one acknowledges the fact that it is God alone who deserves to be worshipped, and thus abstains from worshipping any other thing or being.

Having achieved this knowledge of the One true God, man should constantly have faith in Him, and should allow nothing to induce him to deny truth.

When faith enters a person's heart, it causes certain mental states which result in certain actions. Taken together these mental states and actions are the proof for true faith. The prophet said, "Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by deeds"

Foremost among those mental states is the feeling of gratitude towards God, which could be said to be the essence of Ibada (Worship).

The feeling of gratitude is so important that a non-believer is called 'kafir', which means 'one who denies a truth', and also, 'one who is ungrateful.'

A believer loves, and is grateful to God for the bounties He bestowed upon him, but being aware of the fact that his good deeds, whether mental or physical, are far from being commensurate with Divine favors, he is always anxious lest God should punish him, here or in the Hereafter. He, therefore, fears Him, surrenders himself to Him and serves Him with great humility. One cannot be in such a mental state without being almost all the time mindful of God. Remembering God is thus the life force of faith, without which it fades and withers away.

The Quran tries to promote this feeling of gratitude by repeating the attributes of God very frequently. We find most of this attributes mentioned together in the following verses of the Quran: "Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; - Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; - the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the justly Proud glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. All that is in the heavens and on the earth, glorify Him. and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."(59:22-24).

"Allah! there is no god but He, - the Living, the Self subsisting, Supporter of all No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there that can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures As) Before or After or Behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most Height, the Supreme (in glory). "(2:255).

"People of the Book, commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not "Three": desist it will be better for you: for Allah is One God, Glory be to Him: (far Exalted

is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs. "(4:171)

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAM

Since God is the absolute and the sole master of men and the universe, He is the sovereign Lord, the sustainer and Nourisher, the Merciful, whose mercy en-shrines all beings; and since He has given each man human dignity and honor, and breathed into him of His own spirit, it follows that, united in Him and through Him, and apart from their other human attributes, men are substantially the same and no tangible and actual distinction can be made among them, on account of their accidental differences such as nationality, color or race. Every human being is thereby related to all others and all become one community of brotherhood in their honorable and pleasant servitude to the most compassionate Lord of the Universe. In such a heavenly atmosphere the Islamic confession of the oneness of God stands dominant and central, and necessarily entail the concept of the oneness of humanity and the brotherhood of mankind.

Although an Islamic state may be set up in any part of the earth, Islam does not seek to restrict human rights or privileges to the geographical limits of its own state. Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances whether he is at peace with the Islamic state or outside it, whether he is at peace with the state or at war. The Quran very clearly states: "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from Justice. Be just: that is next to Piety..." (5:8)

Human blood is sacred in any case and cannot be spilled without justification. And if anyone violates this

sanctity of human blood by killing a soul without justification, the Quran equates it to the killing of en-tire mankind: "...Whoso slays a soul not to retaliate for a soul slain, nor for corruption done in the land, should be as if he had slain mankind altogether." 5:32

It is not permissible to oppress women, children, old people, the sick or the wounded. Women's honor and chastity are to be respected under all circumstances. The hungry person must be feed, the naked clothed and the wounded or diseased treated medically irrespective of whether they belong to the Islamic community or are from amongst its enemies.

When we speak of human rights in Islam we really mean that these rights have been granted by God; they have not been granted by any king or by any legislative assembly. The fights granted by the kings or the legislative assemblies, can also be withdrawn in the same manner in which they are conferred. The same is the case with the rights accepted and recognized by the dictators. They can confer them when they please and withdraw them when they wish; and they can openly violate them when they like. But since in Islam human rights have been conferred by God, no legislative assembly in the world or any government on earth has the right or authority to make any amendment or change in the rights conferred by God. No one has the right to abrogate them, withdraw them. Nor are they basic human rights which are conferred on paper for the sake of show, exhibition and denied in actual life when the show is over. Nor are they like philosophical concepts which have no sanctions behind them.

The charter and the proclamations and the resolutions of the United Nations cannot be compared

with the rights sanctioned by God; because the former is not applicable on anybody while the latter is applicable on every believer. They are a part and parcel of the Islamic Faith. Every Muslim or administrators who claim themselves to be Muslims, will have to accept, recognize and enforce them. If they fail to enforce them, and start denying the rights that have been guaranteed by God or make amendments and changes in them, or practically violate them while paying lip service to them, the verdict of the Holy Quran for such government is clear and unequivocal "...If any do fail to judge by what Allah has revealed, they are Unbeliever." (5:44)

Human Rights in an Islamic State

1. The Security of life and Property:

In the address which the Prophet delivered on the occasion of the Farewell Hajj, he said: "Your lives and properties are forbidden to one another till you meet your Lord on the day of Resurrection". The Prophet has also said about the dhimmis (the non-Muslim citizens of the Muslim state):"One who kills a man under covenant (i.e., Dhimmi) will not even smell the fragrance of Paradise."

2. The Protection of Honor:

The Holy Quran lays down:

i. You who believe, do not let one (set of) people make fun of another set
ii. Do not defame one another.
iii. Do not insult by using nickname.
iv. Do not backbite or speak ill of one another 49:11-12

3. Sanctity and Security of Private Life:

The Holy Quran has laid down the injunction:

i. Do not spy on one another.
ii. Do not enter any houses unless you are sure of their occupant's consent.

4. The Security or Personal Freedom:

Islam has laid down the principle that no citizen can be imprisoned unless his guilt has been proved in an open court. To arrest a man only on the basis of suspicion and to throw him into a prison without proper court proceedings and without providing him a reasonable opportunity to produce his defense is not permissible in Islam.

5. The Right to Protest Against Tyranny:

Amongst the rights that Islam has conferred on human beings is the fight to protest against government's tyranny. Referring to it the Quran says: "God does not love evil talk in public unless it is by someone who has been injured thereby."(5:148)

In Islam, as has been argued earlier, all power and authority belongs to God and with man there is only delegated power which becomes a trust; everyone who becomes a recipient or a donee of such a power has to stand in awful reverence before his people towards whom and for whose sake he will be called upon to use these powers. This was acknowledged by Caliph Abu Bakr who said in his very first address: "Cooperate with me when I am right but correct me when I commit error;

obey me as long as I follow the commandments of Allah and his prophet; but turn away from me when I deviate."

6. Freedom of Expression:

Islam gives the right of freedom of the thought and expression to all citizens of the Islamic state on the condition that it should be used for the propagation of virtue and truth and not for spreading evil and wickedness. The Islamic concept of freedom of expression is much superior to the concept prevalent in the West. Under no circumstances would Islam allow evil and wickedness to be propagated. It also does not give anybody the right to use abusive or offensive language in the name of criticism. It was the practice of the Muslims to enquire from the Holy Prophet whether on a certain matter a divine injunction had been revealed to him. If he said that he had received no divine injunction, the Muslims freely expressed their opinion on the matter.

7. Freedom of Association:

Islam has also given people the right to freedom of association and formation of parties or organizations. This right is also subject to certain general rules.

8. Freedom of Conscience and Conviction:

Islam has laid down the injunction: "There should be no coercion in the matter of faith." On the contrary totalitarian societies totally deprive the individuals of their freedom. Indeed this undue exaltation of the state authority curiously enough postulates a sort of servitude, of slavishness on the part of man. At one time by slavery was meant total control of man over man - now that type

of slavery has been legally abolished but in its place totalitarian societies impose a similar sort of control over individuals.

9. Protection of Religious Sentiments:

Along with the freedom of conviction and freedom of conscience Islam has given the right to the individual that his religious sentiments will be given due respect and nothing will be said or done which may encroach upon his right.

10. Protection from Arbitrary Imprisonment:

Islam also recognizes the right of the individual that he will not be arrested or imprisoned for the offences of others. The Holy Quran has laid down this principle clearly: "No bearer of burdens shall be made to bear the burden of another." 35:18

11. The Right to Basic Necessities of Life:

Islam has recognized the right of the needy people that help and assistance will be provided to them: "And in their wealth there is acknowledged right for the needy and the destitute."(51:19)

12. Equality Before Law:

Islam gives its citizens the right to absolute and complete equality in the eyes of the law.

13. Rulers are Not Above the Law:

A woman belonging to a high and noble family was arrested in connection with theft. The case was brought

to the Prophet, and it was recommended that she might be spared the punishment of theft. The Prophet replied, "The nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common-man for their offences and let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes; I swear by Him Who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, has committed this crime, I would have amputated her hand."

14. The Right to participate in the Affairs of State:

"And their business is (conducted) through consultation among themselves."(42:38). The shoura or the legislative assembly has no other meaning except that: The executive head of the government and the members of the assembly should be elected by free and independent choice of the people.

Lastly, it is to be made clear that Islam tries to achieve the above-mentioned human rights and many others not only by providing certain legal safeguards but mainly by inviting mankind to transcend the lower level of animal life to be able to go beyond the mere ties fostered by the kinship of blood, racial superiority, linguistic arrogance, and economic privileges. It invites mankind to move on to a plane of existence where, by reason of his inner excellence, man can realize the ideal of the Brotherhood of man.

THE SWORD OF ISLAM

The first few who embraced the 'new' religion at the hands of the Prophet were his wife Khadijah, his servant Zaid and his eleven year old cousin Ali.

Among the ones who later joined this in Makkah were the honest merchant, Abu Bakr, the iron man of Arabia, Omar the Great, the shy businessman, Othman, Prophet's brave uncle Hamza and the family of a pagan's slave, Bilal. They simply couldn't resist the magic sword of a humble and lonely prophet! The negligible minority of the Believers in this new Faith was soon driven away from Makkah (with their "SWORD"). In the city of their migration, Medina, people not only welcomed the bearers, but the 'SWORD' as well. It didn't cease to work even there and it's magnetic force continued to 'pull' people towards it until the whole of Arabia joined the Faith. Compared to the population of the rest of the world at that time, the Arabs constituted a tiny minority. A fraction of this minority decided to take 'the SWORD' beyond the boundaries of the Arabian desert to the mighty empires of Rome and Persia, the shores of the Mediterranean, the coast of Malabar and the far away East Indies Islands. People after people went on surrendering to this SWORD and joining the Faith.

So sharp was the edge of the SWORD! It simply conquered the hearts; bodies yielded automatically.

It is the SWORD OF TRUTH , whose mere shine eliminates falsehood just like light wipes away darkness.

HAS THE SWORD GONE BLUNT? NO,FAR FROM IT.

It continues to pierce the hearts of countless men and women even today - in spite of the relentless efforts by persons with vested interests who like darkness to prevail, so that they may rob people of their good things.

Read below the impressions of some who were recently conquered by the same 'SWORD'. They were from different countries, speak different languages and have different back-grounds. Their present addresses are also given. Perhaps you may like to ask them how it feels to be struck by the SWORD OF TRUTH.

1. LEOPOLD WEISS: (Now Muhammad Asad):

Austrian statesman, journalist and author; former foreign correspondent for the Frankfuerter Zeitung; author of 'Islam at Cross Roads' and 'Road to Makkah' and translator of the Quran. (Embraced Islam in 1926).

"Islam appears to me like a perfect work of Architecture. All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and support each other. Nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking, with the result of an absolute balance and solid composure."

Present address: Dar AI-Andalus, 3 Library Ramp, Gilbraltor, Morocco.

2. AHMED HOLT: British Civil contractor Traveled extensively in search of the Divine truth. Spent time in research and comparative study of Judaism Christianity and Islam. (Embraced islam in J975).

"The 'Sword of Islam' is not the sword of steel. I know this by experience, because the sword of Islam struck deep into my own heart. It didn't bring death, but it

brought a new life; it brought an awareness and it brought an awakening as to who am I and what am I and for what I am here?"

Present address: 23 Welland Garden, Perivale, Middlesex UB6 8SZ, U.K.

3. BOODAN KOPANSKI: (now Bogdan Ataullah Kopanski): Originally Polish now American. Ph.D. in History and Politics. Had a very interesting journey to Islam and faced severe hardships; was imprisoned twice by the Polish Communist regime (1968, 1981-82). Embraced Islam in 1974.

"When I was 12 years old I rejected illogical and contradictory faith of Church. Two years later in 1962, I was fascinated by victorious struggle of the Algerian Muslim Mujahideen against French Colonialism. It was the first 'arrow' of Islam In the high school and earliest days of my education in the University, I was a typical example of 'rebel generation' of Reds... My way to the truth of AI-Qur'an was slow and unpaved ……. In 1974, I visited Turkey. I wrote my M.A. dissertation about Sultan and Caliph Suleiman Kanuni's policy towards Polish Kingdom. There, I was hit by the most beautiful voice of mankind: ADHAN, the call to prayer. My hair stood up. Unknown powerful force led me to old masjid in Istanbul. There, old smiling Turkish, bearded men taught me WUZU, ablution. I confessed to tears SHAHADAH and I prayed my first SALAH Maghrib... I swept out the rubbish ideologies... The first time in my life, my mind was relaxed and I felt pleasure of Allah's love in my heart. I was a Muslim...

Present address: 3013 Harrel Drive 203 Grand Prairie TX 75051 U.S.A.

4. VENGA TACHALAM ADIYAR: (Now Abdullah Adiyar): Indian, noted Tamil and Journalist worked as a News Editor in Dr M. Karunanidhi's daily Murasoli' for 17 years. Worked with 3 former Chief Ministers of Tamil Nada. Received alaimamani Award (Big Gem of Arts) from TN. Government in 1982. (Embraced Islam in 1987).

"In Islam I found suitable replies to nagging queries arising in my mind with regard to the theory of creation, status of woman, creation of universe, etc. The life history of the Holy Prophet attracted me very much and made easy for me to compare with other world leaders and their philosophies."

Present address: I Ashok Avenue, Rangarajapuram, Kodambakkam, Madras, India.

5. HERBERT HOBOHM: (Now Aman Hobohm). German Diplomat, Missionary and Social worker An intellectual, who has been serving the German Diplomatic Mission in various parts of the world. Presently working as Cultural Attache in German Embassy in Riyadh. (Embraced Islam in 1941).

"I have lived under different systems of life and have has the opportunity of studying various ideologies, but have come to the conclusion that none is as perfect as Islam. None of the systems has got a complete code of a noble life. Only is-lam has it; and that is why good men embrace it Islam is not theoretical; it is practical. It means complete submission to the Will of God."

Present address: Cultural Attache, German Embassy, P.O.Box 8974, Riyadh-l 1492, Saudi Arabia.

6. CAT STEVENS: (Now Yousuf Islam). British, Formerly Christian, world famous pop singer (Embraced islam in 1973).

"It will be wrong to judge Islam in the light of the behavior of some bad Muslims who are always shown on the media. It is like judging a car as bad one if the driver of the car is drunk and he bangs it with the wall. Islam guides all human beings in the daily life - in it's spiritual, mental and physical dimensions. But we must find the sources of these instructions: The Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Then we can see the ideal of Islam."

Present address: Chairman, Muslim Aid, 3 Furlong Road, London, N7, U.K.

7. Ms. MARGARET MARCUS: (Now Maryam Jamilah) American, formerly Jewish. Essayist and Journalist. Author of many books. (Embraced Islam in 1962).

"The authority of Islamic morals and laws proceeds from Almighty God. Pleasure and happiness in Islam are but the natural byproducts of emotional satisfaction in one's duties conscientiously performed for the pleasure of God to achieve salvation. In Islam, duties are always stressed above rights. Only in Islam was my quest for absolute values was satisfied. Only in Islam did I at last find all that was true, good, beautiful and which gives meaning and direction to human life and death."

Present address: C/o. Mr. Muhammad Yusuf Khan, Sant Nagar, Lahore, Pakistan.

8. WILFRIED HOFMAN: (Now Murad Hofman). Ph.D. (Law) Harvard. German. Social Scientist and Diplomat. Presently German Ambassador in Algeria

"For some time now, striving for more and more precision and brevity, I have tried to put on paper, in a systematic way, all philosophical truths, which, in my view, can be ascertained beyond reasonable doubt. In the course of this effort it dawned on me that the typical attitude of an agnostic is not an intelligent one; that man simply cannot escape a decision to believe; that the createdness of what exists around us is obvious; that 'Islam undoubtedly finds itself in the greatest harmony with overall reality. Thus I realize, not without shock, that step by step, in spite of myself and almost unconsciously, in feeling and thinking I have grown into a Muslim. Only one last step remained to be taken: to formalize my conversion. As of today, I am a Muslim, I have arrived."

Present address: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, BP 664, Alger-gare, Algeria.

9. CASSIUS CLAY: (Now Muhammad Ali Clay); American boxer. (Three times world Heavyweight Champion), formerly Christian. (Embraced Islam in 1965).

"I have had many nice moments in my life. But the feeling I had while standing on Mount Arafat on the day of 'Hajj' (Muslims' pilgrimage), was the most unique. I felt exalted by the indescribable spiritual atmosphere there as over a million and a half pilgrims invoked God to forgive them of their sins and bestow on them His choicest blessings. It was an exhilarating experience to see to people belonging to different colors; races and

nationalities, kings, heads of states and ordinary men from very poor countries all clad in two simple white sheets praying to God without any sense of either pride or inferiority. It was a practical manifestation of the concept of equality in Islam." (Speaking to the daily "Al-Madinah" Jeddah, 15 July 1989).

Present address: 1200E, 49 St., Chicago, ILL 60615.

These were the impressions of a few persons who had themselves been struck by the SWORD OF TRUTH.

As for the propaganda that it was the sword of steel (i.e. the force) which was instrumental in the universal expansion of Islam, we give below remarks of some prominent non-Muslims refuting this baseless claim:

1. M. K. GANDHI: "I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every trouble" Young India, 1924.

2. EDWARD GIBBON: "The greatest success of Mohammed's life was affected by sheer moral force without the stroke of a sword." History of the Saracen Empire, London. 1870.

3. A.S.TRITON:"The picture of the Muslim soldier advancing with a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other is quite false." Islam, London, 1951 - page 21.

4. DE LACY O'LEARY:"History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims, sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated "Islam at Crossroads, London, 1923-page 8

5. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO: "My problem to write this monograph is easier because we are not generally fed now on that (distorted) kind of history and much time need not be spent on pointing out our misrepresentations of Islam. The theory of Islam and sword, for instance is not heard now in any quarter worth the name. The principle of Islam that, 'there is no compulsion in religion' is well known" Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, Riyadh 1989 - page 4.

6. JAMES A. MICHENER: "No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam ... The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts that idea, and the Quran is explicit in support of the freedom of conscience" Islam - The Misunderstood Religion, Readers Digest (American Edition) May 1955.

7. LAWRENCE E. BROWNE: "Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword." The Prospects of Islam, London 1944.

WHO IS PROPHET OF ISLAM

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA confirms:

"a mass of detail in the early sources shows that he was an honest and upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were likewise honest and upright men." (Vol.12)

BERNARD SHAW said about him:

"He must be called the savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness." (The Genuine Islam, Singapore. Vol.1, No. 8, 1936)

He was by far the most remarkable man that ever set foot on this earth. He preached a religion, founded state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated numerous social and political reforms, established powerful and dynamic society to practice and represent his teachings and completely revolutionized the worlds of human thought and behavior for all times to come.

His Name Is MUHAMMAD (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)

During this short period of 23 years of his prophethood, he changed the complete Arabian peninsula from paganism and idolatry to worship of One God from tribal quarrels and wars to national solidarity and cohesion, from drunkenness and debauchery to sobriety and piety, from lawlessness and anarchy to disciplined living, from utter bankruptcy to highest standard of

moral excellence. Human history has never known such a complete transformation of a people or a place before or since - and IMAGINE all these unbelievable wonders in JUST OVER TWO DECADES.

Lamartine, the renowned historian speaking on essentials of Human Greatness wonders: "If greatness of purpose, smallness of means and rounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man of modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislation, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls.. his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an impostor but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was two-fold. the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words. Philosopher, orator, apostle. legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restore of rational dogmas, of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire - that is MUHAMMAD. As regards all the standards by which Human Greatness may be measured, we may well ask, IS THERE ANY MAN GREATER THAN HE?" (Lamartine. Historie de la Turquie. Paris, 1854, Vol. II. pp. 276-277).

The world has had its share of great personalities. But these were one-sided figures who distinguished them-selves in but one or two fields, such as religious thought or military leadership. The lives and teachings of this great personalities of the world are shrouded in the mist of time. There is so much speculation about the time and place of their birth, the mode and style of their life, the nature and detail of their teachings and the degree and measure of their success or failure that it is impossible for humanity to reconstruct accurately the lives and teachings of these men. Not so this man. Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) accomplished so much in such diverse fields of human thought and behavior in the fullest blaze of human history. Every detail of his private life and public utterances has been accurately documented and faithfully preserved to our day. The authenticity of the records so preserved are vouched for not only by the faithful followers but even by his prejudiced critics.

Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was a religious teacher, a social reformer, an administrative colossus, a moral guide, a faithful friend, a wonderful companion a devoted husband, a loving father - all in one. No other man in history ever excelled or equaled him in any of these different aspects of life- but it was only for the selfless personality of Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) to achieve such in-credible perfection.

Mahatma Gandhi, speaking on the character or Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) says in 'Young India'; "I wanted to know the best of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind ... I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity. The utter self-

effacement of the prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges. His intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle."

Thomas Carlyle in his 'Heroes and Hero-worship' was simply amazed as to: "how one man single handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades."

Diwan Chand Sharma wrote: "Muhammad was the soul of kindness and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him" (D.C. Sharma. 'The Prophets of the East', Calcutta, 1935.pp. 12)

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley speaking on the profession of ISLAM write: "I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, AND MUHAMMAD, APOSTLE OF GOD" is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. "The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honor of the Prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtues; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion" (History of the Saracen Empires, London, 1870, p.54).

Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was nothing more or less than a human being. But he was a man with a noble mission, which was ONLY ONE GOD and to teach them the way to honest and upright living based on the commands of God. He always described himself as Servant and Messenger of God," and so indeed every action of his proclaimed to be.

Speaking on the aspect of equality before God in Islam , the famous poetess of India, Sarojini Naidu says: "It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy for, in the mosque. When the call for prayer is sounded and worshippers are gathered together. The democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and king kneel side by side and proclaim": "God Alone is Great."

"I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes man instinctively a brother." (S. Naidu, Ideals of Islam, vide speeches & Writings, Madras, 1918, P.169).

In the words of Prof. Hurgronje: "the league of nations founded by the prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations as to show candle to other nations"

He continues: "the fact is that no nations of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the realization of the idea of the League of Nations."

The world has not hesitated to raise to divinity, individuals whose lives and missions have been lost in legend. Historically speaking none of these legends achieved even a fraction of what Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) accomplished. And all his striving was for the sole purpose of uniting mankind for the worship of One God on the codes of moral excellence. Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) or his followers never at any time claimed that he was a Son of God or the God-incarnate or a man with divinity - but he always was and is even today considered as only a Messenger chosen by God.

Micheal H. Hart in his recently published book on rating of men who contributed towards the benefit and upliftment of mankind writes:" My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels." (M.H. Hart, The 100: A ranking of the most influential persons in History ' , New York, 1987, pp.33).

Today after a lapse of fourteen centuries, the life and teaching of Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) have survived without the slightest loss, alteration or interpolation. They offer the same undying hope for treating mankind's many ills, which they did when he was alive. This is not a claim of Muhammad's (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) followers but also the inescapable conclusion forced upon by a critical and unbiased history.

“The least YOU could do as a thinking and concerned human being is to stop for a moment and ask yourself: Could these statements sounding so extraordinary and revolutionary be really true? And supposing they really are true and you did not know this man MUHAMMAD (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) or hear about him, isn't it time you respond to this tremendous challenge and put-in some efforts to know him?

It will cost you nothing but it may prove to be the beginning of a completely new era in your life.

We invite you to make a discovery of this wonderful man, 'MUHAMMAD (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)', the like of whom never walked on the face of this earth.

Further Reading on Islam:

-T.B. Irving, et al. : The Quran: Basic Teachings

-Hamuda Abdalati : Islam in Focus

- M. Qutb : Islam: The Misunderstood Religion

-Maudoodi : Towards Understanding Islam

-Maurice Bucaille : The Bible, The Quran and Science

-Suzanne Haneef : What Everyone Should know About Islam and the Muslims