

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

by

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PART I. OBJECTIVES

1. To provide Christian circles understanding and know-how of the practice of Islamic Faith.
2. To listen to both Christians and Muslims about the contributions and challenges of Islamic Faith in the globalized world.
3. To be informed about the spirituality and morality of Sufism.
4. To be familiar about the status of women in Islam and their contribution in the contemporary world.
5. To read together the interplay of challenges presented by Islam in Asian countries like Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and the Philippines.

PART II. INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC FAITH & PRACTICE *Fr. Thomas Michel, SJ*

A. ISLAM, IMAN, IHSAN

According to a hadith report preserved in Bukhari's famous collection of the sayings of the Prophet, Muhammad once said: "The religion of God has three parts: *islam*, *iman*, and *ihsan* (or *islah*), and the first of these has given name to the religion." *Islam* means "submission" and indicates what a Muslim must do to submit his/her life to God's will. The Arabic word *islam* means surrender or submission and denotes the active surrender of one's life to God. A *Muslim* is a person who submits one's life to God.

When Muslims say the religion of Islam has three parts, they mean three essential aspects:

- 1) *islam*: deeds, actions, what a Muslim must do,
- 2) *iman* (faith): the more interior concept believing what God has taught,
- 3) *ihsan* (goodness) or *islah* (uprightness), the process of interiorizing the divine commands so that they give shape and expression to an upright, good life that reflects God's own goodness. *Ihsan* is thus the fruit of carrying out the pillars of *islam* and accepting the pillars of *iman*, and goes beyond the basic minimum to integrate all that God has revealed and commanded into every aspect of one's daily behavior.

Islamic belief and practice has two sources: the Qur'an and the *hadith*. The Qur'an is the scripture, the revealed book of Islam. The

hadith are the sayings, deeds, and decisions of Muhammad and, together with the Qur'an, form the basis of Islamic belief and practice. The practice of *islam* rests on five "pillars," or basic acts which are obligatory for all Muslims.

B. THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

I.) SHAHADA

The first of these pillars, the *shahada* is different from the other four. It is more accurate to say that the practice of Islam rests on a central affirmation and upon four cornerstones of Islamic religiosity. The central affirmation, the "witness" or profession of faith, is brief, consisting of two phrases: 1) "There is no god but *The God*" (*Allâh*), 2) "and Muhammad is the messenger of God."

The first phrase indicates the universal aspect of Islamic witness, which Muslims profess together with other monotheists. God is one. Nothing else exists that is worthy of worship; there is no being other than God to whom adoration and obedience is owed. Muslims not only forbid worshiping other gods, but also reject devoting one's life to (that is, making false idols out of) wealth, power, beauty, sex, nation, etc. This affirmation Muslims share with other conscientious monotheists, such as Jews and Christians.

This first phrase of the *shahada* is so important that those who profess the unity of God form a broad monotheistic community. More than once, the Qur'an says that Muslims, as well as Jews, Christians, and Sabaeans (an ancient monotheist religion in the Middle East) - all those who believe in God and the Last Day - will have nothing to fear from God's judgment, nor will they come to harm. Muslims cannot wage *jihad* against those who profess the first half of the *shahada*, unless they (Muslim, Jewish, Christian etc.) be guilty of injustice and oppression.

The second phrase of the *shahada* indicates what is distinctive, unique, and particular to the Islamic community. "Muhammad is the messenger of God." In one sense, Muhammad is the last in a series of messengers, all sent by God with basically the same divine message for humans. However, the phrase implies that Muhammad is more than simply one among many. He is preeminently *the* messenger, the one who brought the final, complete, perfect expression of God's Message contained in the Qur'an. This second phrase of the *shahada* is not professed by Jews, Christians, or the followers of other religions. Thus, profession of the of the *shahada* makes a person member of the Islamic *umma* (community of faith.)

Muslims believe that Muhammad is the final prophet who completed the religion. This distinguishes them from later religious traditions, such as the Bahai faith, which accept the prophethood of Muhammad, but deny that he was the final, definitive prophet. Whether or not followers of the Ahmadiyya movement should be considered Muslims is a debated issue.

Profession of the *shahada*, with interior assent, makes a person a member of the *umma*. When one converts to Islam, the simple ceremony consists solely of his or her making the profession of faith in the presence of witnesses. When a child is born, Muslim parents immediately pronounce the *shahada* in the child's ears so that these be the first human words which it hears.

When one enters Islam by professing the unity of God and the messengership of Muhammad, the practice of submitting one's life to God rests on four pillars: prayer, aid to the poor, fasting, and pilgrimage. Muslim legal scholars spell out what is demanded of Muslims in each of these aspects of religious life.

2.) *SALAT*

The second pillar of Islam is *salat*, the ritual prayer. *Salat* is ritual prayer in that every detail of the prayer is carefully prescribed and Muslims are not free to deviate in any particular. The purpose of *salat* is to reaffirm one's submission to God at critical moments of daily life.

The first significant moment is the beginning of each new day. The day's actions begin with the prayer at **dawn**, which must be completed before sunrise. In the morning prayer, the Muslim turns to God anew in repentance and seeks God's mercy and forgiveness. The morning continues, filled with activities of homemaking, rearing children, work and business affairs. At **noon**, when daily cares and demands reach their peak, Muslims pause from these activities to reaffirm their submission to God's will in the second time for prayer. After the midday meal and, where local custom and climate favor the practice, a period of rest, the day's activities begin anew in mid-afternoon. Muslims begin their daily activity anew, between 15.30 and 16.00, with the **afternoon** prayer. After **sunset**, they conclude the day with prayer, and at **night**, before retiring, Muslims make their final periods of ritual prayer.

The morning prayer includes a petition seeking God's forgiveness, and at close of the day, at the sunset prayer, the petition for forgiveness is repeated. One could say that the daily rhythm of life in Muslim societies is shaped by the periods of prayer.

The *salat* is not a lengthy prayer, requiring but 5-10 minutes for its performance. It is intended to be performed in the midst of one's daily life, and may be done at home, office, construction site, or school. Once a week, at noontime on Fridays, Muslims males are required to perform the prayer in congregation, at the mosque, when a sermon is preached. Women usually perform the Friday prayer at home, although many mosques have special areas reserved for female worshippers.

The periods of prayer are preceded by a call to worship, a fixed text chanted from minarets by the *muezzin*. Like the prayer itself, the call to prayer is always made in Arabic. The call to prayer (*azan*) has three sections: an introduction, the actual call, and a conclusion.

- (Introduction) 1. God is greater! (4X)
2. I bear witness that there is no god but God! (2X)
3. I bear witness that Muhammad is messenger of God! (2X)
- (Call) 4. Come to prayer! (2X)
5. Come to the sowing [i.e., the seeds of salvation]! (2X)
6. Prayer is better than sleep (2X)
[Only at morning prayer.]
- (Conclusion) 7. God is greater! (2X)
8. There is no god but God! (1X)

The introduction (1-3) consists of praise to God (*Allahu akbar!* God is greater!, i.e., God is greater than all else) and a profession of the *shahada*. Then, (4-6), after summoning the believers to prayer (*Hayy 'ala s-salat*), the *muezzin* calls them to "the sowing" (*Hayy 'ala l-falah*). This unusual phrase, taken from agriculture, is an allusion to prayer as sowing the seed in this present world which will bear fruit in the world to come. To these, at the morning prayer, is added the affirmation that prayer is better than sleep, a reminder that in many parts of the Islamic world until today the call to prayer before dawn is the signal to rise from sleep. The conclusion to the prayer is brief, a repetition of the phrase *Allahu akbar*, and the single repetition of the first part of the *shahada*, "There is no god but God." After each phrase of the call to prayer there is a period of silence, during which pious Muslims are to repeat silently the phrase proclaimed by the *muezzin*, thus becoming not passive listeners, but making the call their own.

The call to prayer begins and ends with the name of God, ALLAH. Allah, whose literal meaning in Arabic is "The God," antedates the time of Muhammad and is the common name by which Arab Muslims and Christians call upon the one God.

Upon hearing the call to prayer, Muslims prepare themselves with a ritual ablution. They wash their hands and arms to the elbow; faces, with special attention to eyes, nose, ears, and mouth; and feet and legs to the knees. When they have incurred ritual impurity, e.g., through sexual relations or by touching an unclean animal, they perform "the complete ablution" by bathing. The ablution is symbolic, indicating the importance of interior purity and the exalted nature of prayer.

Muslims begin the prayer by facing Mecca and making the essential act of intention, called the *niyya*. This prayer, a time to pause and affirm to God that one is going to make, for example, the morning prayer, is so important that if a Muslim omits the *niyya*, the prayer is not valid and the obligation not fulfilled. The prayer continues with the recitation of the Fatiha, the short prayer that makes up the first chapter of the Qur'an, followed by other Qur'anic verses. The stages of the prayer are marked by a repetition of *Allahu akbar*. The most dramatic moment of the prayer occurs in the repeated prostrations, with forehead, hands and knees touching the ground. For Muslims, this "body prayer" symbolizes both the submission of one's life to God and trust in God's loving providence. The prayer is concluded with the greeting of peace offered to fellow worshipers on the right and left: "*Al-salamu alaykum! Wa-alaykum al-salam!*" ("Peace be with you. And with you peace")

The Friday noon prayer is the weekly congregational prayer. It is obligatory for men, but not for women, to perform this prayer in a mosque. Every mosque, no matter how simple, has two features: the *mihrab* marking the direction of Mecca (the *qibla*), and the *minbar*, the pulpit for the Friday sermon. Shoes are not worn in the mosque, and the floor is usually covered with carpets or mats. No pictures or statues are permitted in Islam, so the walls are usually decorated with verses of the Qur'an and geometrical designs.

3.) ZAKAT

The third pillar of Islam is *zakat*, the poor tax. *Zakat* is different from almsgiving (in Arabic, *sadaqa*), because *zakat* is a fixed obligation, a percentage of income to be used for the poor of the community. The purpose is to ensure that all members of the community are provided for. The term *zakat* is taken from the Arabic word meaning "to purify." The Muslim "purifies" one's wealth by giving a portion of it to the needy. The point is that each Muslim must realize that the poor of the community are his or her responsibility and providing for them is a sacred obligation.

The manner collecting and distributing *zakât* varies widely. It is common, especially during Ramadan, to see a bread truck pull up at a mosque in a poor neighborhood, and loaves of bread distributed to all who ask. In Indonesian and Malaysian villages, *zakât* is paid in rice. Elsewhere, families conscientiously prepare extra food at noon on Fridays so that they can feed the needy after Friday prayers.

The spiritual implications of *zakât* are that caring for the poor of the community is not a matter of choice, mood, or feelings of sympathy. It is a required duty for every obedient Muslim. Any relationship to God or life of prayer, fasting, and other acts of worship that does not include the element of concrete assistance to the poor of the community is not a full response to the Qur'anic message.

4.) SAUM: THE RAMADAN FAST

The key elements in the Ramadan fast are *remembrance, celebration, communal solidarity, renewal, forgiveness, and exposure* to the experience of hunger.

In Ramadan, Muslims **commemorate** the revelation of the Qur'an. It is a time for Muslims to thank God for the gift of the Qur'an with Qur'an study groups, academic congresses and public Qur'an recitations. During the last week of Ramadan, on the Night of Destiny (*Lailat al-Qadr*) when the Qur'an is believed to have been sent down from heaven, and when the Day of Judgment is expected, many Muslims spend the entire night in the mosque, reading the Qur'an, listening to its recitation, and performing recommended prayers. When the Last Judgment arrives, they hope to be found in prayer.

A second element is **celebration and social solidarity**. Ramadan is not a sad time, but the happiest month of the Islamic year and eagerly awaited. The ordinary rhythm of life is replaced by a "sacred" schedule, with families rising in the early hours of the day to prepare a light meal to be consumed before dawn. The work day is often shortened and schoolchildren given their annual vacation. The mosques are crowded with worshipers, visitors, sermons and recitations of the Qur'an. At the popular level, Muslims visit shrines and tombs of holy persons and Sufis hold sessions of *dhikr*.

Sunset is announced by the call to prayer from the minarets, and in many places by cannons, gunshots, or fireworks. At the *iftar*, Muslims break their fast with traditional foods. Families, neighbors, friends, and colleagues gather at one another's homes or, in modern cities, restaurants, to break the fast. After the meal, they return to the mosque for night prayer and the long *tarâwîh* prayers. After the *tarâwîh*, shops and markets are again open, social calls are made, and

special musical programs are aired on television. The socializing goes on until the early hours.

The communal performance of a long and difficult fast, with many periods of prayer, followed by communal celebration, creates a strong sense of social solidarity. The disruption of the normal daily schedule, with ordinary activities - rising, eating, praying, shopping - performed at extraordinary hours, results in the creation of a sacred time. Business affairs and work schedules are held to a minimum so that the main "business" of Ramadan is the celebration of the fast.

Renewal and forgiveness are important features of the fast. Muslims share a human tendency to get slack in their duties. Ramadan is a time for repentance and starting anew, and the *tarâwîh* prayers are directed towards asking forgiveness for the wrongs committed during the previous year. Muslims believe that God's mercy is boundless and immediate towards one who repents, but during Ramadan God's forgiveness is superabundant.

They believe that through the faithful practice of Ramadan, all their sins are forgiven, and so the *Id al-Fitr*, the Feast of Breaking the Fast, is celebrated with joy. Having been forgiven by God, Muslims are taught to **forgive one another**. Thus, the vertical and horizontal dimensions of forgiveness are joined. In the practice of *halal bi-halal*, Muslims visit parents and friends to ask forgiveness for any wrongs they might have committed towards the others during the previous year in order to prevent grievances from going on and on and poisoning human relations.

Finally, in Ramadan Muslims experience hunger. They are asked to recall the multitudes who go hungry. Ramadan is thus a time of **conscientization** towards the plight of the hungry. At the end of the fasting month, Muslims make a special offering called *zakat al-fitrah* so that the poor can also celebrate the feast of Breaking the Fast with joy.

5.) THE *HAJJ*: THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

For pious Muslims, the pilgrimage to Mecca is the dream of a lifetime, but due to factors of health, responsibilities, expense and logistics, most Muslims are never able to fulfill this desire. Because of the ease of travel, the applications to make the annual pilgrimage exceed what can be accommodated by the extensive but still limited facilities in Arabia. The norm laid down by the Saudi authorities is one pilgrim for every 1000 Muslims in each country. Although for most Muslims the *hajj* remains a dream, the pilgrimage has an important place in Islamic life. Like the other pillars of Islam, the form and

content is fixed. The pilgrimage must be made at the proper time (during the Month of the Pilgrimage) and prescribed actions must be performed on the proper days.

The pilgrimage is a reliving of Islamic roots. Mecca is the scene of Muhammad's birth and early mission and the site of the Ka'ba, towards which all Muslims pray. The Ka'ba symbolizes both the unity of the Islamic *umma* and also the ancient, God-given nature of Islam. Muslims believe that the Ka'ba was built by the prophet Abraham, the first structure on earth dedicated to the worship of the One God. Praying in the direction of the Ka'ba is a reminder of the unity of the Islamic community.

During the pilgrimage, Muslims enter a sacred state, a time dedicated totally to God. Normal clothing is replaced by two white sheets. It is forbidden to cut the hair or nails. Sexual abstinence is required. The preliminary rites are in Mecca, particularly the walking around the Ka'ba, as Muhammad and his Companions had done and reenactment of the faith of Hagar, Abraham, Hagar, and the baby Ismail. The central act of the pilgrimage takes place 30 km. from Mecca on the slopes of Mt. Arafat. Here Abraham was ordered to sacrifice his son Ismail. If the Day of Witness is omitted, one has not performed the pilgrimage and the obligation to do so remains.

Muslims ascend the mountain in time for noon prayers and remain there until after the sunset prayer. To understand the meaning of the rite, one should know that Arafat, in the midst of the Arabian desert, is one of the world's most arid, hot, and inhospitable locations. But if God had not commanded it, no one would go there. Standing in the sun on Arafat, the pilgrims profess that the human person finds true fulfillment and identity in obedience to God, that the ultimate purpose and reason for human existence is found in accepting willingly and joyfully one's creaturehood before God. A whole lifetime of Islamic experience is summed up in this one act.

After the return from Arafat, a final moment of the pilgrimage is worth noting. On the road to Mecca, in the village of Mina, the pilgrims sacrifice a goat or sheep to commemorate the faith of Abraham who was prepared to sacrifice his son, Isma'il, in obedience to God. At this point, the pilgrims become united with Muslims around the world who celebrate the second great Islamic feast, Id al-Adha, Feast of the Sacrifice. Just as the Day of Arafat sums up in one act the Islamic understanding of the meaning and purpose of human life, so the Sacrifice expresses their continuity with the faith of Abraham. At that moment, Muslims around the world vicariously participate in the pilgrimage, performing at their own homes or mosques the same rite performed in Mina.

Just as, in addition to required *salat*, devotional prayer (*du'a*) is recommended, besides the obligatory *zakat* Muslims are urged to give alms (*sadaqa*), and along with the Ramadan fast pious Muslims voluntarily fast on other days (e.g., Mondays and Thursdays), so also, the informal pilgrimage to Mecca called the '*umra* is considered highly meritorious. Every month outside the *hajj* season, over 200,000 Muslims make the '*umra*. These recommended but non-obligatory practices will be treated more fully in speaking of the third part of the religion of Islam, *islah*.

C. THE FIVE PILLARS OF IMAN

If *islam* can be described as **obedience** to what God has commanded, *iman* refers to **faith**, internal assent, to what God has revealed. Salvation (*najat*) in the sense of eternal reward with God is the result of obedience and faith. Both are necessary. Like the concept of *islam*, *iman* has five pillars.

1.) Belief in the oneness of God

The first pillar of faith is very similar to the first pillar of Islam (bearing witness that there is no god but God). As the *shahada* means that Muslims obey nothing other than God, the first pillar of faith indicates that Muslims believe nothing but what God has revealed. It is not sufficient to witness to God's uniqueness in the *shahada*; a Muslim must also believe all that God has taught. One of God's names is Al-Haqq, "the Truth," who has revealed His Word to humankind through the prophets. All human efforts at truth (theology, philosophy, science etc.) may be correct or incorrect, but only in God's Word can humans be sure of arriving at the truth and finding sound guidance.

2.) Belief in His Prophets

Muslims believe in all the prophets that God has sent. God has sent many prophets (122,000/ 144,000). There is no nation or ethnic group that has not been sent a prophet at some point in their history. In the Qur'an, 26 prophets are named, some of whom are the same as the patriarchs of the Old Testament, some are unique to the Arab tradition (Shuaib, Hud, Salih, Dhu'l Kifl, etc.), and from the New Testament, Yahya (John the Baptist) and Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary).

Of these, Muslims believe that before the time of Muhammad, there were five great prophets who advanced "the history of salvation" of humanity.

a.) **Adam**. The first man was the first prophet to receive God's revelation. This means that there was never a time in history when humans were left without Guidance. Adam sinned but repented and was forgiven; his sin was personal and Islam has no concept of "original sin."

b.) **Nuh (Noah)**. Adam's descendants abandoned God and divine teaching, so that God sent Noah to warn them. They did not listen to Noah and God sent the flood, after warning Noah to build the ark. After the flood, Noah became the "second father" of humanity.

c.) **Ibrahim (Abraham)**. After Noah, men once again took to sinning and worshipping idols. God sent Abraham to break the idols of his father's house and started on his wandering. After Sarah expelled Hagar and her baby Ismail, Abraham traced her to the region of Mecca, where he built the Ka'ba, the first structure on earth dedicated to the worship of God. With Abraham came the introduction of formal worship of God. Abraham was especially beloved to God (called **Khalil**, that is, "the close friend" of God) and is for Islam the model of faith.

d.) **Musa (Moses)**. Moses represents a new stage of God's guidance. He received the Torah, formed a religious community, the Jews, and gave them a law. But the Jews committed a serious error, believing that God had done all that for them alone, not realizing that God's mercy was for all people.

e.) **Isa (Jesus)**. God sent Jesus to correct the mistakes of the Jews, proclaiming God's will for all peoples. God sent Jesus with the Injil (Gospel) and through him worked many signs of His favor. His followers understood well the universal nature of Jesus' prophetic message, but they too committed a serious error. They began to worship the messenger, equating Jesus with God.

- **Muhammad, the final Messenger.**

Finally, God sent Muhammad with the perfect, complete message of the Qur'an and formed a community that would live according to its teachings. After Muhammad, God's revelation was complete, so Muhammad is called "the Seal of the Prophets." There can be no other prophets/messengers after Muhammad.

- **The teaching of the Qur'an about Jesus.**

The Qur'an makes claims about Jesus that are not even alleged of Muhammad. Jesus was born of a Virgin, his birth foretold by the angel. He spoke as an infant and worked miracles as a child (paralleling stories in apocryphal gospels), worked miracles, giving sight to the blind, making the lame walk, and raising the dead by God's grace. He formed a community of disciples (*hawariyyun*) and left them

a communion meal as a memorial. He predicted that another prophet (*Ahmad*, the Most Highly Praised One) would come after him. He did not die on the cross, but was assumed directly into heaven, where he awaits the end of time. His return will mark the beginning of the Last Days.

Jesus is called '*abdu'llah* (Servant of God), the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. He is the model of holiness; the Qur'an calls him *min al-muqarrabin* (someone brought near to God). Muhammad said, affirming Jesus' sinlessness: "Of all children born since Adam, all have been touched by sin except Jesus and his mother."

Jesus is not called "Son of God," as this is always understood in a physical way, and the Qur'an affirms that God is far beyond begetting children. The traditional Semitic triad - Allah (the High God), Allat (the High Goddess), and their son Baal (the Lord of Heaven) - had been erroneously interpreted by some poorly-informed Arab Christians to indicate a trinity of God, Mary (his wife), and Jesus (their son). This is strongly rejected by the Qur'an, just as it is rejected by Christian Scripture and tradition..

• The teaching of the Qur'an about Mary.

Mary is mentioned in the Qur'an 34 times (19 times in the New Testament). She is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an, the only woman to have a Qur'anic *sura* named after her. Mary is said to have received *wahy* (revelation), leading some Muslims to classify her among the prophets. The Qur'an recounts her Presentation in the Temple, the Annunciation, and the Birth of Jesus with stories that parallel the apocryphal gospels. She was without sin, strongly preserved her virginity, and is said to be the "greatest of all women." One obscure passage in the Qur'an may be an allusion to her Assumption into heaven. In popular piety, Mary is revered as a model for women, her shrines are visited by Muslims (Damascus, Jerusalem, Ephesus), and a "Marian fast" of silent prayer and reflection is undertaken by Muslim women expecting their first child.

3). *Belief in His Books*

Islam teaches that some of the prophets were sent with Scriptures. The "scrolls" of Abraham are lost, but the Torah given to Moses, the Psalms to David, the Wisdom to Solomon, and the Gospel to Jesus still exist. The Qur'an says that the Jews misinterpreted the Torah. In the polemics that ensued between Christians and Muslims, some Muslim scholars claimed that the original texts of the Torah and Injil were corrupted, so that the scriptures that Jews and Christians now have are

no longer original. More careful scholars claim that some corruption *may* have occurred or that the corrupted passages were minor. Others hold that Christians, led by St. Paul, virtually rewrote the original message given to Jesus, so that it is impossible today to recreate the revealed Book. Since Jews and Christians were recipients of revealed Books, even if they later may have corrupted them, they are called "the People of the Book" and have special privileges in Islamic law.

• The Qur'an, the Islamic Scripture

According to Islamic teaching, the Qur'an was revealed word-for-word to Muhammad. Hence, God, not Muhammad, is considered the author of the Qur'an. The name is taken from the Arabic verb *qara'a*, meaning "to recite, to read"; hence *Qur'an* means "Recitation," i.e., the recitation of God's revelations. The Qur'an is shorter than the Christian New Testament and is divided into 114 *suras* or chapters.

Muslims believe that God revealed His Word to Muhammad in the course of 22 years by mediation of the Angel Gabriel. Muhammad memorized each revelation and taught these verses orally to his early disciples, who would recite them together during the night. According to Islamic tradition, Muhammad was illiterate, which would not have been unusual in Arabia at that time. The revelations were not written down until the final years before Muhammad's death, when some disciples began to record verses on smooth stones, leaves, camel hide, tree bark, papyrus etc. Shortly after Muhammad's death, in the time of the Calif Uthman, all these fragments of the Qur'an were collected and a committee of scholars and *huffaz* (those who memorized the Qur'an) studied any variations and determined a definitive text. The earlier fragments were then destroyed. The "Uthmanic edition" is that used by Muslims today.

The Qur'an is not arranged chronologically or thematically. The longest *suras*, which were among the last to be revealed, are found at the front of the book, while the shortest *suras*, chronologically the earliest, are at the end. The result is that non-Muslims often find the Qur'an difficult to follow. The Qur'anic message exists only in Arabic, which is always used in prayer and recitation, but translations of the "meaning" of the Qur'an are permitted for those who do not know Arabic.

Among all religions, Islam is perhaps the most "Scripturally oriented." Much of Islamic religiosity centers on reading, reciting, listening to, studying and reflecting on the Qur'an. Believing that the Qur'an is God's own speech, reading and hearing the Qur'an are for Muslims encounters with God who reveals, teaches, and forms believers in faith and obedience.

Islamic education of children begins with children learning to read and memorize the Qur'an, despite the fact that for over 80% of Muslims Arabic is an unintelligible foreign language. It is expected that those who have begun their Islamic education by memorizing Qur'anic verses will, through subsequent study, come to learn the meaning of God's message. Because of its archaic language and the allusive, associative style of the Qur'an, it is not easy for modern persons to understand without careful study and instruction. Thus, the focus of religious education among Muslims is on study groups, sermons and lectures aimed at explaining the Qur'anic text and its application to daily life.

Muslims place great value on memorizing the Qur'an. All Muslims are expected to memorize some portions, and special honor is given to a person (*hâfiz/hâfiza*) who has memorized the entire Qur'an. There are special schools and academic programs throughout the Islamic world which concentrate on the memorization of the Qur'an. It is considered sinful to allow one's competence to lapse through negligence, hence the *hâfiz* takes on a lifetime responsibility.

Qur'an recitation is an important part of Islamic devotional life. Reciting the Qur'an is a sacred act, demanding careful attention and preparation, beginning, like all Islamic duties, with an act of intention (*niyya*), by which Muslims consecrate their efforts to God's service and praise.

Recitation of the Qur'an is complemented by private reading and study. The Qur'an is divided into 30 approximately equal parts so that a Muslim can conveniently read the whole Qur'an in the course of a month. Especially in Ramadan, Muslims are encouraged to read the entire Qur'an.

4.) *Belief in the Angels*

Islam teaches that there are good angels, whom God has given particular tasks. The Qur'an gives special attention to **Jibril** (Gabriel), the angel of inspiration who brings revelation to the prophets. As in the Jewish and Christian traditions, some angels rebelled and were cast out of heaven. Led by **Iblis** (or **Shaytan**), they tempt humans to disbelieve and disobey God. The Qur'an acknowledges lesser spirits, (*jinn*), some of whom are good, while others are evil. The spirit world, a widespread phenomenon of traditional Asian religiosity, is identified by Muslims with the *jinn*.

5.) *Belief in the Final Judgment*

Muslims await a Day of Final Judgment at which God will judge people according to their deeds. This doctrine emphasizes human

responsibility for one's actions; one day, God will ask each to account for the way they lived. The Qur'an teaches that Jews, Christians, and Sabaeans, along with Muslims, who believe in God and the Last Day, will have nothing to fear nor will they lose their reward. At the Final Judgment, the prophets will intercede for their respective communities (Moses for Jews, Jesus for Christians, Muhammad for Muslims). On the Last Day, humanity will consist of three groups:

- a) The damned, who disbelieved and disobeyed, will be consigned to the fires of Hell.
- b) The saved, who believed and obeyed, will be rewarded with Paradise (*janna*, the Garden).
- c) The holy ones, *min al muqarrabin*, whom God has graciously brought near to Himself.

D. ISLAH (UPRIGHTNESS), IHSAN (GOODNESS)

The third part of the Islamic religion emphasizes that a good, upright Muslim must not be satisfied with doing the minimum, but must make one's whole life conform to God's will. The "pillars" of *islam* and *iman* indicate the basic minimum that Muslims must fulfill in order to be saved on the Last Day. The good Muslim is urged to go far beyond that.

To this end, they are encouraged to perform voluntary religious acts in addition to the obligatory pillars. Besides the obligatory *salât*, there are recommended times of *salât*, such as during the night and on special occasions; further prostrations may be added to those required; many forms of informal prayer, *du'a*, are considered meritorious but not required. In addition to *zakât*, Muslims are urged to give alms (*sadaqa*) spontaneously to the poor. To the fast of Ramadan, many pious Muslims add recommended fasts, (e.g., every Monday and Thursday, or they extend the Ramadan fast by beginning two months early, making it a three month fast). In addition to the *hajj*, Muslims perform the *umra*, an informal pilgrimage to Mecca outside the *hajj* season.

• The *Sunna*

Recommended acts by which the Muslim can conform every aspect of life to God's will comprise the *sunna*. The *sunna* includes both ritual acts (prayer, fasting etc.) and instructions on the proper way to carry out worldly affairs like receiving guests, eating, travel, dress, doing business, family relations, even the performance of bodily functions. For example, it is *sunna* to greet a guest with *Al-salamu 'alaykum*.

Circumcision of boys is *sunna*. It is *sunna* to call people to prayer from the minaret. The *sunna* is derived from the practice of Muhammad found in the collections of *hadith* reports of his sayings, deeds and decisions. Islamic life can be called an "imitation of Muhammad," who, as the first hearer of the Qur'an, lived perfectly in response to its teachings. Muhammad is seen as the model Muslim who lived, to the smallest detail, in accord with the Qur'anic message.

Information about the life and deeds of Muhammad is found in the early biographies and in the collections of *hadith* reports. Of over 100,000 *hadiths*, about 2000 are soundly authenticated and form the basis of Islamic faith and practice. With the Qur'an, sound *hadiths* are the source of the *sunna*. The *hadith* reports elaborate the teachings of the Qur'an and also counsel Muslims on the interior attitude that should accompany Islamic practices. For example, a *hadith* regarding almsgiving recalls Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "If you give alms openly, that is good, but if you give them to the needy in secret, it is even better, and will atone for some of your bad deeds."

• The *Shari'a*

The Qur'an and *sunna* form the main bases of the *shari'a*, the Islamic way of life. Containing elements of law, but going far beyond the notion of law, the *shari'a* indicates the totality of actions and attitudes that characterize Islamic life and society. Elaborated by the science of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), the *shari'a* covers every aspect of human life, from personal affairs and family relations to the social, economic, and political organization of the community.

Muslim scholars speak of four sources of the *shari'a*: 1) the Qur'an (the divine source); 2) the sound *hadith* from the prophet Muhammad (the prophetic source); 3) the consensus of the community, called *ijma'* (the communitarian source); and 4) *ijtihad*, the effort of the individual believer to apply the *shari'a* in the context of place, time, and culture (the individual source). Far from being embarrassed by having a religion of law, Muslims believe that the *shari'a* is one of God's greatest gifts to them.

Although the word *shari'a* does not appear in the Qur'an, all Muslims agree that the concept can be found there. In the Qur'an, there are many regulations and legal decisions aimed at giving guidance to the Islamic community in matters related to the ordering of life in society. In the first centuries after the time of Muhammad, Muslim scholars undertook the task of gathering, organizing, and giving a theoretical framework, basic principles, and systematic method of

development to these regulations. Many legal systems, (*madhhab*, pl. *madhahib*) appeared in the Islamic community and, in the course of time, four systems were eventually recognized among Sunni Muslims. Shi'a have their own Ja'fari *madhhab*.

Each *madhhab* is considered acceptable, and theoretically every Muslim is free to choose and follow any *madhhab*. The practical demands of living together have required that, in every region, one or another *madhhab* is dominant. In North and West Africa, **Maliki** law is followed. In Southeast Asia, Gujarat in India, southern Arabia, East Africa, and the city of Cairo in Egypt, it is the **Shafi'i** *madhhab* which dominates. The **Hanafi** system is the most widespread, covering most of the Arab countries of the Middle East, Turkey, Central Asia, and the nations of the Indian subcontinent. Since the main regions of Muslim immigration to Europe and North America were those of Hanafi tradition, the Hanafi *madhhab* is also the main legal system followed there. The **Hanbali** *madhhab* is the most restricted geographically, followed only in Saudi Arabia.

The function of the *shari'a* in Islam is to enable the believer to know the will of God in every aspect of life. Since the revelation of the Qur'an, humans can no longer claim ignorance or use the pretext that they "do not know." The *shari'a* is meant to make the will of God clear in all situations and hence covers the personal, familial, social, economic, and governmental spheres of life. Being able to know the will of God focuses the attention of the believer on the question of obedience, to obey and submit one's life to God or knowingly choose to disobey God's commands. The *shari'a* has many parts dealing with distinct areas of life. There are sections on faith and what to believe (*aqidah*); ritual, the correct way to pray, fast, pay the poor tax, go on pilgrimage etc. (*ibâdât*; economic affairs (*mu'amalât*); principles of government (*siyâsah*); punishments (*hudûd*); family law (*al-ahwâl al-shakhsiyya*); and moral instruction (*akhlâq*).

According to the principles of *fiqh*, every human act falls into one of five categories. These categories are flexible, and circumstances can and do influence the moral nature of the act. The study of *fiqh* determines the relative weight that is to be given to often conflicting circumstances.

- 1) *obligatory*: the omission of which, without serious reason, is a serious sin,
- 2) *recommended*: these acts, forming the important category of *sunna*, are highly encouraged, but no sin is attached to their omission,

3) *indifferent*: one can perform or omit.

4) *reprehensible*: acts that should be avoided, although they are not strictly forbidden,

5) *forbidden*: serious sins that demand repentance and forgiveness from God.

The *shari'a* is **personal law**, applying to members of a specific religious community. Muslims also recognize the *shari'a* of Christians, brought by Jesus, and the *shari'a* of Jews, brought by Moses. This is in contrast to the Western **territorial** concept of law. Western law codes apply to all persons living within a certain territory, irrespective of religion, race, or social class.

In pre-colonial Muslim society, each religious community was governed by its own laws in matters of personal law and each had its own recognized status, rights, and duties. The state intervened in cases of conflict between the communities. During the colonial period, most Muslim regions became subject to territorial law imposed by the colonial powers. After independence, most Muslim states simply updated and modified colonial law, although some movements today advocate a return to the *shari'a* system that predated the colonial era. This often means application of the *shari'a* as a kind of territorial law of the state.

• **Modern debate over the nature of the *shari'a***

Until the 20th century, the *shari'a* was assumed to have found its final, complete form codified in the four *madhhabs*. *Fiqh* was limited to the study of differences between the four systems and to the application of principles that had already been determined. The door of *ijtihad*, the principle of personal effort, was said to be closed. Ordinary Muslims were not expected to do *ijtihad*, but rather to obey the legal opinions of the legal scholars.

This concept is challenged today by Muslim scholars. They stress the necessity for each Muslim to engage in *ijtihad*, to the extent they are able, in order to arrive at personal moral decisions. The *shari'a* has to be adapted and modified to express the will of God in every social situation and culture in which Muslims live, and rethought at each new period of history. This can only happen if Muslims see *ijtihad* not as an activity limited to highly educated legal scholars, but the duty of each Muslim, to the extent that their knowledge and abilities permit. The debate about the nature of the *shari'a*, and specifically the use of *ijtihad*, is heatedly discussed by Muslims today.

• *Jihad*

The word *jihad* means “struggle” and is a duty of every Muslim. *Jihad* implies that it is not easy to live completely in accord with God’s will. It takes effort, personal sacrifice, and deep motivation to let God’s will be sovereign in a person’s life. Simply pronouncing the *shahada* does not mean that someone has fully submitted every aspect of his/her life to the will of God. This is a lifetime effort, one that is never finished, one that allows no complacency or self-satisfaction.

Muslims distinguish between three facets of *jihad*:

1) The first, called “the greatest struggle” (*al-jihad al-akbar*) is the interior *jihad*, the continual, ongoing effort to make every area of personal life conform to God’s will. It is an effort that ceases only with death. Most people find it easy to submit to God’s will in some areas of life, but hold back in others (e.g., a man will be faithful in prayer but find honesty very difficult; a woman will be a loving wife and mother but hate her in-laws.) The “greatest struggle” is to bring *every* area of life under God’s reign.

2) The second aspect, which may be called “social *jihad*,” involves building society according to God’s will. It is a struggle to be people of faith in modern, secular societies. Parents who raise children to be God-fearing people, teachers who conscientiously impart education, those who work for the development of their people are engaged in this type of *jihad*.

3) Muslims must oppose all forms of injustice and oppression. When force is the only way this can be accomplished, Muslims can use force and, when necessary, engage in military action. This third facet of *jihad*, which is quite rare in real life, has given rise among non-Muslims to the idea that Islam has a concept of “Holy War.” The concept of *jihad*, which generally has little to do with fighting and killing, can be exploited by unscrupulous rulers, ethnic nationalist movements, and fiery preachers to mobilize Muslims for particular causes. Christians, aware of their own frequently bloody history, despite the non-violent teaching and example of Jesus, will not be surprised that religious concepts can sometimes be manipulated and coopted for worldly ends.

• The Sufi tradition in Islam

It is not possible to speak of *islah* without referring to the Sufi tradition. Sufism is not a separate religion, a sect, or a “parallel path” “opposed to Islam as practiced according to the *shari’a*. Sufism is rather an Islamic movement that intends to discover and elaborate on the spiritual elements already found in the pillars of *islam* and *iman* in

order to lead people to a union of love with God. Sufis see their efforts as an expression of the "interior struggle," *al-jihad al-akbar*, to attain a union of love and will with God. The Sufis drew up a practical program of inner growth and spiritual direction so that ordinary Muslim "laity" - manual laborers, craftsmen, housewives, farmers - could live united with God in the midst of their daily activities.

From the first generations, some Muslims stressed the potential of the Qur'anic message to transform a believer inwardly. They protested against the worldly power and wealth that entered the community soon after the death of Muhammad. They stressed the need for a simple, prayer-centered life and adopted many ascetical practices. Starting from Qur'anic teaching, they stressed the transforming power of God's love. Their early leader and hero, Hasan al-Basri, criticized rulers for luxury and nepotism. By the second century there was already a community of ascetics in Abbadan (modern Iraq) who wrote treatises about the love of God. About this time, they began to be called "Sufis," although the origin of the word is disputed (*suf*, wool; *ahlu saffa*, people of the bench; *safa'*, purity.)

Spiritual teachers attracted disciples and wrote down instructions for their students. Chains of initiation grew up, so that a student on the path identified, through his spiritual teacher and teacher's teacher, with one of the great spiritual masters of the past. In the early centuries, Sufi life was informal, with disciples gathered around a spiritual guide (in Arabic, *shaykh*; in Persian, *pir*, in Turkish, *ishan*. In Asia, local terms came to predominate among the highly "inculturated" Sufis. In the Indian subcontinent, the Hindi word *guru* was often used for the Sufi master, as was *kiai*, the Javanese term of respect, in Indonesia).

• The Sufi Orders

In 1258, the Mongol armies destroyed Baghdad, killed the Caliph and his family, and burned the great educational institutions and mosques. The "old order" in Islam was dead, and new movements and forms of Islam took its place. Prominent among these were the Sufi Orders. Noted Sufis wrote a Rule by which their disciples should live. Each Sufi Order (*tariqa*) was distinguished by particular dress, and each had its own system of initiation and novitiate, its own lodges or convents, and was characterized by distinctive forms of prayer and patterns of spiritual exercises.

Between the 14th and 18th centuries, most Muslims were inscribed in one or more Sufi Orders. Some were made up of mainly intellectuals and scholars, others drew from one or another craft guild, from soldiers, the urban poor, or peasant farmers. Many of the Sufis were

missionary-minded and accompanied traders on their business trips to Asia. As the merchants conducted business, the Sufis preached Islam to the masses, and it was primarily through their activity that, in the 14-15th centuries, the mass conversions to Islam came about in South and Southeast Asia.

• The Sufi Path

The Sufis saw Islam as a path leading progressively to union with God. God was called "the Beloved" and mystical poetry used the human experience of passionate love as a symbol of the relationship between the mystic and God. Many longed for death in order to be united forever with the Beloved.

The *pir* prescribed a program of spiritual exercises tailored to the seeker's personality, needs and state of life. Under the guidance of the director, the seeker passed through a series of stations (*maqâmât*) to overcome the human obstacles to God's grace. Sufi convents had special rooms set aside for retreatants who would retire in silence for prayer for 3-7-30 days. The Sufi would have to learn humility, obedience, poverty, patience, diligence, temperance in matters of food and sex, etc. After progressing to a certain point, the Sufi would be blessed with special states (*hal*, pl. *ahwâl*), when God would enlighten the heart with strong experiences of love, trust, joy, fear of the Lord, etc., intervening directly by grace to carry the believer farther along the Path. These states were not always uplifting. The Sufis knew the Dark Nights (*qabd*) described by Christian mystics, when they had to trust in God despite the lack of sensible or emotional evidence.

The final state is that of *fanâ'* when all else passes away and what remains (*baqâ'*) is God's loving presence. With this, the Sufi arrives at the Truth (*Al-Haqq*), the ultimate goal of life, a union with God where the believer no longer has an independent will, but desired only the will of God. Those acquainted with Christian spiritual traditions will find parallels between the stages of the Sufi path and the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways described by Christian mystics.

• Dhikr

A distinctive characteristic of Sufi spirituality is the way they developed the Qur'anic injunction to "Remember God often" (33:40). *Dhikr* means "remembrance" and refers to many forms of repetitive prayer whose purpose is to center one's attention on God's immanent presence in the heart of the believer. *Dhikr* may be done alone and silently recited aloud in groups, often accompanied by bodily movements, musical chanting and instruments. A popular form of *dhikr* is the

rosary (*tasbih*), which the Muslim uses to recite the Beautiful Names of God. 99 Divine Names are mentioned in the Qur'an, hence Muslim rosary beads usually have 99, 66, or 33 beads. Each name corresponds to one of God's qualities, hence the prayer becomes a meditation on God's nature and characteristics.

Muslims are encouraged to pray the *tasbih* daily as a form of dhikr, praying "*Subhan Allah!*" (Glory be to God), *Al-hamdu li-'llah* (Praise be to God), and *Allahu akbar* (God is greater [than all else]) each 33 times.

- ***Wahdat al-wujud* (the Oneness of Reality)**

Sufi emphasis on unity with God led some to elaborate a kind of pantheism. God is the only true reality, and all other beings are imperfect manifestations of the One Reality. To unenlightened persons, reality appears multiple, but to the mystic who has discovered "the secret," the creatures of this world are seen to have no existence other than God. The proponents of *wahdat al-wujud* used images such as the sun and its rays, shadows on a wall, a coconut - hard, ugly, and inedible on the outside, but once one has cracked its secret, full of sweet meat and drink. This view was strongly rejected by other Muslims, who believed that *wahdat al-wujud* made God wholly immanent and destroyed God's essential differentness and transcendence. The resulting controversy resulted in some of the earliest Muslim literature in South and Southeast Asia.

In this century, the influence of Sufism has declined, but in many parts of the Islamic world Sufism is still very much alive and active. South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan), West Africa, the Maghrib, Egypt, Sudan, and the Central Asian former Soviet republics are outstanding examples.

E. MUHAMMAD: THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

1.) Muhammad's early life before his prophetic call

Muhammad was born about the year 570 in Mecca, near the west coast of central Arabia. Due to continuing wars between the Byzantine and Persian empires, the normal trade routes between India and the Mediterranean were disrupted, which proved to be a boon for towns like Mecca along the Arabian caravan route. Mecca was more prosperous than its neighbors because of the presence of the Ka'ba, a pagan shrine for all Arabian tribes, and hence a *haram* where killing was not permitted.

Although Muhammad came from the dominant tribe, Quraysh, his early life was hard. His father, 'Abdullah, died before he was born, and his mother, Amina, died when he was two. He went to live with his grandfather, who died a few years later and Muhammad was raised by his uncle. The insecurity of Muhammad's orphaned youth is reflected in some Qur'anic passages.

At about the age of 12, Muhammad went to work on the caravans bearing goods to Damascus and Jerusalem, which brought him into contact with new cultures and religions. At the age of 19 he was hired by a wealthy widow, Khadija, to manage her caravans, and a few years later, they married. It was apparently a happy marriage, although Khadija was 16 years older than Muhammad, and Muhammad never took a second wife while Khadija was alive. With his marriage, Muhammad's fortunes changed. He became a respected member of the community with no financial problems, and had four daughters but no surviving sons. Muhammad might well have spent the rest of his days as a successful businessman, but at the age of 40, he underwent a religious crisis.

2.) The religious situation in Arabia at the time of Muhammad

a.) The Peoples of the Book.

The religious options in Arabia were limited. There were many Jews and Christians in various parts of Arabia, but few, if any, in Mecca, the pagan stronghold. Some tribes in northern Arabia (present-day Jordan) had converted to Christianity and there were several important Jewish tribes in the region of Madina (300 km to the north of Mecca). A significant presence of Christians in the Arabian wasteland was the desert monasteries, Christian monks who believed that life in the cities was morally corrupt and fled to the desert to lead lives of prayer and penance. The monasteries also performed a social function, for they were centers of hospitality for travelers stranded in the desert and *harams* where the ancient Arab practice of vengeance could not be carried out - in short, oases of peace and safety in a harsh, unforgiving environment.

The Jewish Scriptures and those of the Christians were not translated into Arabic, which made them inaccessible to most Arabs. As religious communities that possessed Sacred Scriptures, they were known as the People of the Book. Politically, the Christians tended to be allied with the Byzantine Empire, while the Jews were supporters of the Persian Shah.

b.) Traditional Arabian religion.

Each tribe had its own male and female deities. Every Arabian tribe had the right to worship its gods at the Ka'ba and to keep there the necessary instruments of worship - statues, texts, musical instruments, potions etc. Every year the tribes had the right to safe passage to Mecca to make pilgrimage. So that the tribes could feel free to come and worship, Mecca was declared a *haram* where killing and vengeance were taboo. Merchants, happy to know that their business affairs would not be disturbed by tribal conflicts, found Mecca an attractive site for their shops and storerooms. Thus, the financial prosperity of Mecca was bound up with the presence of the pagan cult in Mecca.

c.) The hanif community.

These were Arabs who rejected the pagan polytheism centered about the Ka'ba. They believed in One God and felt themselves akin to Jews and Christians, although they were unable to read their Scriptures. They were *ummi*, that is, people who knew no language other than Arabic. They were native Arab monotheists who traced their faith to that of Abraham, and they awaited an Arab prophet who would bring to them "a Book in clear Arabic" containing the same message found in the Books of Jews and Christians. *Hanif* poets wrote long poems in praise of Allah, and the *hanifs* met for informal worship of the one God.

3.) The first revelations to Muhammad

In the year 610, when he was about 40 years old, Muhammad could no longer accept the pagan cult at the Ka'ba. The multiplicity of gods and the myths of gods having sexual relations and begetting children seemed to him unworthy of the deity. More serious still was the lack of any social consciousness in the pagan religion. Although Mecca was enjoying a period of prosperity, many people had few or no rights. Women, slaves, outcasts, and foreigners especially suffered. Women were sold from father to husband, who could divorce his wives at will, and female infanticide was a common practice. There was no mechanism by which slaves could buy or earn their freedom. Since people were protected by their tribes, outcasts and travelers had no protection in law. The pagan religion gave no moral guidance in these matters; there was no concept of a person's being held accountable for one's actions.

Muhammad was attracted by the superior moral sense of Jews and Christians and by their understanding of the One God who had a moral will for humans. But like many Arabs, he felt a perpetual outsider to

the communities of the Book, whose language he did not know. Thus, Muhammad began to associate with the *hanifs*, where he learned of their identification with the faith of Abraham and their longing for a prophet of their own who would bring a book in Arabic.

Muhammad began to withdraw more and more from his business affairs and to seclude himself for days at a time in the small cave of Hira near Mecca, where he would pray and reflect about the social and religious situation in Arabia. On one of these occasions, he had a kind of mystical experience in which he heard a voice say, "Recite, in the name of your Lord who created..." (Qr 96:2-6). Muslims accept these as the first verses of the Qur'an to be revealed. At first, Muhammad was frightened by the experience and told no one but his wife, Khadija. Khadija took him to see her uncle, Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who knew a bit about Judaism and Christianity. Waraqa reassured Muhammad that the message he received issued from the same source as the books of the Jews and Christians.

4.) Muhammad in Mecca

Some time later, Muhammad received a message to preach and warn. He began preaching to the Meccans, warning them to repent and believe in the one God or else they would meet destruction. The Meccan leaders refused to accept the preaching of Muhammad, for they felt that the pagan worship centered on the Ka'ba was an important reason for the prosperity of Mecca. They claimed that Muhammad was lying about the revelations, that he was inspired by one of the jinn, that he had gone mad, or that he was learning these things from a secret informant.

Some people in Mecca believed in the message that Muhammad was preaching. Most were from disadvantaged social groups - slaves, women, outcasts, but a few men of better families (e.g., Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and the boy Ali), believed in him. Muhammad taught the Qur'anic verses to his followers, who memorized and recited them at night. The Meccan leaders tried to ostracize the Muslims and to persecute the weaker among them. At one point, a group of Muslims took refuge in Christian Ethiopia, where they were received well by the local ruler.

5.) Muhammad in Madina (Yathrib)

After about 11 years of struggle, Muhammad was invited to Yathrib, a city on the caravan route north of Mecca. Learning of a plot by the Meccans to kill him, Muhammad and Abu Bakr fled to Yathrib, which later came to be called "Madina," that is, "the City [of

the Prophet].” The year of the *Hijra*, the Emigration to Madina, 622 A.D., is the beginning of the Islamic era, that is, year 0 from which all later years would be counted.

Madina was a city divided between several Jewish and pagan tribes. They were looking for an impartial judge to decide matters of conflict between rival tribes. With the emigration of Muslims from Mecca, Muhammad gradually became the ruler of Madina in every sense. There he sought to build a society according to the principles of the Qur'an. At this point, Muhammad received a revelation to fight against the pagans in Mecca and began to raid the Meccan caravans. Civil war ensued, with the various Arab tribes taking one or another side. As the Muslims gradually gained in strength against their Meccan opponents, Muhammad announced that they would make the *hajj* to Mecca. The Meccan leaders found it difficult to oppose this plan, since all Arabs had the right to safe passage in order to make the pilgrimage. A compromise was reached by which the Muslims would be permitted to make the pilgrimage the following year. During that year, so many Arab tribes pledged allegiance to Muhammad, that when the Muslims came to Mecca, the Meccan leaders surrendered the city to them without a battle.

Muhammad's life was nearly over. After retiring to Madina, he announced a final pilgrimage to Mecca. Every detail of that pilgrimage was remembered and recorded. On the Day of Witness at Mt. Arafat, he preached his final sermon, “Today, your religion is completed.” A short time later, after returning to Madina, he died.

6.) The period of the Rightly-Guided Califs

It is disputed as to whether or not Muhammad left any instructions concerning his successor. Most Sunni scholars claim that he did not, while Shi'i scholars claim that he had verbally appointed Ali. In any case, on the day of his death, Muslims gathered in Madina to determine his successor. The majority chose as *khalifa* (calif) Abu Bakr, one of the first Muslims, a close friend and associate of Muhammad. A minority felt that Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad, was the proper choice. The fact that Ali was still very young probably influenced the majority to choose the elderly, highly respected Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr governed the community for less than two years before he also died. In the election that followed his death, the majority chose Umar to be the second calif, again passing over Ali against the wishes of his supporters. The “faction” or party supporting Ali was called “the faction of Ali (*shi'at* Ali), or simply, Shi'a.

Under the dynamic leadership of Umar, the Arabs left Arabia and conquered Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Iran. The conquests brought the Muslims power and wealth and made them rulers of ancient centers of Middle Eastern civilization. During the time of Umar, Islam evolved from becoming a religion of local Arabs to a truly international religion, extending from Morocco to Sind (in modern Pakistan.) After Umar was killed by an unhappy slave, Muslim leaders again met to choose a *khalifa*. Although Ali was by then an adult and supported by a greater number of Muslims, the choice fell to Uthman, another early Companion and member of the wealthiest and most powerful clan of the Quraysh. Uthman seems to have been a basically good Muslim, but did not have the strength of character of Abu Bakr and Umar. Corruption and nepotism set in, with Uthman appointing his cousins as governors of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq.

A delegation from Egypt came to Mecca to complain about what they considered excessive taxation. A brief battle occurred and Uthman was killed. In the following election, Ali was elected the Fourth Calif. Muawiya, Uthman's cousin and governor of Syria, accused Ali of being the mastermind behind the death of Uthman. According to Arab tradition, he claimed vengeance upon his cousin's murderer. (Historians find no evidence of Ali's involvement in a plot to kill Uthman and suspect that Muawiya was driven more by ambition than righteous vengeance.) Muawiya raised a powerful army and, in a clever stratagem, affixed copies of the Qur'an to the swords of his army. Ali refused to fight against the Qur'an and, though in a stronger position militarily, negotiated, for which he was killed by one of his uncompromising supporters. Ali is remembered by all Muslims, Sunni and Shi'a, for his holiness and idealism.

Muawiya governed the Muslim world from Damascus and inaugurated Islam's first dynasty, the Umayyad. Muslim historians tend to picture the Umayyads in a harsh light, as being greedy and repressive, as well as lax Muslims given to luxury, wine, and promiscuity. The notable exception is Umar II, a pious and effective ruler.

7.) The Growth of Shi'i Islam

From the time of the death of Muhammad, the Shi'a had always regarded Ali as the only proper successor to Muhammad. To them, Muawiya was an opportunistic usurper who transformed Islamic theocracy into a traditional Middle Eastern despotism. They considered Ali a martyr and recounted many stories of his sanctity. Of Ali's two sons, Hasan and Hussein, it was Hussein, the younger son, who opposed the Umayyad tyrant, Yazid, the son of Muawiya.

At the Battle of Karbela (in modern Iraq), Hussein and many of his supporters were killed. To the Shi'a, Hussein is the preeminent martyr, the innocent upholder of justice, killed by the impious Yazid. A concept of redemption evolved in which Hussein bearing the sins of all, in his death brought reconciliation for wrongs committed by men. Hussein's martyrdom is commemorated annually by Shi'a on 10 Muharram.

Most Shi'a accept 12 Imams in the direct line of Muhammad (through Ali and Fatima), while a minority, called Ismailis, accept 7 Imams. The Imams are considered infallible teachers and their words, with the Qur'an and hadith, are the basis for Islamic practice. They await the return of the final Imam, the Mahdi, who is invisibly present in the world and will, at the correct moment, return to establish a reign of justice and truth on earth. Most Iranian Muslims are "Twelver" Shi'a, as are many Muslims in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Bahrain. Ismailis ("Sevener" Shi'a) are especially prominent in Pakistan and northern India.

F. SPREAD OF ISLAM TO ASIA

Almost 2/3 of the Muslims in the world today live Asia. If one were to include the number of Muslims living in Arabic, Persian and Turkish speaking nations of the Middle East as part of the total number of Muslims in Asia, the percentage would be much higher. This paper does not directly treat Middle Eastern countries but considers only the countries of South Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Even so, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any single nation in the world, and over half the Muslims in the world live in one of four Asian countries: Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. By contrast, even though many people consider Islam to be mainly an Arab religion, less than 20% of the Muslims in the world live in Arabic-speaking countries.

Christian-Muslim relations in Asia are complicated by many contrasting and often contradictory elements. Demographic, political, economic, social and ethnic factors affect the ways in which Christians and Muslims relate, in both positive and negative ways. Imbalances in relationships of power can be a particular source of tension and even conflict. The group that lacks power feels vulnerable and at the mercy of the good will of those in positions of power.

One of the most obvious imbalances is demographic. In Asia, Christians and Muslims relate in a variety of *majority-minority* relations.

- 1) Muslim majority, Christian minority (Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Central Asian republics)
- 2) Christian majority, Muslim minority (Philippines)
- 3) Both minorities (India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Singapore, China)
- 4) No clear majority (Malaysia).

Other imbalances arise from access to *political* power or economic strength. These two things do not always go together. In some countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and many Central Asia republics, Muslims control the political system, but Christians are generally in a much stronger *economic* position. While Christians may feel uneasy because of the political strength of Muslims, Muslims can often have negative feelings toward Christians whom they perceive to be controlling their lives by dominating the economic sphere.

Ethnic factors can play an important role in Christian-Muslim relations, particularly when a group identifies their Islamic or Christian faith as part of their ethnic identity. Malays throughout Southeast Asia or Maranao, Maguindanao and Tausug peoples of the Philippines often see Islam as part of what makes one belong to those ethnic groups, just as Tagalog, Cebuano, and Ilongo peoples of the Philippines, or Florinese and Timorese peoples of Indonesia consider themselves Christian peoples. In those instances where the same ethnic group includes both Muslims and Protestant and Catholic Christians, relations are generally easier. Examples of this would be Batak or Javanese people of Indonesia, the Subanon in the Philippines, or the Melanau of Sarawak in Malaysia.

In some places, such as in Pakistan, remnants of caste mentality can create problems for the Christian minority. Evidence that it is power relationships in the political, economic and social fields that underlie the tensions that sometimes arise between Christians and Muslims is the fact that wherever both communities are minorities in a region dominated by a third dominant group, relations between Muslims and Christians is always without problem, always at least correct and often cordial. This would be the case of the Christian and Muslim communities in Hindu India, in Buddhist Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand, or in Confucian Singapore. In some cases, the common experience of marginalization and occasionally persecution brings the two communities together (as in Myanmar, India, and communist China).

• The roots of radical Islam in Asia

Traditionally, Islam in Asia has had a pietist, interior, family-oriented orientation. This is largely the result of the early preachers of Islam, who were strongly influenced by a mystical Sufi interpretation of the religion. However, in more recent times, a militant form of Islam has emerged with which Christians find relations more tense. Militant Muslims are everywhere a small but articulate minority among Muslims, and their societal and religious programs are often not shared by the majority of Muslims in Asia. To understand militant Islam in Asia today, one must recognize both the distant and proximate roots of this militant interpretation which are found in the history of Islam in Asia. Islam in Asia has a very long history, going back almost to the birth of the religion in the first century after the death of Muhammad. One might divide this history into four general periods of unequal length. As the Islamic presence in Asia progressed from one period to the next, one can discover the particular characteristics of Islam in Asia that laid the bases for distant and proximate roots of Islamic revival in the region.

1. 750-1300 - foreign commercial presence
2. 1300-1600 - Age of Expansion, first Muslim states, sultanates
3. 1600-1945 - Colonial Period
4. 1945-2002 - Independent modern national states.

• Early period: the spread of Islam to Asia (800-1300)

Muslims arrived in Asia in the first century after the death of Muhammad. In some cases, it was Arab armies who brought Islamic rule through military conquest. This was the case among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, in Sind in Pakistan and later on generally in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. More often, Islam was introduced to Asia peacefully by Arab and Persian merchants. Following established pre-Islamic commercial routes, these traders set up foreign merchant communities of Muslims in the port cities of the Indian Ocean and along the famous "Silk Road" between China and the Mediterranean.

Because the sea voyage in the Indian Ocean and the land trip across the Silk Road took between 1½-2 years, Muslim firms set up local offices to handle affairs. Some Muslims married local women and raised families, who were expected to adopt the Islamic faith. Local employees also frequently accepted Islam and in this way the local foreign communities began to include a limited number of local Muslims. In some places, these mixed communities of Muslim traders left the port cities to travel inland in small boats, along the

canals of Burma and Thailand, and up the river system of modern-day Bangladesh.

Not all foreign Muslims remained in Asia by choice. Bankruptcies, confiscated vessels, shipwrecks, and the changeable policies of local rulers prevented some merchants and sailors from returning to the Middle East. Thus in the port cities of the Indian Ocean, the caravan stops along the overland routes, and along the inland waterways, small communities of local Muslims began to arise. In this early period, the instances of mass conversions of local inhabitants to Islam were few, although there were some notable exceptions, such as in Sind in modern Pakistan and among the Champa people of Cambodia.

• **The age of expansion: conversion of Asians to Islam (1300-1500)**

In 1258, Baghdad, the religious, cultural, and political center of the Islamic world, was conquered and destroyed by the Mongol armies. Although the Calif and his whole family were killed, a distant relative escaped to Cairo and was set up as calif. However, never again did the calif wield any real power. He remained a figurehead until Ataturk's suppression of the califate in the 1920s.

To fill the vacuum created by the destruction of the most important political and educational institutions in Islam, new movements arose. The most important were the Sufi Orders. Mystically-inclined Muslims had been present in the Islamic community since its beginnings, but in the 14th Century, they gathered into brotherhoods and became the most dynamic force in Islam. Dedicated to achieving a union of love and will with God and possessing great missionary zeal, the Sufis began to accompany the merchants on their commercial trips to Asia. Through their preaching, many in Asia were attracted to Islam. The fact that most Asian peoples accepted Islam strongly marked by the mystical, inner-oriented interpretation of the Sufi preachers had important consequences on its subsequent development and history in Asia.

• **Islam in the colonial period: the Sufi revival (1550-1800)**

The early Sufis did not place great emphasis on doctrinal formulation or political questions, but emphasized interior piety and submission to God's will. Instead of a confrontative approach to traditional Asian spirituality, a pantheistic nature religiosity centered on cosmic and interior harmony, the Sufis focused on a few basic principles of Islam - the oneness of God, the necessity of prayer and fasting, and prohibitions against pork and alcohol - and accommodated many traditional practices related to the spirit world and the cult of holy persons and places.

Islam was implanted in Asian societies for a relatively short time when most predominantly Muslim regions came to be conquered and governed by non-Muslim powers. In South and Southeast Asia it was European Christian powers - first the Portuguese, then Dutch, British, Spaniards, Americans, and Russians who came to dominate Muslim regions. In the same period, Buddhist Chinese, Thai, and Burmese incorporated Muslim regions into their domains.

During the 17-18th centuries, the early colonial period saw a reformist trend initiated by international Sufi brotherhoods, particularly the Naqshbandiyya and the Qadiriyya, who sought to bring about a deeper Islamic awareness based on better religious education. While not forbidding the traditional rites centered on cemeteries, local shrines of holy persons, healing practices, and the spirit world dwelling in caves, mountains, the sea, and banyan trees, the Sufi reformers worked to instill authentic Islamic practice among Muslims.

• Islamic revival and the struggle for independence (1800-1945)

When Muslims looked around the world at the beginning of the 19th Century, many asked, "What went wrong?" From having, in previous centuries, the world's most powerful, advanced, and prosperous states in the Ottoman, Safavid and Moghul empires, they had almost everywhere succumbed to the rule of others. A radical response was provided by **Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab** in Arabia, who held that it was because they deviated from the true Islamic path that Muslim peoples arrived at their low state. He felt that nothing less than a return to the pure, original Islam would permit Muslims to achieve their past glory.

Those who took up these views were called Wahhabis. They wanted not only to purify Islam of all accretions and novelties that had wrongly been accepted as Islamic in the course of time, but they held that the Sufi preoccupation with Islam as a personal, spiritual path to God was in itself a distortion of the original intent of the religion. They claimed that Islam was meant to be a program for building a human society whose every aspect was to be lived in accord with the will of God. Islam was not simply, or even primarily, to be seen as a set of pious practices leading to mystical union. Many hajjis making the pilgrimage to Mecca encountered Wahhabi ideas in Arabia and brought these views back with them to their homelands in Asia.

The Wahhabi understanding of Islam had political implications. If God intended the Islamization of society in all its social, economic, and political aspects, it was felt that this could only be done if Muslims themselves were in control of the political systems. Their political

theory held that the state existed to permit Muslims to foster the Islamization process and to forbid and punish wrongdoing. They felt that the Sufis, with their spiritual programs, ignored political realities and held Muslims back from the task of reforming society according to God's will.

The Muslim revival linked religious and political concerns. To pursue their societal ends, they sought to create a state that would favor and implement these goals. The first objective was to achieve liberation from non-Muslim rule. Revivalists began to work actively toward the overthrow of colonial regimes in order to create Islamic states that would support the Islamization of society.

• **Islamic revival in the modern nation states (1945-1995)**

In the years after World War II, when most Muslim regions achieved independence, two organizations emerged to articulate the concept of the Islamic state. In Egypt and other Arab countries, the **Muslim Brotherhood**, insisting that rule by Muslims did not ensure the creation of an Islamic state, worked to counter nationalist feelings that, in their view, divided rather than united the Islamic umma. The harsh repression of the Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria convinced many that the new Arab regimes were as opposed to the creation of an Islamic state as the colonial regimes had been.

On the Indian subcontinent, the **Jamiati Islami** held that Islam offered the world an Islamic solution to every modern problem. There was already an Islamic science, economics, politics, legal system, and educational program. Muslims had only to search in their own early tradition to rediscover the ingredients necessary to develop Islamic alternatives to these secular fields.

As one predominately Muslim nation after another achieved independence after 1945, the revivalists hoped that Islamic states would be set up. The actual Muslim rule that replaced the colonial regimes was, however, far from their ideals of the Islamic state. The new ruling class throughout the Muslim world generally adopted the principles of nationalism and created nation states on a European model. Legal codes were based on those of Western nations and were usually mere revisions of colonial law. Cultural mores as well as development concepts were taken from the West. On the grounds that it was more egalitarian and would prevent the abuses of uncontrolled capitalism, many of the ruling elites adopted socialist policies of a one-party state, state ownership of industries, and centrally planned economies.

The creation of Pakistan

In the first decades after World War II, many Muslims were enthusiastic about the creation of Pakistan, which they considered a model for the modern Islamic democracy. However, as the years passed, it became clear that Pakistan's Islamic identity did not enable the country to overcome ethnic clashes, economic mismanagement and corruption, military takeovers, and equitable distribution of wealth. Many Muslims claimed that the Pakistan model was a failed experiment and that a truly Islamic state would have to undergo a more revolutionary societal restructuring.

The Palestinian struggle

Shortly after the creation of Pakistan, in 1949, the emergence of the state of Israel had great influence on the thinking of militant Muslims. Seen as a state for European Jews created in the Arab heartland by the Western powers to assuage their guilt for Europe's treatment of its Jews, Israel was felt to be a continuation of colonial policies of forced implantation and lawless landgrabbing. The Palestinian struggle became the symbol of oppressed Muslims striving to achieve, against all odds, liberation through armed rebellion. The Palestinian cause engendered a conviction that the West, despite its professed concern for the development of Muslim nations, was in fact opposed to Islam and that Muslims were victims of injustice perpetrated by Western powers.

The disastrous defeat of the Arab alliance by Israel in 1967 was a watershed. Egypt, the most populous and powerful Arab nation and its cultural capital, led by the charismatic Gamal Abd al-Nasser, with the financial support of other Arab countries, went down to quick and humiliating defeat by tiny Israel. It was not only Nasser and the rhetoric of pan-Arab nationalism that was discredited. The military, on which millions of dollars had been spent, showed itself inept and corrupt. Ineffective in its role of defending the nation, the military was often seen as existing primarily to preserve the internal status quo, enabling the ruling elites to govern by force, often against the will of the people. Hopes that the Western powers would provide necessary assistance were dashed when those states supported Israel both financially and in international diplomatic fora such as the United Nations. Many Muslims began to question the efficacy of nationalist thought and turned to religion to furnish more effective means to govern Muslim peoples.

The Iranian revolution

The 1979 Iranian revolution gave concrete shape to these grievances. The world was amazed when religious solidarity enabled Iranian Muslims to overthrow with apparent ease a wealthy but unpopular Muslim regime, one which had been presumed to be the model of strength and stability. The fact that the Shah's regime strongly promoted secularization in the name of modernization and was closely allied to the West was not lost on revivalist Muslims. The Islamic Republic of Iran replaced, in the minds of many, the failed Pakistan model of an Islamic state. All observers, whether sympathetic or not, agree that the government of Ayatollah Khomeini was truly revolutionary in rethinking and reorganizing every aspect of social life according to Islamic principles.

Later events in the Muslim world encouraged the growth and spread of revivalist ideals. The 1991 Gulf War and the continuing blockade against Iraq, along with economic and diplomatic measures taken against other outspoken Muslim nations, confirmed for many that the West, particularly the U.S.A., intended to isolate Muslim countries much as communist states had previously been isolated. The electoral victory of the Front Islamique du Salut in Algeria in 1992 showed that a grass-roots Islamic political movement could succeed through democratic processes. The uncritical welcome granted by Western powers to the establishment of a repressive military dictatorship in Algeria, confirmed to many Muslims the shallowness of European rhetoric about democracy as well as its implacable enmity towards Islam.

Revivalist critique of modernity

There are many factors underlying Muslim revival movements in Asia today. There is a criticism of the Sufi roots and a desire to reorient the inner-directed thrust of Sufism towards an activist program of social reform. Muslim revivalists propose a political philosophy that holds that the state should be an instrument to promote Islamic values and way of life. In many countries, revivalist Islam is an attractive alternative that promises to resolve the crises in existing institutions: the lack of effective and representative government, the wasteful yet ambiguous role of the military, the failure of socialist central planning and management of the economy, and the institutionalization of the traditional *ulama* which turned them into government servants rather than being spokespersons for the people.

This is accompanied by a harsh critique of modernity. By modernity is not meant technological advances in communications, transportation

and consumer goods. Muslims are ready to accept and use all these to promote their cause. What they object to are the philosophical presuppositions of the modern way of life, its understanding of humankind and its place in the universe, and the values that derive from this philosophy of life. This comprehensive philosophy, growing historically out of the European ideals of the Enlightenment, is often referred to as liberalism.

A conflict of values

Muslims see a fundamental conflict of values in today's world. The liberal value system is anthropocentric, with the individual at the center of the universe. This philosophy of life exalts human dignity, freedom, and rights. Fulfilling to the utmost one's potential, capabilities, and legitimate desires is considered the highest human goal, and modern people must be free to achieve these aspirations. The only limitation on human freedom is that in pursuing one's objectives, the individual must not violate the rights of others to pursue and achieve their own goals.

While liberalism does not deny the existence of God or reject religion, it is skeptical of the ability of any religious system to attain truth and is opposed to the role of religion in public life. Religion is admissible as the personal choice of some individuals who feel they need to give moral direction to their private and familial lives, but it has no place in public affairs. The marketplace, social interaction and, above all, government, are spheres that must exist and operate outside the influence of religious thought.

Against liberal values, Muslim revivalists propose a theocentric system. For them, God has revealed how humans should live and has laid down the principles on which society is to be built. They feel that Western values lay so much stress on the individual person that the rights of society are ignored or denied. They hold that the humanistic approach to morality espoused by Western modernity leads to dehumanization, where the person is viewed primarily as a consumer of goods, a prospective buyer to be reached by effective advertising, rather than as a creature of God called to live a simple, God-fearing, non-materialist life.

The emphasis on the individual divides the world into winners and losers. The winners are those who obtain the best university education, achieve good, steady jobs, and the privileges that come with wealth and status. The losers are driven to destructive activities such as crime, or self-destructive activities related to drugs, alcohol, gambling and sexual promiscuity. What people need, Muslim critics claim, are not

new and better consumer goods, but a clear sense that human life finds meaning in the context of an obedient and joyful response to the demands of God.

One of the most important arenas for Christian-Muslim dialogue at the present time is a critical evaluation of modernity to distinguish the obvious benefits that modernization brings to humanity from the anti-religious and ultimately destructive attitudes that can often accompany it.

In the period after the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the whole question of the use of violence against innocent non-combatants as a tool for change has been reopened. Ethical questions connected with the use of violence against innocent civilians, such as the policy of suicide-bombing undertaken by Palestinian nationalists and practices connected with the U.S. government's "war on terrorism," such as the bombing of civilian populations (Afghanistan and perhaps Iraq) and the proper treatment of prisoners of war need examination on both sides. These are issues that cannot be avoided in dialogue if Christians and Muslims are to be able to work together for peace and the promotion of divine and human values in today's world.

PART III. ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY & SUFISM

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Islam and Christianity present themselves as religions of "salvation", both offering a message from God of salvation, happiness and peace. The history of humankind is seen as a "history of salvation" and the message of salvation is understood as universal, addressed to each and every human person¹.

In his letter to the Muslim faithful on the occasion of the feast of 'Īd al-Fitr of 1991 and during the first Gulf War in the Middle East, Pope John-Paul II concluded his greetings with a quotation from one of his predecessors, Pope Gregory VII, originally addressed in 1076 to An-Nasir, the ruler of Bijāya (present day Algeria), just twenty years prior to the first crusade:

*"Almighty God, who wishes that all should be saved and none lost, approves not in us so much that after loving Him, one should love his fellow man, and that one should not do to others, what one does not want done to oneself ..."*².

¹ Cf. NAGEL, Timan, *Islam. Die Heilsbotschaft des Korans und ihre Konsequenzen*, Westhofen, 2001.

² GIOIA, francesco (ed.), *Interreligious Dialogue. The official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, Boston, 1997, p. 453.

The Pope thus recognises that no single human being, Muslim or Christian, can be excluded from God's universal salvific will, whether by arbitrary human law or on grounds of the colour of one's skin, one's social status, one's gender or one's culture.

For Muslims this means that the religion of Allah is one, including all humanity both historically and geographically. According to the Qur'an, the core of the message, which ultimately agrees with the fundamental kerygma proclaimed by Mohammed in Mecca, has been proclaimed by all the prophets throughout the centuries and remains unchanged:

"When your Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam – from their loins – their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): 'Am I not your Lord (Who cherishes and sustains you)? – they said 'Yes! We do testify!' (This), lest you should say on the Day of Judgement: 'Of this we were never mindful'..." (Qur. 7, 172).

According to the Qur'an, however, "The Children of Adam" – i.e. "humanity" itself – have not always been steadfast in remaining faithful to this initial message. Although the message has been corrupted in the course of history on account of humanity's inconstancy and imperfection, humanity has always been aware of its privileged relationship with God and God's plan for His creation.

While the practical applications of the message might have changed, the essence thereof remains the same:

"The same religion He (God) has established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah – the which we have sent by inspiration to you – and that which He enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely, that you should remain steadfast in Religion, and make no divisions therein..." (Qur. 42, 13).

This revelation represents a 'good guide' over which thousands of prophets have spoken:

"You say: 'We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, 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 bow to Allah (in Islam)'..." (Qur. 2, 136).

The covenant between God and humanity has its roots in the creation of the human person by the Creator. The 'yes' that binds human nature to God, the Creator and Lord is the faithful response of the confession of faith that recognises the order of creation and the divine will. A Muslim believer is faithful to this relationship of recognition; trust in God, acceptance of God's plan for creation and God's purpose in the creation of the human person.

The "covenant" or "alliance" that binds humanity to God consists on the one hand of God's creative salvific will and on the other of the human person's acquiescent and engaged 'yes'.

As Mohamed Talbi once stated, this 'yes' is an all-embracing engagement that makes a Muslim a Muslim: *"In essence, 'Islam' is nothing other than fidelity to this 'yes'; the concept 'Islam', the roots of which also call to mind the words 'peace' (silm) and 'salvation' (salaam), bears within itself the pregnant significance of the trusting, voluntary, serene and conscious abandonment of oneself into God's hand; and this implies adhesion to God's plan for creation"*.

This definition of Islamic Faith is presented by Wilfred Cantwell Smith³ in his definition of the Islamic terms for faith and infidelity: *"Infidelity' (kufr...) the heinous sin, the incomprehensibly stupid and perverse obduracy, is not unbelief but "refusal": it is spitting in God's face when He speaks out of His infinite authority and vast compassion. It is man's dramatic negative response to the spectacular divine initiative. The positive response (...) is called 'faith' (iman...); "the man of faith" (mu'min) is he who accepts, who says 'yes'. As the theologians subsequently explain, imân, faith, is self-commitment. It means, and is said to mean, almost precisely, "s'engager" (original text employs the French word).* .

It is for this reason that the Qur'an always describes the term "mithaq", i.e. "covenant", "alliance" in the sense that 'God accepts the engagement of the human person' (*akhadha mithaqa...*), an expression that can be found no less than fifteen times in the Qur'an:

"And remember We took from the Prophets their Covenant: as (We did) from you [Mohammed]; from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus the son of Mary: We took from them a solemn Covenant" (Qur. 33, 7).

It should be evident in light of the above that the Qur'an, seen as the perfect reflection of the inviolable, creative, salvific word of God, is intended as a message of salvation for all men and women. The fundamental word that gives expression to this intention is perhaps the best-known word in the entire Qur'an . It is the word "salaam" in all its simplicity, a word that expresses both salvation and peace, a word that occurs thirty-three times in the Qur'an:

"...Allâh guides (yahdî) all those who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His will unto light and guides them to the straight way" (Qur. 5: 16); "Allâh calls to the Home of peace (Dâr as-salâm) and guides whom He wills to the straight path" (Qur. 10: 25)

³ SMITH, Wilfred Cantwell, Faith and Belief, Princeton, 1979, p. 40.

Verses with an analogous meaning, referring to salvation and peace without using the word *salaam*, clearly allude to the good news and to the way that leads thereto under God's guidance.

The fifth and final article of the Islamic credo, an article that has been the subject of much discussion and debate, can thus be understood in light of what has now become apparent, namely that the goal of the Qur'an is to bring a message of peace and salvation. It is ultimately a question of 'divine Decree' and 'predestination'.

Two significant terms are rendered into modern languages in the translations referred to above, terms that have been the object of continuous reflection in Islamic theology: *al-Qadâ' wa l-Qadar*. God has established by His divine Will the boundaries of everything in creation. All things have a limit that they cannot transgress. If they do so, nevertheless, then they act in a self-destructive manner. God's Will likewise establishes the boundaries of good and evil. Without any form of mediation God gave existence to creation by Decree of his creative Word:

"To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: When He decrees [qadâ] a matter, He says to it: 'Be,' and it is" (Qur. 2, 117).

The limit set by God for all things establishes, at the same time, the purpose of every being. In this sense we can say that the human person has also received a goal in life, a pre-destin-ed goal. The person of faith will thus maintain that revelation reveals to him or her that this goal is ultimately one of salvation: the Qur'an, in the last analysis, is "good news". Should the human person reconcile him/herself with the divine Way, or in others words, should he/she live in obedience to the divine Law, then he/she acts in a free and salutary manner. Should the human person not do so, then he/she acts in a destructive manner.

In schematic form:

God's	creative Decree	is salvific.
God's	LAW	leads to salvation.
Human	Destiny	is oriented to salvation.
The human	WAY	leads to salvation.

For Muslims, the Qur'an is the eternal Word of God, His unchanging Law, a path that leads men and women to salvation. This is the fate of the human person: by nature he or she is destined for salvation. This is thus the "pre-destin-ation" of the human person rooted Gods "Decree": "God's Decree is the human person's Destiny to Salvation; God's Law is the human person's Path to Salvation".

An analogy with Christianity is evident in this presentation of things. As we have seen, Christianity likewise argues that every human

person is called on the basis of his or her 'createdness' to be happy, to be saved. When Jesus says that he is "*the Way, the Truth and the Life*" and when the gospel of John states "*the Word became flesh and lived among us*" (Jn. 1,14), Christian theology has understood these words in a specific manner: the Eternal Word of God, His creative Word, appeared among human persons in Jesus, the Christ, in order to lead them on the path towards salvation and peace. Jesus thus reveals to all human persons the true meaning of God's Law. It is in the gospel's interpretation of the Law, however, that the New Testament differs so considerably from the Qur'an.

The concepts of predestination and destiny, *al-Qadâ' wa l-Qadar*, have been reflected upon down through the centuries and have given rise to many an article and book. Islam refers thereby to the concept "*fitra*" that is to be found in the Qur'an (Qur. 30, 30: "... *fitrat Allâh allati fatara an-nâs*": "...Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind"), although it is better known from the later prophetic tradition, quoted among others by Buhari (o.a. 33.93.3):

"God's Emissary has said: Every child that is born is born according to the intention of God (the "*fitra*"). The parents then make the child a Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian. As with children so it is with animals: have you ever seen an animal born with its ears cut off?"

Reference can be made in this regard to the writings of Bishop Kenneth Cragg on the concept of "*fitra*"⁴:

"It is wise here to refer to another crucial Quranic passage which has often been made the ground of a vigorous rejection of New Testament thought about man. Surah 30:30 speaks of 'the nature of God on which He constituted man'. Some take the word *fitrah* (nature) to mean the 'religion' (Islam) for which man is meant. More generally, it is taken, with the cognate verb in the verse, to mean something like the Biblical 'image of God' in which man was 'made' - the divine intention for humanity in the wholly, good initiative in his creation. Paul and the rest of the New Testament share that conviction. 'Every creation of God is good' says the First Letter to Timothy (4:4). Man's positive destiny is not in question. Rather it is taken in all seriousness. - a seriousness that does not minimise the degree human perversity in fact seems to defy that goodness. It is precisely when we believe most passionately in the human meaning as blessedly willed by God for good that we must realise how actively its good is thwarted or denied..."

The inclusive interpretation of Jesus' words that claim him

⁴ CRAGG, Kenneth, *Jesus and the Muslim*, Oxford, 1985, tweede ed. 1999, p. 218.

to be “the Way, the Truth and the Life” is reflected in the inclusive interpretation of the Islamic concept “*fitra*”. Within the context of homogeneous cultures, however, an exclusive interpretation would appear to be the more obvious and, as we shall see, this is in fact the case in Islam. Some, indeed, simply translate the concept “*fitra*” as “Islam”: all children are thus born “Muslim”. Nevertheless, such an exclusive interpretation of both the text of the Tradition and that of the Qur’an (Qur. 30, 30) is ultimately incorrect. In line with the Tunisian theologian Mohammed Talbi, it is possible to interpret both texts in a non-exclusive fashion⁵:

“The respect one is obliged to show every human person has its roots in fitra, the nature enjoyed by the human person in conformity with his or her origins, from the beginning, and according to which everyone receives as spark of spiritual light at birth. It should never be forgotten that every human person, whoever he or she may be, has received something from God that makes him or her inviolable from the point of view of the believer”.

This nature, enjoyed by every human person in conformity with his or her origins, flows forth from God’s creative Decree that predestines humanity for salvation: *God’s Decree designs Human Destiny for Salvation.*

This brings us to what I refer to as the “mystical” aspect of Islam. I would define Islam, therefore, as an existential act, whereby the human person recognises himself or herself as “abandoned to God” in the awareness that he or she does not own or possess himself or herself but only exists thanks to God. It is in this sense that Christians employ the words of Paul in the context of the funeral liturgy: “*We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s*” (Rom. 14, 7-8). The person of faith is thus profoundly aware that in the last analysis he or she is not self-determined. On the contrary, as a human person he or she is fundamentally dependent on God for the context in which he or she lives and for his or her personal welfare. The joy of being human is ultimately a *gift*. Self-sufficiency is thus an absurd pretension.

To accept this is “to be Muslim”, to submit oneself to God, to surrender to God, to abandon oneself to God in serenity, peace, is “the act of Islam”.

The foundations are thus established for our understanding of

⁵ GOBILLOT, Geneviève, *La Fitra. La conception originelle, ses interprétations et fonctions chez les penseurs musulmans* (Cahiers des Annales islamologiques, 18), Cairo, 2000., p. 3-4.

what Islam is from the perspective of its existential dimension. As a matter of fact, Islam is radically incomprehensible if one does not consider all its other dimensions from the perspective of this existential dimension.

Religions tend to be described for the most part as a question of "faith" and "practice". As is apparent from the well-known hadith, passed on to us in Sahih Muslim's collected traditions, the Islamic credo consists of six articles:

"[An unknown man once appeared among us who asked the prophet]: 'Teach me what 'Iman' is'. And the Prophet answered: Confessing your faith in God, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers and the day of Judgement; and also in the will concerning good and evil."

There would thus appear to be six articles of the Muslim Creed that have already been summarised of old in the Islamic tradition.

This credo is similar to other credos. According to generally accepted Western opinion, however, the various formulas employed in a credo, likewise serve to indicate the manifest difference between the various "faith communities". It is thus apparent, among other things, that Muslims do not believe in "the Son, born of the Father" as is clearly maintained in the Christian credo. Credos represent a personal faith conviction that one is expected to respect even if one does not "believe" therein. Behind such statements lies the notion that faith ultimately has to do with the acceptance of a number of "creedal truths" that can be "learned". This, of course, has everything to do with a particular understanding of "dogmas". In the last analysis, credo and personal faith conviction rooted in the existential dimension of faith are placed on one and the same level. Would that it were so simple. It should be evident, however, that the articles of faith as found in the Muslim tradition represent conceptual articulations of that which belongs to the existential dimension of the act of faith.

The six articles of the Muslim creed are articulations of the fundamental faith in one God and His decisive salvific intention, revealed to mankind through prophets and holy books. "To be Muslim", to submit oneself to God, to surrender to God, to abandon oneself to God, to be receptive to his Word, patience, serenity, peace, to be conscious of the foreordained, to renounce self-sufficiency, to enjoy the fundamental experience of being in relation to God and one's fellow human beings, to be grateful for that which is given... so many expressions for what I call "the act of Islam".

Down through the centuries, this mystical aspect of Islam took shape in the Sufi movement in which masters and disciples followed a path of self-relativation and detachment, of self-examination and

uninterrupted awareness of God's presence. Sufism found its inspiration in the Koran itself, which maintains the total dependence of the human person on God and the relativity of power and riches. The confession of faith "there is no god but Allah" likewise serves, therefore, as the foundation of Islamic Sufism.

In the Middle Ages, countless fraternities emerged from the broader Sufi movements, some of which still exist and even thrive to the present day. Throughout the Muslim world, the mausoleums dedicated to the saints of these fraternities continue to function as places of pilgrimage and popular devotion, attracting tens of thousands of devotees every year.

At the end of the seventh century, the community of Muslims had been through two terrible civil wars, and the dynasty of the Umayyads did not meet the religious expectations of the believers. The way of life of the new rulers in Damascus was not any more the same as the way of life in Medina and the fundamental intuition of the mystical dimension of the act of faith and self-relativation it implied. Some Muslim believers went back to the spirit of the Qur'ân as he appeared previously and emphasized an ascetic way of life, a complete break with that kind of "world". That is why Annemarie Schimmel stated in her *"Mystical dimensions of Islam"*, that *"Sufism meant, in the formative period, mainly an interiorization of Islam, that of tawhîd, 'to declare that God is one'. The Sufis always remained inside the fold of Islam, and their mystical attitude was not limited by their adherence to any of the legal or theological schools"*⁶.

The Sufis take refuge with *"God, the Lord of mankind"* as aid in the last sûra of the Qur'ân (114, 1): *"a'udhu bi-Rabb an-nâs"*... And so we can understand that without any doubt, sufism traces his origins back to Muslim's attitude of fundamental confidence in God's Divine Decree revealed in the Night of al-Qadr (sûra 9).

Schimmel brings us back to our starting point, when she says: *"The aims of all the mystics are essentially the same"*, it concerns precisely this Divine Decree. *"The religious conscience of Islam is centered upon (...) the transhistorical fact of the primordial covenant as understood from the Koranic word in sûra 7:17. Before creation, God called the future humanity out of the loins of the not-yet-created Adam and addressed them with the words: 'Am I not your Lord? (a-lastu bi-rabbikum?)', and they answered: 'Yes we witness it' (balâ shahidnâ). The idea of this primordial covenant (mîthâq) between God and humanity has impressed the religious conscience of the Muslims, and especially*

⁶ SCHIMMEL, Annemarie, *Mystical dimensions of Islam*, North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1975, p. 17.

the Muslim mystics, more than any other idea. Here is the starting point for their understanding of free will and predestination, of election and acceptance, of God's eternal power and man's loving response and promise. The goal of the mystic is to return to the experience of the "Day of a-lastu", when only God existed, before He led future creatures out of the abyss of not-being and endowed them with life, love, and understanding so that they might face Him again at the end of time".

Crucial in this context is the twofold meaning of the idea of return.

First: return to the day when only God existed, when "existence" was only God's attribute. The fundamental self-relativation, renunciation (*zuhd*) and nearly self-annihilation of the Sufi is in some sense the consequence of the fact that he is profoundly conscious that "existence" is a real attribute only in God, even after creation. Some of them even proposed the notion of "*wahdat al-wujûd*", "unity of existence", meaning that only in God real existence is actually present.

Second: return to God in the future. This is our destiny, and nothing, even the most terrible catastrophe, can hurt the believer, according to the Qur'ân:

"And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient. Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: Truly! To Allâh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return!" (Qur. : 2: 155-156).

In this the believer will find peace and salvation. The faithful accepts God's Decree, his Destiny, even if God's reason is beyond human reasoning: *"...And they will never compass anything of His knowledge except that which He wills"* (Qur. 2: 255). The believer will never stop praising the Lord: *al-hamdu li-llâh!* He is our destiny. He is the Light: *"Allâh is the Light of heavens and of earth"* (Qur. 24: 35). By His light we can be saved, because He will *"guide us to the straight way"* (Qur. 1:6).

In this twenty-first century the image of "*islam*" is the image given by militant and political islam. There is however something more fundamental than what "*fundamentalism*" is showing the world: the spiritual roots of islamic faith. Fundamentalist militants do not accept the whole firmament of saints, the devotions and popular pilgrimages and processions of the *tarîqa*'s, the religious confraternities; their view on religion is in fact a reduction to jurisprudence. They forget the spirit behind the letter.

For a secular and modernized world view, in a modern world of emancipation and autonomy, it seems strange to hear that "mysticism of

love and suffering – which teaches man to live and to die for a goal outside himself – is perhaps the most important message of Sufism to day”.

But that is what an authentic religion is all about: and there we discover another existential dimension of Islam:

The positive response that lies at the heart of being Muslim, his or her fundamental confidence in God, his or her submission and resignation to the salvific goal that ultimately depends on God's will, is expressed in obedience to His Law. The human person who sets out along God's salutary path does so by accepting God's Law. The commandments of God's Law oblige themselves on the human person, under penalty of the loss or erosion of humanity. These fundamental commandments are referred to in surah 17, verses 22 to 39, and in summary form in surah 6, verses 151 to 152. They bear a close affinity to the words found in the book of *Exodus* (20, 1-17) and to what is referred to in Judeo-Christian circles as the *Ten Commandments*. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the demands accredited to Judaism, which constitute a part of the covenant with Moses, return in Islam in the form of commandments:

“Say: ‘Come,

*I will rehearse what Allah has (really) prohibited you from’:
join not anything as equal with Him;*

– be good to your parents;

kill not your children on a plea of want.

– We provide sustenance for you and for them;

*– do not come near to shameful deeds,
whether open or secret;*

*take not life – which Allah has made sacred –
except by way of justice and law;*

*Thus does He command you,
that you may learn wisdom.*

*And come not near to the orphan's property,
except to improve it,*

until he attain the age of full strength;

– give measure and weight with (full) justice.

*No burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear;
whenever you speak, speak justly,
even if a near relative is concerned;*

and fulfil the Covenant of Allah;

thus He commands you,

–that you may remember.” (Kor. 6, 151-152).

A young Muslim girl once approached me in the library of the Dominican Institute in Cairo and asked me to help her look up the various passages in the bible in which the term "orphan" (*al-yatim*) is to be found. She was curious to know whether the orphan also enjoyed a place of great significance in the bible and I was able to respond to her curiosity in the affirmative. For her, and for countless other Muslims saturated with the koranic message, the very idea of "the orphan" functions as a central symbolic concept from the earliest surahs onwards:

"Therefore, do not treat the orphan with harshness!" (Kor. 93, 9-10); *"Nay, nay! But you do not honour the orphans! Nor do you encourage one another to feed the poor! And you devour Inheritance – all with greed. And you love wealth with inordinate love!"* (Kor. 89, 17-20); *"[The righteous] feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive"* (Kor. 76, 8); *"Righteous is [...] 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 practice regular charity [...]"* (Kor. 2, 177).

It would appear from the thought of Emmanuel Levinas that *"the widow and the orphan call the ethical calibre of the "I" into question in imperative fashion: they judge as if 'from above'"*. The orphan functions symbolically at this juncture for an encounter with a radically different reality: *"The face of the other penetrates the self-satisfied security of the totalitarian "I". In so doing, however, it offers the "I" the opportunity to do itself justice as subject in the actual (i.e. ethical) sense. Moreover, the other appeals as one in need to the righteousness of the "I". According to Levinas, 'the Other' (uppercase) is also made manifest in the same encounter with radical external alterity. It is here that God becomes visible as the wholly "Other" who enjoins us to righteousness and ultimately judges us"*.

It seems to the present author that this offers a precise description of what we find in the Koran. The fundamental commandments in the Koran are likewise framed by the recognition that God is the only true God: *Place no other god beside God*. The bedrock of the commandments is God: it is His Way for all people. For Islam, monotheism or the oneness of God serves as the foundational factor for the oneness of humanity. Human persons are not divided to the core, each with his or her god, every tribe or clan with its own divinities, excluding others, worshipping what pleases them. The Creator and the Lawgiver are one. From the Muslim perspective two fundamental pillars arise from these

⁷ DECORTE, Jan (e.a.), *Fundamentele Wijsbegeerte*, Leuven, 2001, pp. 312-313.

foundational commandments: first, the human person is not at liberty to set them aside with impunity: they are the *conditio sine qua non* of humanity itself; second, they do not result from human freedom.

The person of faith is thus profoundly aware that in the last analysis he or she is not autonomous, self-determined:

"We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves" (Rom.)

"Truly! To God we belong and truly, to Him we shall return" (Qur.)

PART IV. MILITANT ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS

Prof. Taha M. Basman

A. INTRODUCTION

Militancy is not a monopoly of the Muslims. According to published statistics, the number of international militant and terrorist nets has increased to 550 organizations in more than sixty (60) countries. Of this number, there are only more than twenty (20) Muslim organizations, which may be included as militants and/or terrorists. Among the so-called "terrorists," the Al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah, Hamas, and Abu Sayyaf stand out as the more active ones these days. The classification of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front is still not fixed by the Philippine Government, although the United States of America consider it to be coddling terrorist organizations.

The United Nations Higher Committee for Fighting Terrorism, affiliated to the General Assembly, has issued on February 29, 1979 the following political, economic, and social reasons behind militancy and terrorism:

A. Political

- Colonialism
- Racial discrimination
- Use of force against weak countries
- Interference in the internal affairs of other countries
- Complete or partial foreign occupation
- Exercise of both violence and suppression to force people to migrate, and to dominate a particular race.

B. Economic

- Lack of balance in the international economic system
- Foreign exploitation of the natural resources of developing countries

C. Social

- Violation of human rights
- Deprivation, starvation, misery, and illiteracy

- Negligence of a nation that has been subjected to oppression
- Destruction of the environment

An important sector of the militant/terrorist groups are the "separatists." Historically, the strategies of separatist movements go beyond dialogue. There are many violent activities that are carried out to realize independence from the State. The ETA Organization in Spain endeavored to have the Basque region independent from the country. In the Philippines, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front is engaged in Peace Talks with the Government after an armed struggle spanning several years. In Canada, a movement to liberate Quebec also exists. In India, some Sikh organizations have been fighting for independence. The Tamil sect in Sri Lanka has the same separatist goals also.

This paper focuses on Muslim militancy in contemporary times. We will not deal with the realities of the olden times. Thus, we will not discuss the militant groups such as the Jewish Psychariots, the Christian Crusades, or the Muslim Karametas because their situations were different from ours.

B. ISLAM AND MILITANCY

Islam utterly rejects the kind of militancy and terrorism planned in reality, against innocent people, women and children. Islam stands against the kind of terrorism that is designed to threaten a recourse to certain methods that might annoy people, disturb their rest, and deprive them of their security and peace of mind. Islam adjudicates any participation in acts of terror of this nature unlawful. Islam does not encourage any terrorist plan or any clandestine act of that nature, irrespective whether it is carried out by a government, an individual, an institution, or groups of people, that is irrespective of their title or official positions. Terrorism, in the view of Islam, endangers properties and exposes them to destruction. It impedes progress and development needed to provide people with food, and to secure the interests of individuals and society. Terrorism is an ugly crime that directly affects society and Islam. The effects of any act of terrorism are scrutinized and proper punishments, accordingly, are prescribed to fit the effect of panic and fear inflicted on people.

A number of calumnies and slanders have been utilized by Western mass media against Islam. Examples of such propaganda are: Islam, promulgates violence, terrorism, and resists any call for peace. In fact, Islam is a religion of peace.

Islam, as a tolerant and indulgent religion, reject violence and terrorism, for they are founded on sin and transgression. Islam has encouraged believers to shun all that brings them close to violence, terrorism, and use of force. Islam, in fact, has made any aggression against fellow man unlawful, and made suicide unlawful, as well. This belief is attested in the Qur'an, Surat A Baqara (The Heifer), verse 195:

"And make not your good hands contribute to your destruction; But do good; for God loves those who do good."

If Islam prohibits the killing of one's own life, how would Islam encourage the killing of others and the use of violence and as a recourse to terrorism! Islam has disparaged terrorism and cautioned Muslims to its bad and dangerous consequences. Islam prohibits the bloodshed of any human being with an exception of doing it for lawful cause. Again, this approach is attested in Qur'an Surat Al An'am (The Cattle), verse 151:

"Take no life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law. . ."

Islam does not differentiate between one person and another. In other words, people are equal in Islam. Islam has dignified the human soul and cautioned against any burden incurred due to an aggression committed against it. A person who transgresses a human soul would be committing transgression against all humanity for he would be transgressing the right of life, and he who initiates an act of benevolence for a human being, he would be doing so to all humanity. This belief is confirmed in the Qur'an in Surat Al Ma'ida (The Table), verse 32:

"On that account: We ordained for the children of Israel that if any one slew a person – unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people."

C. THE INDONESIAN MILITANTS

Militancy in Islam is a phenomenon now sweeping the whole world. To understand this phenomenon easily, focus on the Indonesian situation will provide a good reference and a typical picture of the realities in other countries. A research conducted by Yunanto and a group of scholars invited to discuss the subject matter in a conference held in Bogor, Jakarta, Indonesia on October 27 – 30, 2002, is our main reference in the present discussion.

Indonesia's transition from authoritarianism to democracy also opened the way for militant Islamic movements to gain ground. Some of these movements acted as pressure groups and their actions included demonstrations demanding the implementation of Shari'a law through a constitutional amendment and mob violence aimed at destroying

'dens of iniquity' such as nightclubs and entertainment venues offering alcoholic drinks, gambling and prostitution. Other groups became involved in sectarian conflicts, such as the violence in the Maluku islands, as well as in Poso, Central Sulawesi, maintaining they were attempting to defend fellow Muslims.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, America's retaliatory strikes against Osama bin Laden's Afghanistan-based Al Qaeda network –deemed responsible for the attack – provoked angry reactions from several Islamic groups in Indonesia. Their actions included anti-US demonstrations, calls for a national boycott of American products and threats to 'sweep' American citizens out of the country. While little came out of these threats, Western intelligence analysts have since linked some of Indonesia's most radical extremists, mostly Jemaah Islamiyah members, to Al- Qaeda.

The re-emergence of militant Islamic movements in Indonesia is undeniably a product of the nation's transition to democracy, yet there are some who fear these groups could be a threat to democracy and peace. This paper hopes to answer the following questions:

First, given the history of militant Islamic movements in Indonesia, do the radical groups established after the fall of the New Order regime have any ties with previous extremist groups? To answer this question, the paper examines the form, organizational structure and networks that characterize these groups.

Second, do the similarities between Indonesia and Middle Eastern radical groups go beyond the use of Arabic terms in their names? Such terms include 'jihad' in Laskar Jihad, '*mujahid*' (mujahedin) in *Majelis Mujahiddin* Indonesia (Indonesian Mujahedin Council: MMI), '*hizb*' (soldier or party) in Hizbut Tahrir and Hizbullah, and 'jamaah' (community) in Jemaah Islamiyah. The use of these Arabic terms leads to the identification of similarities with militant groups in the Middle East and Africa.

Third, military movements are often assumed to be anti-democracy. This study looks at militant Islamic groups' perceptions of democratic values such as pluralism. Also examined is the issue of an Islamic state and demands for the implementation of Shari'a law through amendments to the 1945 Constitution. Furthermore, this paper investigates claims that Indonesia's radical Islam is actually a 'Trojan horse' used by military factions to serve their own ends. The paper also examines the radical groups' anti-vice policies.

Fourth, in relation to studies on peace issues, this paper attempts to explain the motivations of militant groups involved in regional

conflicts. What is the underlying ideology of their violence? And what is the extent of their alleged relationships with international terrorist networks?

Before getting any deeper, it is necessary to briefly explain several terms that frequently appear throughout the work, such as 'militant', 'fundamentalism', 'radical', and 'hardline'.

One definition of 'militant' is "people who believe in something very strongly and are active in trying to bring about political and social change, often in extreme ways that other people find unacceptable." Balai Pustaka's Indoensian Dictionary defines the term as "being highly motivated," "full of spirit" or "having a hardline outlook." Alternatively, Saad Edin Ibrahim and colleagues from the American University of Cairo define the term 'militant Islam' as "collective behavior that performs violence to oppose the state and other parties on behalf of Islam."

In this study, therefore, the term 'militant' refers to "a group of firm-minded, highly motivated people who make efforts to achieve their mission and interests, some of which with violent orientation." The term 'Islamic militants' is defined as "militant groups that use Islam as the symbol of their movement in an effort to achieve their mission and interests." Mass mobilizations to conduct 'sweepings,' attacks on nightclubs, gambling dens and brothels; and involvement in violent local conflicts characterize many of these groups in Indonesia. These actions are illegal and unacceptable. Thus, groups of performing these actions in the name of Islam or in terms of Islamic ideology such as *jihad* and *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* (performing good deeds and opposing vice) can be categorized as Islamic militant groups. Groups fighting for the imposition of Shari'a law by means of an amendment to Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution also belong to this category.

But not all of Indonesia's various militant groups necessarily subscribe to all of these actions. Some are inherently ideological, while others are inherently violent. Laskar Jihad, for example, played a major role in the deadly religious conflict in the Maluku and has launched attacks against vice, as evident in the Ngawi incident in East Java, when gambling dens and nightspots serving alcohol were attacked during the fasting month of Ramadhan. The Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*: FPI) has also frequently staged attacks on nightclubs, gambling dens and brothels, and has used extreme means to advocate the implementation of the Sha'ria law. Other groups such as MMI, Surakarta Muslim Youth Front (*Front Pemuda Islam Surakarta*: FPIS), Hizbullah Sunan Bonang and Laskar Jundullah, are considered militant due to their extreme stances and demands for

Sha'ria law. Although MMI differs from other groups, it has been included because it is suspected of having links to Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaida. The more localized groups, such as FPIS, Hizbullah and Laskar Jundullah, were involved in non-violent and unsuccessful attempts to 'sweep' American citizens out of Surakarta in late 2001 in protest against US attacks on Afghanistan. But these groups have been more violent when cracking down on local vice trades.

Thus, the term 'militant Islam' is only used in this research to describe actions rather than to evaluate or judge whether they are 'right or wrong' or 'good or bad.' Its locus rests on violence used in the name of religion. To a large extent, militant Islam has grown as the state has become increasingly accommodative to demands for Sha'ria law at the local level.

Some experts argue that a militant stance is a manifestation of fundamentalism. Egypt's former chief justice Said Al Ashmawi maintains that fundamentalist movements may be classified into two categories: spiritual rational fundamentalism and political activism fundamentalism. The former exhibits the following characteristics:

First, spiritual rational fundamentalism believes in the importance of interpreting the terms in the Holy Qur'an from the time of the divine revelations and firm to their definitions.

Second, it attempts to study the basic values in the Holy Qur'an and follows Muslim interpretations of the revelations.

Third, it emphasizes the need to return to the essential nature of Islam, which highly values tolerance and *rahim* (mercy). This kind of fundamentalism aims to release human beings from suffering and is against extremism. In other words, it holds firm to the universal and humanistic nature of Islam and attempts to return to a pure spiritual life.

As such, this type of fundamentalism can be categorized as the 'moderate groups,' free from negative labeling. In Indonesia, these characteristics appear in puritanical or reformist (*tajdid*) movements. Muhammadiyah and the Justice Party may belong to this category.

By contrast, political activism fundamentalism exhibits the following characteristics. First, it narrows the interpretation of the verses of the Holy texts and extrapolates on the definitions to include points that may not be contained in them. Misunderstandings are caused by altering interpretation of the revelations.

Second, it ignores the process of the revelations and deviates from the interpretation of the Prophet Muhammad, but accepts their explanations and converts the verses of the Holy Qur'an into slogans. For example, it converts the interpretation of 'yahkum' from its true

meaning of 'judge' to 'govern' and consequently considers governments 'kafir' (infidel). By invoking memories of the past, the group hampers advancement.

Third, its attitude is inconsistent and tends to proffer superficial interpretations, which makes it confusing and irrational. This group is then associated with fundamentalism, extremism, militancy and radicalism.

The militant movements that serve as the units of analysis in this paper are closely identified with the latter category. For example, they tend to restrict the definition of *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* to individual issues, as seen in their focus on opposing alcohol, gambling, pornography and nightclubs, while ignoring issues of 'structural wickedness,' such as injustice, corruption, suppression and exploitation. Likewise, the term 'jihad' is only applied to violent issues, such as the battles fought in the Maluku, while its other connotations, such as hard work and self-purification, are largely ignored.

Ayzumardi Azra, rector of Jakarta's Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, citing US scholar Martin E. Marty, mentions four principles of the fundamentalist movement that are similar to Al Ashmawi's classification of political activism fundamentalism: 'oppositionalism' (a tendency to oppose); rejection of pluralism and relativism; rejection of hermeneutics (critical interpretation of the verses); and rejection of both the sociological and historical contexts of the issues at hand. Groups that exhibit the above distinctive characteristics may be labeled as militant, radical, extremist and even terrorist. Alternatively, academic such as Scott Appleby, Karen Armstrong, Bruce Lawrence and Ahmad Mousalli prefer using the term fundamentalism to describe groups with militant characteristics.

In contrast, US sociology professor Mark Jurgensmeyer has objected to the use of fundamentalism to describe groups with a political orientation. In his opinion, fundamentalism is a conservative movement originating in the Protestant tradition that rejects modernization. He favors a distinction between groups that take religion as their ideological base and those using Islam as a political tool to achieve their aims.

D. COMPARISON TO ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Militant Islamic movements in Indonesia and the Philippines, like Abu Sayyaf, for a long time gained less attention than those in Middle East. Due to the fact that most research on the issue of Islamic militancy has concentrated on the Middle East, those seeking to research the phenomenon in Indonesia lack resources. Regions such as Indonesia

are seen as peripheral to the issue and of only minor importance.

Let us examine the relationship between militant Islamic groups in the Middle East and in Indonesia with emphasis placed on the key figures, ideology, training methods and organization of the groups. Most of the militant Islamic groups in Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Algeria are inspired by the teachings of Egypt's *Ikhwanul Muslimin* (Muslim Brotherhood) movement led by Hssan al-Banna. The Saudi Arabian regime, which practices '*Wahhabism*,' is opposed by militant groups protesting the domination of the descendants of Ibnu Saud. Sunni militant Islamic groups use the concepts developed by the *Ikhwanul Muslimin* group as a blueprint. *Syiah* teachings have influenced and supported the Hizbullah of Lebanon in fighting against Israel.

1. Key Figures

The three most important leaders of militant Islamic groups in Indonesia are of Yemeni descent: Habib Rizieq Shihab (FPI leader), Ja'far Umar Thalib (Laskar Jihad commander), and Abu Bakar Baasyir (MMI leader). Their shared heritage may be a coincidence but all three have gained legitimacy in the eyes of their followers as a result of their perceived mastery of Islamic teachings and their charismatic leadership.

2. Ideology

The militant Islamic movements in Indonesia, Philippines and the Middle East share many ideological similarities.

3. Wahhabism

Groups such as FPI, FPIS, and Laskar Jihad are inspired and influenced by the reformist movement of the 18th century Arab preacher Shiek Muhammad Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792). This movement, later known as '*Wahhabism*,' developed from Abdul Wahhab's disappointment with the Ustamaniyah Turk Sultanate, which he considered infidel. His movement rejected the *fiqh* (religious school of thought), philosophy and mysticism prevalent from the Middle Ages and attempted to establish pure belief based on Islamic teachings of the 17th century. Aggression and sometimes violence in disseminating its teachings characterizes Wahhabism. The methods of the original movement are followed by Laskar Jihad and FPI, which also draw on Arabic symbols and use Arabic-inspired uniforms and insignia.

4. Pan-Islamism

Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia adopts the '*Pan-Islamism*' goal of Afghanistan's Islamic revivalist Jamaluddin A-Afghani (1838-97), whose ideas laid the basis for radical/fundamental Islam. His teachings also inspired Egyptian theologians Muhammad Rashid Ridha (1865-1935) and Hassan Al-Banna (1906-49).

5. Sha'ria Law and the Islamic State

The struggle to establish based on Sha'ria law has the origins on the thoughts of Al Afghani, Rashid Ridha, Hassan Al-Banna and another Egyptian scholar Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), who has been described as the father of modern Islamic fundamentalism.

6. Jihad

Leaders of militant Islamic movements, both in the Middle East and Indonesia, believe that jihad is the ideological basis for achieving their objectives. Several radical Indonesian groups have incorporated the term jihad in their names, while MMI leader Abu Bakar Baasyir holds the title of *Amirul Mujahidin* (Jihad Leader).

An interesting focus of this study is how this groups have used jihad as the sole ideology to legitimize their long-term objectives, ignoring its comprehensive meaning as defined in terms of both violent and non-violent acts. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad referred to the violence that sometimes formed part of his struggle to bring Islam to the Arabian tribes of the 7th century as the 'lesser jihad' and the personal spiritual struggles of Muslims to realize the true meaning of Allah's message as the 'greater jihad.'

The conception of jihad as the core ideology inspiring militant groups can be traced to the works of Pakistan's Syed Abdul Al Maududi, who viewed universal jihad as the primary obligation of Islam. For him, jihad is neither the holy war to convert the non-believer to Islam, as often believed in the West, nor what Abduh described as a method of self-defense. Al Maududi defined jihad as a revolutionary struggle to gain power for the sake of human beings. Jihad varied in meaning and took form in articles and sermons, but still contained the notion of armed struggle.

7. Democracy, Nationalism and Secularism

Similarities between Ikhwanul Muslimin and Indonesia's militant Islamic groups can be seen by their views on the incompatibility of democracy and Islam. With the exception of Muhammad Abduh, who tend to be viewed as a reformist rather than a militant, the successive leaders of Ikhwanul Muslimin disagreed in some sense with democracy, nationalism, and secularism. Rashid Ridha was also opposed to nationalism and secularism.

8. Other Militant Movements in the Middle East

The fundamentalist movement in Algeria consists mainly of small autonomous groups with various outlooks ranging from peaceful to fanatical. The ideas of Al-Banna, Al-Maududi and Sayyid Qutb have influenced the militant leaders of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). This fundamentalist Algerian groups maintains that modern

society had been poisoned by the devil, as seen in the spread of moral decadence, AIDS, prostitution and free sex. Furthermore, the group believes the evils of paganism (*Jahiliyah*) and contemporary ideologies (liberalism, communism, socialism, and feminism) have destroyed religion. The only way to fight the spread of such social phenomena was Islam. FIS maintains that governments have failed to carry out their responsibilities effectively because they have betrayed the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. The infidel leaders of such states must be toppled through jihad, which allows violence and even assassination.

FIS leader Ali Benhadj, a former high school teacher known for his militant rhetoric, was arrested in 1991 and sentenced to 12 years in jail for 'undermining state security.' He was due to be released in July 2003. According to Benhadj, any journalists, writer, artist or secular ulama who support the separation of religion and the state are also to be blamed for the moral decadence of the Muslim community. He believes that democracy is the religious product of an ancient Greek pagan community and a serious threat to Islam. He also asserts that democracy is synonymous with homosexuality, alcohol, vulgar songs, and indecent films. The state itself is considered *murtad* (apostates) and deserves to be killed, says Benhadj. He also opposes pluralism, arguing the moral dissolution of Europe would repeat itself in Algeria if left unopposed.

Shiek Mahfoud Nahnah, leader of Algeria's Islamic Hammas Movement, has a considerably moderate view on democracy, especially on the issues of women and pluralism. In his opinion, which mirrors that of Muhammad Abduh, sharia law considers men and women equal in terms of the right to education, employment and involvement in developing the community. Nahnah believes that doctrinal, linguistic and political diversity across regions and communities is a natural and healthy phenomenon that was accommodated in the original Islamic society. He says these differences enrich life, consensus, dialogue, fair competition, exchange of ideas and constructive criticism that can simulate community development.

In his view, a constitution should be based on Islamic principles that institutionalize "an Islamic government system" based on consensus, equality, freedom and justice. These principles guarantee individual freedoms – freedom of opinion, expression, and association. But they must not destroy the basis of society, conspire to oppose society or give rise to immoral deeds. Regarding Islamic parties, Nahnah says, "people who choose non-Islamic parties may still be Muslims." This is quite contrary to Benhadj's stance that parties not in accordance with Islamic principles are satanic.

An-Nahda, a small party led by Abdallah Djaballah, supports most of Nahnah's views. This party also struggles for the establishment of an Islamic state based on Sha'ria law through pluralistic and democratic means. Djaballah opposes secular party representation in parliament and promotes the use of the veil for women.

In Lebanon, fundamentalist movements are divided along ethnic lines that relate to the broader picture in the Middle East. The biggest group is Hezbollah, followed by the Islamic Association (al-Jama'a al-Islamiya) and Al Tauhid. The Islamic Association is influenced by the teachings of Sayyid Qutb, while Hezbollah is influenced by the Shi'ites of Iran. These organizations believe Islam and the West are caught in an endless war dating back to the Crusades and Zionism. They also condemn the US for its support of non-Islamic and 'unjust' governments, especially the Israeli government.

On the other side of the spectrum is Al-Ashbash, which has been a key player in Lebanese politics by offering a moderate alternative to radical Islam. It is a *sufi* (spiritualist) movement that devoutly follows the teachings of Ethiopian theologian al-Habashi. Despite recommending a return to the true path of Islam, Al-Ashbash is not politically Islamic and therefore opposes the Islamic Association's idea on establishing an Islamic state. Instead, Al-Ashbash aims to foster a normal and stable community where Muslim and non-Muslim communities can live together to enrich their collective lives. The group does not recommend jihad, but advises its members to learn Western ideas and science in order to create a civilized Islamic society.

E. CONCLUSION

Despite the impression that some Muslim militants export their ideals and ideologies to Muslim communities worldwide, let us accept the fact that the mainstream Muslim is still a "moderate" because the real teaching of Islam is moderation, not extremism or militancy. The militants do not even constitute 1% of the total Muslim population of 1.4 billion worldwide.

This means that even if we combine the memberships of the militants like the Jemaah Islamiyah, and other groups, their number will not even reach 100,000. Include the very insignificant number among the Shi'ites, Sunnis, Wahhabis, and other regular Muslim sects, the total figure will not reach the 1% level.

In a nutshell, if the international community takes the mainstream Muslim as a partner in fighting terrorism, instead of looking at all Muslims as suspects, the peace that we, here, all aim for is within our reach and achievable. We are one in this pursuit.

PART V. STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

by Hadja Salma Laurdes

The role of women in Islam as a subject can be divided into three main headings:

- A. Muslim women in the past;
- B. The present situation of the Muslim women;
- C. The role, which should be played by women in the Islamic renaissance.

The first part constitutes the basis upon which our new awakening should be built. We often hear statements such as "Real Islam is not applicable today" and that "Any effort to review the past is no more than a reactionary movement that does not fit in the general framework of the 20th century advancements". The slogan, "If you do not work, you should not eat," is the *shibboleth* of the age.

Now all healthy societies are called to seek its potentials and to realize the good of the whole. The distribution of labor gives equilibrium to society. The moment roles are discarded or changed, the equilibrium is disturbed and the well-being of a society is jeopardized. This is the first premise of Islamic social laws.

A. Muslim Women in the Past

The history of Muslim women is a tapestry of exquisite patterns and colors, and to unfold it will be beyond the scope of the present study. I will thus confine myself to a few aspects: the Muslim woman as a wife, the Muslim woman as a mother; the Muslim woman as a leader in jihad.

The Muslim Woman as a wife

The family, as a social unit, has always enjoyed great importance in all societies; Islam, however, accords it a special sanctity:

"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect." (al-Qur'an 30:1)

Marriage is an institution to raise a family, it is considered by Islam as the sole legitimate way of gratifying sex. The unmarried youth are exhorted by the Prophet to get married as soon as they reach puberty. If they cannot get married because of puberty, they should abstain, since taking a mistress is strictly forbidden, for it is degrading to women and destructive to children.

Love and mercy are the basis of marriage in Islam. The fore-mentioned verse stresses the importance of peace and love in the family life. And should love be found lacking, divorce may be resorted to. That is why, without the consent of the bride or her representative, a marriage contract cannot be concluded. It is related that a young lady from the *Ansar*, be the name of *Khansa bint Jizam*, came to the prophet (Allah's blessings be upon him) and complained against her father, who, contrary to her wishes, wanted to give her in marriage to a man whom she did not like. The *Prophet Muhammad* (peace upon him) intervened and thwarted her marriage.

Marriage in Islam is a civil contract; and like all contracts, it cannot be validated under duress. Essentially, a relationship of love based on the spouses' willingness to have the union, is supposed to strengthen faith and to further the cause of Islam.

In its idealistic form, the marriage of *Muhammad bin Abdullah* and *Khadijah bint Khuwaylid* could be cited. Their marriage took place fifteen years before the former's elevation to the Prophethood. *Muhammad* (peace upon him) was asked by Sayyedah *Khadijah* to look after her business interests. She was a lady of impeccable character, wisdom and beauty. She loved him, because through his honesty, devotion and efficiency her profits multiplied. She did not hesitate to propose to him, and the happiest marriage took place. In love and devotion, they formed their family. They had three sons and four daughters. But the serene, quiet life was suddenly disturbed by the new change that took place in the life of *Muhammad*. He began contemplating for long hours, watching the universe around him, seeking its real essence. He became a recluse in the cave of *Hira'*. The loving wife stood by him. She did not complain; she understood fully the imperceptible change taking place in her husband's life. Instead, her concern for him increased, and she took pains to see that the family chores did not distract him.

When he received the first message from God, he could not stand the shock and he fled to *Khadijah*; trembling, he divulged the happening to her. She did not panic, but waited for her husband to calm down and soothed him by her gentle words, by telling him that God would never fail him since he discharged his obligations, shared other's concerns, helped the poor, gave to the needy, fed guests, and stood by people in need. She went beyond the gentle, comforting words and took him to her cousin *Waraqah bin Nufal*, a learned Christian, for advice. When he told her that *Muhammad* would become the messenger of God and the seal of the Prophets, she called the *Makkans* to Islam, but they responded with violence, accused him of quackery and fatuity. Seeing

him (*Muhammad*) resolute and preserving in his cause, the nobles of *Quraish* decided to punish the clan of *Hashim*, and other Muslims, by severing their social economic ties with the Makkans. The aristocratic lady of *Quraish* had to choose now between hardship and a life of ease. When her husband and the clan of *Hashim* and other Muslims were confined in a pass for three years, she stood by his side. Never for a moment did she complain or utter a word to hurt her husband. The rigors of confinement and privation did not weaken her spirit, though her health gave way. By the time *Quraish* decided to end the siege, she was so ill and weak that they had to carry her home. There she died – a perfect example of faithful *Muslimah* and devoted wife.

A Muslim wife is obedient to her husband, not because of any inferiority, but because she accepted him as her guardian. *Asma bint Yazid*, the renowned lady of *Ansar*, known for her eloquence, was once delegated by other women to inform the Prophet (peace upon him) about their sense of frustration on not being equal to men in matters of good deeds and the concomitant reward in the Hereafter. Men, she said, had diverse opportunities to do good deeds, such as Friday prayers, collective prayers, visiting sick people, attending funerals and participating in *Jihad*. Impressed by her eloquence, the prophet is reported to have said that if a woman loved her husband, sought his pleasure, and obeyed him, she would be at par with him in good deeds.

A Muslim wife is very much concerned about the psychological health of her husband, as well as his material comfort. It was related that *Umu Sulaim bint Malhian*, the mother of *Anas bin Malik*, had a son who fell critically ill. One day, while her husband was offering his evening prayers at the mosque, the son died. She did not call for him; instead she waited. When he returned home, she found him in the company of his friends. She restrained herself and put her self to preparing supper for the guests. Later in the evening, when he inquired about his son's state of health, she replied, "He is quieter than before." She did not want to spoil his evening. At night, when they were alone, she broke the news of his death. Somehow the news trickled to the Prophet; obviously moved, he prayed to Allah to bless that evening of theirs. *Umu Sulaim* later conceived and gave birth to '*Abd Allah bin Talha*."

A Muslim wife is also very particular in choosing her husband: wealth and materialistic considerations are least important to her. *Umu Sulaim* refused to accept *Abu Talha* for a husband because he believed in *Jahiliyyah*. She persuaded him to give up his ways of *Jahiliyyah* and embrace Islam. Her words appealed to him; he chose Islam as well as her.

The Muslim woman as a mother

Devoted as she is to Islam, the Muslim woman turned out to be a good mother. She raised her children with a singular passion to safeguard nature and Islamic values. *'Asma bint Abu Bakr* was a very outstanding example. Her son *Abd Allah bin Al-Zobair*, learned since his childhood to fear nothing, but God. One day the children were playing in the street. *Umar bin Al-Khatab*, known for his strictness, passed by. All the children ran away, except *'Abd Allah b. Al-Zobair*. Amazed, *Umar* asked the child why he did not leave the scene the way the others had done. He replied that the road was wide enough for everybody, and besides he had done nothing wrong to make him run. When he grew up as a young Muslim, he refused to pay allegiance to *Yazid bin Mu'awiyah*. To him, monarchy was repugnant to Islam, and *Yazid*, for lack of character, was not qualified to lead the Muslims. Knowing that the odds were heavy against him, he still defied *Yazid*. Abandoned by his army and about to fall, he came to his mother for her advice. An ordinary mother under such trying circumstances would have counseled compromise. But *'Asma*, a woman of true grit encouraged her son to die for his cause. *'Abd Allah b. Al-Zobair* fell down fighting. His foes mutilated his body and exposed it for three days to serve as a lesson to those who might defy the monarch. *'Asma* came over to see the exposed body of her son. It was badly mutilated, but she did not scream nor faint, but said, "It does not matter for the sheep to be skinned after it is killed." (i.e. "It is natural for the sheep to be skinned after it is killed.")

The Muslim Woman as a Leader in Jihad

The term *jihad* does not necessarily mean fighting with a sword or the waging of war. When *'Ayshah* asked the Prophet about the *jihad* of Muslim women, he was reported to have said that her *jihad* was *hajj* (pilgrimage). In the past, the Muslim woman waged *jihad* on many fronts. *Fatima Al-Zahra*, the daughter of the Prophet, used to do all the housework without any outside help. One day, she complained to her husband, *Ali bin Talib*, that she felt weak, her hands had become rough and full of boils. He asked her to report this to her father, who might provide them with a maid. She went to the Prophet, but instead of getting the house-help, she was advised to say "*Subhan Allah, Al-hamdo*" and "*Allah o Akbar*" ten times each after prayers. Contented, they never complained again. One day, while the Prophet was visiting his beloved daughter, *Fatimah*, he found her wearing a rough dress made of camel-hair, and grinding flour. He could not help his tears and

was reported to have said that to attain the eternal bounties; *Fatimah* "willingly swallowed the worldly bitterness".

'*Ayshah Umm Al-Mumineen* was a profound scholar. She has transmitted more than five thousand *ahabith*, and is exceeded only by *Abu Hurairah*. The companions of the Prophet often consulted her. Her analysis was always sound, and her opinion learned. She was known for her honest and authentic transmission of the *sunnah*.

'*Orwah b Al-Zubair* is of the opinion that he had not seen anyone with a better knowledge of the Qur'an, sunnah, poetry and history than '*Ayshah. Al-Zubair*'; he said that she surpassed all the wives of the Prophet in knowledge and learning. Similar words were said about her by *Al-Maqdad bin Al-Aswad*; and in faith Al-Bari, it was reported that one-quarter of the shari'ah law was transmitted to ummah through her. Al-Thahib and Al-khashif stated that '*Ayshah* was the most learned woman of the Islamic community.

Besides teaching and household management, the Muslim woman, in times of need, rendered auxiliary roles in the battlefield. An outstanding example is found in the person of *Nasibah bint ka'b*, a brave lady from the *Ansar*, and the only one of the two women who personally took the oath of allegiance on the hands of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the second *bya'ah* of *al-Aqaba*. On the field of *Uhud*, she nursed the wounded and provided water to the thirsty. When she heard that the Prophet was badly hurt, she drew out her sword and fought bravely to protect him. She was deeply wounded. It is said that she received ten wounds at different battles and lost one of her arms. Here, we must note that originally, it has never been the intention of any Muslim woman to carry arms.

B. Where Does the Muslim Woman Fit in the Present Society?

The present-day Muslim woman with her degrees, jobs and titles is not playing any serious part in the Islamic awakening.

The distortion of Islamic values has put us into a very precarious situation. The woman is the honor of our nation, and if she is hurt, the whole community will be affected. This is the reason why education has become the center of attraction to our enemies. In 1846, girls' education started in Egypt under the leadership of the English and the French missions. These schools admitted girls from rich classes only. As early as the year 1832, poor girls were either sent to the traditional schools, or the midwives training center, which did not help in giving esteem to traditional schools or the nursing profession. To detach nursing further from its Islamic appearance, they made a special uniform for the nurses so that a nurse could never have the appearance of a Muslim woman.

The number of schools increased, and by 1886, the first school was established in Syria. In 1911, the Sudan had its own school. The teaching staff was either drawn from the French, Italian or British nationals. Catholic missions also became active, and their schools spread in many Muslim countries. The main objective of the colonial powers was to create a rift between secular education and religious instruction.

It was a long carefully planned process, which started at first by changing the concept of learning in Islam. In the past, learning included chemistry, mathematics, physics astronomy, Shari'ah, poetry, history and geography. All these subjects today have nothing to do with Islam. Islam has been excluded from the mainstream of social life. A new hierarchy of men, similar to the ecclesiastical order called *rijal al-din*, has emerged; they are dressed and educated in a different way. Their job is to lead the congregation and offer the funeral prayers. For women, the opportunity for this kind of education unfortunately does not exist.

C. The Role of Women in the Present

To be logical and systematic, I think we should start where the Prophet had started fifteen centuries ago. He started with the individuals, then the families, and finally the Islamic community. The woman is the cornerstone of this process. As a mother, she happens to be the first educator. We are living in an age of scientific planning. Specialization is the pole of any plan for development. Every individual should carry out the job in which he or she excels. Man cannot conceive or give birth to a child - a role that falls naturally to women. If she does it mechanically, in the sense that she becomes a "hatching machine", producing children and abandoning them after six weeks, there will hardly be any difference between human beings and animals.

A working mother is subjected to diverse pushes and pulls in her daily life. She has to be a good wife, a good mother and above all, a good worker. No wonder, tension, nervousness and irritability are the typical diseases of this age. We want everyone to believe that motherhood is a very serious responsibility. If the machine breaks, we can always repair it, or we can even throw it away and buy a new one. We cannot buy new children. From the day of birth and even prior to it, the child needs very careful handling. It is a fulltime job, and it remains to be the most complicated of all jobs. Theoretically, motherhood cannot be studied in any university; it requires the learning of many things and needs common sense, quick action, love, affection and discipline. A good mother should do all that. She should pay full attention to it. If she is

always in a hurry and unable to satisfy a child's queries, the upbringing of the child will deteriorate. Generation after generation, the standard of upbringing is deteriorating. The result is a complete alienation from Islam or any other values; this is the real catastrophe of the twentieth century.

Today's Islam is confined to official ceremonies, and has ceased to reside in the hearts and minds of the youth. Thus any attempt for reformation must necessarily begin from the woman as a mother. This cannot be done only by individuals or committees, but it should be undertaken by all Muslim governments. Co-education should be allowed in all fields of knowledge. The separation of secular from religious school should be abolished. All people should be men and women of religion because Islam should not be monopolized by a class. This is not going to be an easy job. Everybody should seriously participate.

All means of communication, especially the mass media, should contribute to help mothers play their role in this awakening, we should protect them from seeing, hearing or reading anything that might disturb the delicate process. This, in no way, is to be construed as restricting individual freedom, however, this in itself should be examined very carefully.

On the other hand, continued teaching of the true Islam should be carried out by all the scholars. There should be serious annual assessment of all the Islamic work, both on the official and popular levels. In this way, mistakes and shortcomings will be discovered at an early stage. A serious study program of what is allowed (*halal*) and what is prohibited (*haram*) needs to be launched. Many young girls do not know that music, dancing, acting, and mixed social gatherings are prohibited by Islam. Unfortunately, our scholars are spending much time in conferences discussing the beauty of Islam, but little attention is being paid to its social import. An international body of God-fearing scholars should be instituted to provide *fatwa* (guidance) on issues of social bearing. This will help mothers to seek their spiritual growth in an atmosphere free from the pernicious influence of un-Godly life.

The youth gone astray should be brought back to their Islamic life by giving them good examples. One man started Islam even in the face of opposition from the notables and chiefs. His personal qualities and example recruited to Islam more people than words or preaching.

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“A Christian Woman Meets Muslim Women”

Sr. Lilian Curaming, FMM

1. Introduction: Yasmin

I will start my sharing with an encounter with a young Muslim woman, very much in love, who was instrumental in my being involved with interreligious dialogue. How did I come to this ministry? Yasmin came to my Guidance Office sharing her love life problem, just like any teenager. But there were elements in her problem that baffled me. To understand her and her situation better, I requested to meet her family that included the whole tribe. The more I was confused and felt so helpless! “If only I knew more of her culture and religion, then I could help more young people like Yasmin to live life to the full”, was my cry. I shared these thoughts and desire to the late Bishop Tuddud, who replied: “There is joy in my heart that God revealed Himself to you this way. If the Almighty reveals Himself through a flower, can He not also reveal Himself through a Muslim?” The same bishop encouraged me to “move from fear of dialogue, to dialogue without fear, to love out of (desire for) dialogue, and above all, to dialogue out of love”. That is the beginning of my love affair with Muslims, full of joys and challenges and includes pains and difficulties too. And so with Yasmin and the other Muslims, whom God sent to my life, I could exclaim “*al-hamdu lillah*”! (Praise be to God/Thanks be to God)

2. Women in the Holy Qur'an

Other intriguing and challenging experiences, urged me to study about women in Islam. I recall Amina. She was one of the field workers of the Social Action Desk of the Prelature of Marawi. One day I was “shocked” with her request: ‘Sister, please help me to look for a second wife for Yusuf.’ After listening to her, the initial shock turned to understanding. That is, on the head level.

A major part of this paper is a very brief review of women in the best source of information, the source-book of Islam – that is the Noble Qur'an.

2.1 Spiritual Aspect

In Islam there is absolutely no difference between men and women as far as their relationship to Allah is concerned, as both are promised the same reward for good conduct and the same punishment for evil conduct. The Holy Book, in addressing the believers, often uses the expression, “believing men and women”. It says:

For Muslim men and women, - for believing men and women,

for devout men and women, for true men and men, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, - for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward. (33:35)

The Qur'an further declares:

Enter ye the Garden, ye and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing. (43:70)

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions. (16:97)

According to the Qur'an, men and women have the same essence created from a single source:

O mankind! Fear your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, out of it, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; - fear Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and be heedful of the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you. (4:1)

Both genders are recipients of the "divine breath" since they are created with the same human and spiritual nature (*nafsin waahidin*):

When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him. (15:29)

Both genders are dignified and are trustees of Allah on earth:

We have honored the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of our creation. (17:70)

Men and women have the same religious and moral duties and responsibilities. They both face the consequences of their deeds:

And their Lord hath accepted of them, and answered them: "Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: ye are members, one of another: Those who have left their homes, or been driven out there from, or suffered harm in My cause, or fought or been slain, -- verily, I will blot out from their iniquities, and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath: - A reward from the presence of Allah, and from His presence is the best rewards. (3:195)

Nowhere does the Qur'an state that one gender is superior to the other. Some inaccurate (interpretative) translations of the Qur'an may give this impression. In fact, the Qur'an may make it clear that the sole basis of superiority of any person over the other is piety and righteousness, not gender, colour, or nationality.

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (49:13)

In Islam, woman is not blamed for the "fall of man". Pregnancy and childbirth are not seen as punishments for "eating from the forbidden tree." On the contrary, the Qur'an considers them to be grounds of love and respect due to mothers:

And we have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal. (31:14)

In narrating the story of Adam and Eve, the Qur'an refers to both of them, never singling out Eve for the blame:

"O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and enjoy (its good things) as ye wish: but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression."

Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them, bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said: "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest ye should become angels or such beings as live for ever."

And he swore to them both, that he was their sincere adviser.

So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the garden over their bodies. And their Lord called unto them: "Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?"

They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost."

(Allah) said: "Get you down. With enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood, - for a time."

O ye Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you

to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness, - that is the best. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may receive admonition!

O ye Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as He got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where ye cannot see them: We made the evil ones fiends (only) to those without faith. (7:19-27)

2.2 Intellectual Aspect

Every Muslim should pursue his or her education as far as it is possible, bearing in mind the words of Allah in the Qur'an:

Those truly fear Allah, among His servants who have knowledge. (35:28)

In Islam therefore, all persons are credited with the capacity for learning and understanding with one of the aims of becoming more conscious of God.

2.3 Political Aspect

Social responsibility in Islam is derived from the Qur'anic verse which states:

The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise. (9:71)

This verse compels women and men to act for the betterment of society. The Qur'an addresses the issue of woman giving to Prophet Muhammad a confirmation of his leadership. God tells Muhammad to accept the pledge of the women:

O prophet! If believing women come thee, taking oath of allegiance unto thee that they will ascribe no thing as partner unto Allah, and will neither steal nor commit adultery nor kill their children, nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet, nor disobey thee in what is right, then accept their allegiance and ask Allah to forgive them. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (60:12)

Women can also hold political positions in Islam. No Qur'anic verses exist that prevent women from holding positions of leadership.

2.4 Social Aspect

The Qur'an effectively ended the cruel pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide:

When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned – For what crime she was killed; (81:8-9)

It also condemns the unwelcoming attitudes among some parents upon hearing the news of the birth of a baby girl, instead of a baby boy. Both babies are described as gifts:

When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on? (16:58-59)

Marriage, according to the Qur'an is based on mutual peace, love, and compassion, not just the satisfaction of man's needs:

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect. (30:21)

Islam requires husbands to be kind and considerate to their wives even if they do not like them.

O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them, -except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good. (4:19)

Kindness to parents (especially to mothers) is next to worship to Allah:

Thy Lord hat 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 them 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)

Thus ends my limited exposé on Women in Islam according to the Holy Qur'an.

Islamic teachings on women based on the *Sunnah of Muhammad* is also an interesting study. He once declared: "*The best of you are the kindest*

to their wives and I am your best of mine" (Tirmidhi). Indeed it is a great tribute to women when the Prophet of Islam said: "*Paradise lies at the feet of mothers*" (Nasai). A look into the *Shari'ah* is important to the understanding of the role and status of women in society. And surely meeting Muslim women in history, in contemporary times and in daily life would make the study of women in Islam alive and vibrant. One of the manifold graces that I treasure as a privilege in working and living with Muslims are the moments when I share with Muslim women on varied topics.

3. Conclusion: Rabi'ah Al-Adawiyyah

I started by sharing an encounter with Muslim woman, who was very much in love. I will end by sharing a spiritual acquaintance of Muslim woman mystic who taught by her life to love God for the sake of God alone.

Some Muslim mystics and ascetics did keep celibacy, as in the well-known case of Rabi'ah al 'Adawiyyah of Basra. Her refusal to get married would seem to imply a vow of consecration to God. To her, who was a lifelong celibate, is attributed a large share in the introduction into Islamic mysticism of the theme of Divine love. She eschewed marriage, though legend states that she received many offers from the men Sufis who were her friends, and sometimes her disciples. To one of them said: "*The contract of marriage is for those who are concerned with the affairs of this material world. But in my case, there is no such existence, for I have ceased to exist and have passed out of self. I exist in God and am altogether His. I live in the shadow of His command. The Marriage contract must be asked for from Him and not from me*"⁸.

Rabi'ah is generally regarded as the person who introduced the element of selfless and disinterested love into the austere teachings of the early ascetics and gave Sufism the hue of true mysticism. As one of her male biographers, Abu Turab an-Nakhshabi wrote: "*She was a woman set apart in the seclusion of holiness. She was veiled with the veil of sincerity. She was enflamed by love and longing ... lost in union with God. She was a woman accepted by men as second spotless Mary*"⁹.

Quotations are taken from:

Holy *Qur'an*. (1410 H). *English Translation and Commentary*. Revised by the Presidency of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance. *Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah*: King Fahd Holy *Qur'an* Printing Complex.

⁸ Margaret Smith, *The Way of the Mystics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, p.186.

⁹ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p 38.

Because of her intense feelings, she was accepted as the model of selfless love even by those who otherwise despised women. Her life was a model of mutual love between the Creator and His creation – a state of perfect love in which the lover ceases to exist for herself but lives for the Beloved. She demonstrated invariable courtesy and efficient service, pursuing diligently the commandments of the Beloved, and finally becomes altogether His. Rabi'ah's life is a supreme example of the spiritual state in which the lover, love, and the Beloved become one.

Her poor and humble but symbolized *faqr* or spiritual poverty, which served as a center for *barakah* (Divine Grace), she being a genuine *faqirah* (a woman who practices *faqr*). She was a servant of God alone and desired to be "possession-less" in order to be possessed only by her own love for God. In his voluntary state of material "possession-less", the servant who was a genuine lover begins her life of service to the Beloved with the aim of reaching the final situation on the spiritual path, known as the *Haqiqah* (the Truth).¹⁰

The servant's devoted to service to the One Master, coupled with an intense longing for the Master's majestic presence, leads to the development of a close relationship between the two, whereby the servant begins to hear with the ear of the Master and to see with His eyes. It is at this juncture that the servant's poor dwelling becomes the treasure house of spiritual wisdom and blessing of the Master, wherein many seekers find the true meaning of poverty and start their journey on the spiritual path.¹¹

The perplexing question of how a hut that generally symbolizes poverty can serve as a treasure house of spiritual wisdom and gifts can be answered by citing an episode from Rabi'ah's life. Once a thief entered Rabi'ah's hut and found nothing save a pitcher of water. As he was about to leave, Rabi'ah called out to him, "If you are really a thief then do not leave without taking something". The thief replied sarcastically, "What is there to be taken?" She replied, "O needy one, do the ablution with the water in the pitcher, enter this prayer room, and perform 2 rakaas of prayer (2 cycles of movements of prayer). The thief obeyed and, when he stood for the prayer, Rabi'ah also raised her hands for prayer and said, "O Lord, this man found nothing here. I have brought him to Thy door; bless him Thy bounty and grace." In response to Rabi'ah's appeal to the Hearer of prayers (one of the beautiful names of God), the thief felt spiritual absorption and joy and

¹⁰ Saadia Khawar Kahn Chisti, "Female Spirituality in Islam", in *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1991, pp. 209-210.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

thus continued his prayers throughout the night. Early in the morning when Rabi'ah entered the praying room, she found him prostrate before the Almighty and heard him seeking repentance.¹²

Selfless service performed from the depths of love keeps the lover ready to lay down her life in order to earn the pleasure of the Beloved. It develops in her an intense longing for that supreme moment when she will hear the Beloved's saying, "O soul rest, return to thy Lord well-pleased, well-pleasing; so enter among My servants and enter my Heaven (Q. 89:27 – 30)

As a Franciscan religious woman trying to live and pray, "My God and My All", may I end this sharing with a prayer of Rabi'ah al-Adawiyyah,

*"O my God! If I worship You because of the fear of Hell, burn me in Hell. Moreover, if I worship You with hope of paradise, exclude me from Paradise. However, if I worship You for Your own sake, then withhold not from me Your Eternal Beauty."*¹³

PART VI. THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS THAT AFFECT CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

by *Fr. Emilio Platti, OP*

It is now forty years since the Fathers of Vatican II issued the *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate*, on October 28, 1965. In the third paragraph they mention that, "*over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims*". And "*the sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values*".

When mentioning that "*the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator (... and) profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day*", the sacred Council underlines not only God's universal salvific will, but also that Muslims profess what Christians believe to be the fundament of their faith: God's plan of salvation.

Let us not forget this important verse from the Qur'ân, from an early Mekkan sûra:

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Bhatnaga, R. S., *Dimensions of Classical Sufi Thought*, Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass Publishers, 1992, p. 42.

Qur. 29, 46: "And argue not with the people of the Scripture, unless it be in a way that is better, except with such of them as do wrong, and say to them: 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; our God and your God is One (Ilâhunâ wa-ilâhukum wâhid) and to Him we have submitted".

What we have in common has been mentioned explicitly in the third paragraph of Nostra Aetate, and when analysed, we can see that every sentence of this text is an implicit reference to some verses of the Qur'ân.

*"...the Muslims. They worship God, who is one living and subsistent":
Qur. 2:255: "God! There is no God but He, the living and subsistent";*

*"...merciful and almighty":
Qur. 26:9: "Verily, your Lord is the Almighty, the Merciful";*

*"...the Creator of heaven and earth":
Qur. 6: 1: "Praise be to God, who created the heavens and the earth";*

*"who has spoken to men":
Qur. 96: 5: "(God) taught man that which he knew not";*

*"They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God"
Qur. 87: 3: "(God) hath ordained by Decree and granted guidance";*

*"just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own";
Qur. 2, 131: "(Ibrâhîm), his Lord said o him: Submit (aslim); And he said: I submitted (aslamtû) to the Lord of the universe";*

*"Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet":
Qur. 61, 6: "And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: (...) I am the Prophet (Rasûl) of God";*

*"His virgin Mother they also honour, and even at times devoutly invoke":
Qur. 19: 20.31: "She said: How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me;...and He (God) hath made me blessed wheresoever I be";*

“further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead”:

Qur. 75: 1: “*I call to witness the Day of the Resurrection*”;

Qur. 1: 1.4: “*Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds (...), Master of the Day of Judgment*”.

This respect towards Islam has been reiterated by Pope John-Paul II on many occasions, and also in his book on Hope. But the time of enthusiasm about dialogue between religions and cultures is certainly over. We are now in a period of clashes rather than dialogue, where theologians feel obliged to criticize rather than to achieve mutual understanding, and where old arguments used in the past seem are brought back again in confronting each other. It is therefore useful to rethink about the theological questions that affect Christian-Muslim Relations.

We find that these theological questions are threefold.

The first dimension is dogmatic and already very explicit in the Qur’ân. Although Islam, Judaism and Christianity are all “biblical”, in the sense that themes and concepts are similar, it is clear that there is a fundamental difference when it comes to the mediation of revelation. For Muslims, the Qur’ân is the only revelation, the inimitable miracle of God’s eternal Word, while Christians profess that, by incarnation, God’s Word revealed itself in a human being. According to the gospel of Saint John “*The Word (...) full of grace and truth, lived among us*”; “*God gave the Law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*”. And revealing God’s eternal Word, he is called “*the only Son*”, who has made known “*his Father*” (John 1: 14-18). Through Christ, Redemption has been achieved for all mankind. For the Qur’ân, these dogmatic expressions of the Christian faith are unacceptable. Louis Massignon clearly considered what the Qur’ân was all about: “*The goal of Koranic revelation is not the presentation or demonstration of ‘supernatural’ truths that were hitherto unknown. While the Koran reminds one in the name of God of the sanctions one can encounter here and in the hereafter, it addresses itself to human reason in order to facilitate the latter’s rediscovery of natural religion, original Law, simple religiosity, which God has prescribed from the beginning and which Adam, Abraham and all the prophets have always practiced*”. However, as pope John-Paul said in his book on hope: has the Qur’ân not reduced the plenitude of revelation in Jesus Christ? These questions make it clear that it is when it comes to the mediation of revelation that fundamental theological questions arise.

As Christianity and Islam present themselves as religions of "salvation", both offering a message from God of salvation and peace, it is on this second level that the clash of civilizations reminds us of the many quarrels of the past concerning crusades and *jihad*, violence and war. Thomas Aquinas presents that argument in the sixth chapter of the first book of *The Summa contra gentiles*, about "*the errors... as instanced by Mohammed, (... who) asserted that he was sent in the power of arms*". This argument has been repeated during centuries, until now. And we now that the crusades are in fact a symbol for aggressive behavior by Christians. How can we manage to escape this contradiction presenting Christianity as a religion of love, or Islam as a religion of peace? Both pretending to be messengers of salvation? Can we still stand by the affirmation of the sacred Council urging us "*that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding (...); for the benefit of all men, together preserving and promoting peace, liberty, social justice and moral values*"?

In the actual situation of globalization, another question constitutes even a greater challenge to Islam and Christianity. What is the relation of both religions to the secular world? The question is not, in this case, the relation between Islam and Christianity, but between Islam and modernity, in the same sense as the question arises concerning Christianity and the secular, modern world. Actually, the theological question about the relation between the human act and God's almighty power has risen already in the first centuries of Islamic theology. "*Is predestination in Islam opposed to man's creativity?*" has always been a crucial question in Islamic theology, but is even more a fundamental question in our situation of globalization of the secular world. Sometimes, the impression prevails that Muslims are at the extreme limit of non-accepting human's creativity, while affirming God's over whole sovereignty over the world and the universe. But Muslims, on the other hand, have the impression that a kind of secularized Christianity is at the extreme limit of refusing any divine intervention in human affairs in proclaiming human's absolute autonomy and freedom. We know how much materialism and egoistic interest can be linked to secularism; and with how much apprehension Muslims consider man-made laws without consideration for God's Law. But also how critical Western Christians are towards *Shari'a* Law included in constitutions of so many Muslim countries.

In history, there were more clashes than encounters, more polemics than dialogue, more refutations than mutual understanding. In a global world however, dialogue is the only way to open the future "*for the benefit of all men*", and we can at least try to give some hints towards

mutual understanding, as we have an incredible large area of common ground, most of the time unnoticed.

On the first level of dogmatic theology, opposition between Christian and Islamic theologians is as old as the Islamic religion itself. It is indeed in the Qur'ân that Muslims find a repeatedly expressed refusal of some Christian dogmatic expressions. As we want to analyze the oldest Qur'anic texts about the divine filiation of Christ, we have to consider Sûrat Maryam, sûra 19:

"It befits not Allâh that He should take a son" (19: 35);

"They say: ar-Rahmân (the Merciful) took a son" (19: 88);

"They ascribe a son to ar-Rahmân" (19: 91);

"It is not suitable for ar-Rahmân to take a son" (19: 92).

"There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto ar-Rahmân as a servant ('abd)" (19: 93).

Let us consider that at the earliest time of the recitation of the Qur'ân, pure monotheism was proclaimed towards the polytheists in Mekka and their acceptance of the three daughters of the supreme god, Allât, Manât and al-'Uzza:

"They are but names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allâh has sent down no authority" (Qur. 53: 23).

Considering the struggle against Mekkan polytheism and the refusal to accept the existence of daughters of a god, we can understand that the Qur'ân has been extremely reluctant to consider the validity of the Christian dogmatic expression concerning Christ as the Son of God. But according to some Muslim Traditions, even in these early days, when Muslims stood in front of the Christian King of Abyssinia, the feeling remained that Muslims and Christians had more in common than differences. It was only at the end of Muhammad's life that the refusal was more categorical, but even there, the reference to polytheism is still present:

"Christians say: Christ is the Son of God. That is their saying with their mouths, resembling the saying of those who disbelieved aforetime" (Qur. 9: 30).

The evidence is that the proclamation of the Qur'ân has not been in opposition to the Christians in the first place, but to Mekkan polytheism. It is because of this that the Qur'ân, and the Muslim Tradition afterwards, find it inconceivable, terribly ambiguous and unfortunately that Christians used concepts reminding the very polytheistic expressions.

From there we can understand how different Islam became from Christianity. After Jesus' ascension, the disciples went on to live in the Spirit, and their question, which went on for centuries, until now,

was: "Who was, and is, this Jesus, in whose Spirit we live?" For them, he was himself the manifestation of God's creative Word and Will to salvation, of humanity, according to saint John: *"In the beginning was this Word – the Logos – and this Word became human"*. Christ is the mediation for salvation, and His Spirit shows Christians how to live. From there on, Christianity's evolution has been theological and dogmatic.

It should not be forgotten in this regard that Jesus identified himself with the "righteous one" from the Old Testament and that a significant number of texts employed in the Christian liturgy during Holy Week serve to bring this to the fore. Reference is made, for example, to the "suffering servant of Yahweh" in the book of the prophet Isaiah and to the so-called songs of the suffering servant of the Lord (Isa. 42, 1-4 e.a.). The "righteous one" in question is both *"abd - 'ebed"*, servant of God, and *"sâlih – sadiq"*, righteous one. This is made particularly clear in the second chapter of the book of Wisdom, which provides an interpretational framework for Jesus' self-understanding in the Christian tradition. The said text also establishes a link between the servanthood of the righteous one and his sonship with respect to God, a link the Qur'ân was always unwilling to make on account of its radical rejection of Meccan polytheism. It is here, therefore, that we encounter the initial point of rupture between Christianity and Islam. An more extensive quotation from this late Jewish text is thus warranted at this juncture:

"[The unrighteous one reasons as follows:] Let none of us fail to share in our revelry; everywhere let us leave signs of enjoyment, because this is our portion, and this is our lot. Let us oppress the righteous poor man; let us not spare the widow or regard the gray hairs of the aged. But let our might be our law of right, for what is weak proves itself to be useless. Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions; he reproaches us for sins against the law, and accuses us of sins against our training. He professes to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord. [...] He calls the last end of the righteous happy, and boasts that God is his father. Let us see if his words are true, and let us test what will happen at the end of his life; for if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him, and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries. Let us test him with insult and torture, so that we may find out how gentle he is, and make trial of his forbearance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for,

according to what he says, he will be protected" (Wis. 2, 10-20).

Even as Muslims never made the link, in this old-Testament concept of the righteous servant of God, there can be a link to the self-understanding of the Muslim. As we understand the fundamental religious intuition of Islam as an existential act of faith in the Divine Decree of God, who is the unique Creator and ruler of the universe, we understand also that the Qur'ân is to be perceived as a divine challenge, which brings the faithful to this act of faith, freeing himself from self-sufficiency to compassion, solidarity and a commitment to act accordingly. In its performative language, the Qur'ân opens the dimension of ethical responsibility, of accountability. In this, monotheism, revelation and eschatology are linked, and religion has a dimension of universality. Islam implies obedience, because God's Decree establishes the conditions for real humanity: God's Law is the Road to salvation for all humanity. Muslims were challenged to apply this universal Law. A coherent and all-embracing way of life, the Sunna, is the human answer to God's revealed Decree. Islam is orthopraxis. When Muhammad died in 632, the question was not: "Who was Muhammad?", but: "How can our way of life coincide with God's Law?" And in the way the Qur'ân itself expresses it, the Muslim community, the Umma, will be the best on earth:

"You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; enjoining al-ma'rûf – what is right – and forbidding al-munkar – what is wrong, and believing in Allâh..." (Qur. 3: 110).

It is at this starting point that we see how different Christianity and Islam are in their historical evolution. In some way, we have to accept these differences, but always have in mind the fundamental intention to find the road to salvation.

The second source of polemics between Christianity and Islam concerns an apparent contradiction, as these religions present themselves as religions of "salvation", both offering a message from God of salvation and peace. It is on this second level that the clash of civilizations reminds us of the many quarrels of the past concerning crusades and violent colonization and jihad, violence and war. On both sides we should have in mind, not the actual reality of politics, but the fundamental inspiration and spirituality of religion, pointing towards self-transcendence so often lost in "*real-politi*".

On this matter however, Christians are asking Muslims why the Prophet himself was engaged in fierce battles, and why the Qur'ân is calling to "*fight those who believe not in God nor in the last day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle*" (Qur. 9: 29), and "*fight and slay the Pagans whenever you find them,*

and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem..." (Qur. 9: 5).

In his book on Jihâd, the famous Syrian scholar Dr. Sa'îd Ramadân al-Bouti, discusses the problem of interpretation of these two verses, called "*the verses of the sword*" (*ayât as-sayf*) which are a source of inspiration for so many violent aggressions.

In the Middle ages, an Arab Christian, called 'Abd al-Masîh al-Kindî, received a letter from his Muslim friend, called 'Abd Allâh al-Hâshimî, who quoted the famous verse of the Qur'ân "*Let there be no compulsion in religion, Truth stands out clear from error...*" (Qur. 2: 256). He added many other verses from the Qur'ân, which are expressions of tolerance:

"And argue not with the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) unless it be in a way that is better... (...). And say to them: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; our God and your God is One, and to Him we have submitted" (Qur. 29: 46);

"And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them all together. So, will you than compel mankind, until they become believers? No soul can believe, except by the will of God..." (Qur. 10: 99-100).

The Christian 'Abd al-Masîh al-Kindî mentioned that "*No compulsion in religion!*" is a fundamental message of the Qur'ân; faith is not to be imposed, but has his source in God, calling for submission to Him. So he asked his friend why there is this contradiction in the Qur'ân with the verses of the sword, calling for qitâl, fight – not *jihâd*, a concept with another significance?

Dr. Sa'îd Ramadân al-Bouti will present the following argumentation. The verses of the sword are not a universal call for aggression. This is a wrong interpretation, presented by those who are using it for political means. And they constitute the minority opinion. These verses do not at all abrogate and supersede the other verses. At the contrary, these verses are contextual and particular, not universal. We have to understand these verses in the context where Muhammad and the Muslims had to defend themselves. The Qur'ân reminds the Muslims that they have to fight "*people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Apostle (Mohammed) and took the aggressive by being the first to assault you*" (Qur. 9: 13); "*To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged. And verily, God is most powerful for their aid. They are those who have been expelled from their homes, in defiance of right, for no cause, except that they say: Our Lord is God*"

(Qur. 22: 39-40).

Even if there is this particular permission to fight given by the Qur'ân in the particular situation of the Muslim community in Mecca and Medina, according to Dr. Sa'îd Ramadân al-Bouti, nothing in the Qur'ân will allow people to impose religion by force. On the contrary: there is a much more fundamental dimension in Islam, which is the real universal dimension of mystical and ethical submission to God. In this sense, Sufis have a much deeper apprehension of "Islam", nearer to this fundamental level. In his book on Islam and its Quest for Peace, Mustafa Köylü says:

*"Contrary to both modernists and fundamentalists, Sufis were not much concerned about external jihâd. Instead their passion was to purify the soul from all kinds of evils. They believed that this act, purifying the soul, was more important than external jihâd. They maintained that true peace and equity within a society could be obtained only as Muslims waged war against the desires of the soul. In fact, if we look closely at the views of these different groups concerning jihâd, we see that modernists, fundamentalists, and Sufis shared certain, goals in common: to establish a just social-political and egalitarian society, and put an end to poverty, injustice, despotism and corruption in Muslim countries. They differed, however, in the methods they advocated. Modernists and Sufis accepted more peaceful means, whereas fundamentalists saw active fighting as one of the chief means to achieve their goals"*¹⁴.

It appears clearly that this last solution has not been en will never achieve their goals; their refusal of (Western) modernity being also a refusal of creativity and inventivity. And this brings us to the next dimension of discussions between Christians and Muslims.

In an article on a medieval discussion about the status of human activity in relation to God's almighty power, I introduce the third dimension of theological questions that affect Christian-Muslim Relations as follows: "As it is well known, Christians and Muslims have fought over questions of Incarnation, Redemption and Trinity since the rise of Islam. But both Muslims and Christians have long been confronted with a question of immense importance that troubles both faiths together. It was recognized in the earliest days of kalâm – Islamic theology – but in present times it has risen to a level of unprecedented urgency. The question concerns the relationship between the secular sphere, in which personal and social freedom is assumed and natural processes continue free of any higher influence, and the religious sphere.

¹⁴ KÖYLÜ, Mustafa, *Islam and its Quest for Peace: Jihad, Justice and Education*, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series II/A. Islam, Volume 15, Washington, 2003, p. 69.

(...) There is a serious and pressing need to reconsider the relationship between the two...”.

It is in this context that some Muslim intellectuals stress the opposition between the Western and Islamic views, “even though the Islamic view is in accordance with that of believers in the West, that man is created by God”. For the Egyptian Muslim Muhammad ‘Imâra, the West stops short of affirming God’s deep involvement in the world’s affairs, while Muslims confess that the Creator is not only Creator, but also Protector, *al-Râ’î*, Guide, *al-Hâdî*, Ruler, *al-Mudabbir*, of all existence, humankind included”. Muhammad ‘Imâra refers to the source of Western thinking, Aristotle. As he sees it, God in Aristotelian thinking is nothing more than Initiator of the world; he created it, and gave it its first impulsion, and it now moves spontaneously, driven by its own internal capability.

According to some Muslim thinkers, this Aristotelian vision is the vision of paganism and the period of ignorance of God’s eternal message: “these pagans did in fact believe in a Creator God, but attributed the ruling to the idols and the companions of God”. To accept that the world and the universal are moving independently from God, that the secular city can be ruled independently from God’s Law, is actually stand on the same position as these pagans did.

Muslims all over the world are not at ease with what they call “man-made laws”, legislation completely separated from religion. They argue that God rules the universe and our human world by His Law, and that this separation between society, politics and religion is not in conformity with the fundamental commandments of religion, Bible and Qur’ân. In its critique of Judaism, the Koran makes the following remarks:

“We gave Moses the Book [...]. We took a covenant from the children of Israel (to this effect): worship none but Allah; treat with kindness your parents and kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; be steadfast in prayer; and practice regular charity. Then you turned back, except a few among you, and you backslide [...]. Then is it only a part of the Book that you believe in, and do you reject the rest?” (Kor. 2, 87. 83. 85).

The Qur’ân restores to memory that which God has always made known to human persons and that which we find in one form or another in religions everywhere: the appeal to human responsibility with respect to the fundamental commandments together with the heteronomy of the said commandments. We ourselves do not determine what is good or bad: such belongs to the Creator, the Judge and the Lord. To

accept this is "to be Muslim". Accountability and responsibility are a fundamental presupposition for ethical behavior.

It seems however, that in their heated polemics about the status of human action in relation to God's creative action, some Muslim theologians from very early in Islam favored a deterministic interpretation of their sacred text. They were very reluctant to attribute some creativity to the human being, while only God is in the strict sense of the word "*Khâliq*", Creator, so that creatures cannot perform creative acts. In the modern world, this tendency implies a fundamental ontological devaluation of creation. Human beings have not strength or activity whatsoever within themselves. Human autonomy is at stake.

In a very interesting article written by the Indian scholar Dr. Alam Khundmiri and edited by Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer, *Secularism, Islam and Modernity, Selected Essays of Alam Khundmiri*, he criticizes some Muslim theologians opposed to rationalists, who are, according to him, "known as atomists". According to them, and to affirm strongly that only God is Creator, "each atom is created, in each moment, by Allah, and destroyed by Him", so that "what we perceive as the sensible world are mere passing accidents created by Allah". According to some theologians, even in the early time of the eighth century, "human beings are not free but determined by divine will".

But on the other hand, it is clear that the existential act of faith does imply a conscience of relatedness, from dependence, "abandoning oneself", confidence and gratitude, thanksgiving for what is given, serenity and peace and obedience. But even Hasan al-Basrî, the great sufi scholar of the first century of Islam was an adherent of free will.

At the end of the article I wrote on a medieval discussion on this question, I concluded: "The contrast between Christian and Muslim positions seems stark. However, as both Richard Frank and Christian van Nispen (two eminent scholars on the History of Islamic theology) have shown in their interpretations of the Muslim analysis of human action, when Muslim theologians say that it is God alone who creates, they do not in fact deny real consistency to the human act, because they always insist upon the reality of human responsibility. Likewise, Josef van Ess (another eminent scholar) refers to 'synergie', 'das Mitwerken Gottes', suggesting that among the earliest Muslim thinkers the idea was probably that when human actions come into being they are not only the consequence of a human's ability to act, but also of a creation by God. It is something like "the interplay and concausality of God's grace and man's cooperation" as found in the Christian tradition.

I concluded, and this will be the conclusion for the whole of the discussions between Muslims and Christians, that "there is much there

for believing people to consider and explore together”, in dialogue, and considering each others sensibility and differences in approaches of the contemporary challenges, in “a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values”.

PART VII. ISLAM IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

Sr. Lilian Curaming, FMM

A. Presentation: From A Muslim's Perspective ¹

I. The Islamization of Moroland

The process of the Islamization of Moroland started in Sulu Archipelago towards the end of 13th century, estimated to be in 1280 CE, through the missionary effort of a certain Tuan Mashaikha who married there and established the first *Islamic* community. Tuan Mashaikha was followed by a *Muslim* missionary named Karim-ul-Makhdum around the second half of the 14th century. Through Rajah Baguinda who came at the beginning of the 15th century, the political element in the *Islamization* process was introduced. It was his son-in-law, Abu Bakar, whom he had designated as his successor, who started the Sulu Sultanate.

In mainland Mindanao, a certain Sharif Awliya, from Johor, first introduced *Islam* into Maguindanao areas around 1450. When Sharif Awliya left, a certain Sharif Maraja, also from Johor, came and married the daughter of Sharif Awliya. Later, around 1515, Sharif Kabungsuwan, also from Johor with Arab descent, arrived with many men. He augmented the missionary activities of his predecessors, and was credited the founder of the Maguindanao Sultanate. Though no specific date is known for the *Islamization* of the people of Lake Lanao, the Maranao tarsilas trace their *Islamic* ancestry as well as royal lineage back to the same Sharif Kabungsuwan.

Through intermarriages and political alliances with the neighboring ruling families, *Islam* spread. By the mid-Sixteenth century, the Moroland was in the process of becoming part of the wider *Muslim* world of South East Asia. Commercial relations and political alliances linked the Moro Sultanates of the Mindanao-Sulu region with other neighboring *Muslim* states.

The impact of *Islamization* of the Moroland was so great as Cesar Adib Majul, a Muslim historian, commented:

¹ Taken from “Historical Background of the *Islamic* Movement”, morojihad.com, Copyright © 2000.

"By adopting Islam, a segment of the population of the Philippines became a part of the wider religious community from the pillars of Hercules to the borders of China. Those people in the Philippines gained from Islam a high sense of religious community, new laws, a more developed political organization...and above all, a new ethical outlook on life. Having adopted values that transcended their race and particular culture, they began to consider themselves as a historical people, yet assuming all the time that their history was not the result of their own making or efforts. Without this consciousness, as well as all the benefits that Islam brought to the peoples of Sulu and Mindanao, they would have been easily swept away by Western colonialism and relegated to the limbo of conquered peoples."

2. Spanish Colonial Period

Ferdinand Magellan, a Spanish navigator, landed in one of the islands of the Philippines, named Limasawa, in 1521. Although he was killed by a Moro chieftain, named Lapu-Lapu in Mactan, Visayas, Magellan's unintentional landing in the Philippine archipelago paved the way for the so called discovery of these islands by Europeans.

In 1565, another Spanish navigator named Villalobos arrived and landed at the same Island. A Spanish colony was established in the said Island. They called the native converts 'Indios', who later became known as Filipinos. Following the defeat of the natives in the Visayas, the Spaniards moved northward.

The Spaniards compelled their native (the Indios) converts to serve as their allies in attacking the Moroland, particularly the Moro settlements and forts in Sulu and Mindanao. The Indios were indoctrinated with the belief that they were performing a religious service. Thus the Indios together with their colonial masters fought ferociously against the Moros.

In response, the Moros fought a life and martyrdom battle against the Spanish invaders and their allies, the Indios. This fighting, which was known as 'Moro wars,' lasted for 333 years, and failed to conquer the Moros. The centuries of incessant warfare contributed to irreconcilable tensions and conflicts between Christian Filipinos and the Moros that are existent today.

3. American Colonial Regime

The defeat of Spain during the Spanish-American war, in 1898, prompted the United States of America to take over the Philippines as

successor to Spain under the Treaty of Paris, signed in 1898. Under this treaty, the Spanish had to surrender its authority over the Philippine Archipelago, including Moroland to the United States, even though Spain had never succeeded to incorporate Moroland into its colony.

While the Americans were engaged in the Filipino rebellion in the northern part of the Archipelago, the Americans signed a treaty with the Sultanate of Sulu, known as "Bates Treaty." Immediately after the defeat of the Filipino rebellion in the Northern Luzon, the Americans declared the Bates Treaty as null and void- an act which meant, among other things, that their policy of non-interference also came into an end, and was replaced by a direct rule and control over the Moroland- an obvious declaration of war against the Moros.

Soon, it was followed by the Americans' efforts to achieve the unaccomplished dream of the Spaniards, i.e., integrating the Moros to the Filipino mainstream society. In order to achieve this, American laws and notions of justice were imposed, public schools and other services were created; land was surveyed and titled; and homesteaders were encouraged to migrate from overpopulated Luzon and settle on open land in Mindanao. After the initial success of their pacification campaign in the Moroland, the Americans shifted from a military rule to a civilian administration named as the Department of Mindanao and Sulu (1914-1920).

Under this Department, the policy of attraction was introduced. Scholarships were granted to the Moro students. Schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges were built to attract the Moros. Throughout this period the Moroland was relatively peaceful. Although there were some Moro armed resistance occurring here and there to express their resentment to the American authority, laws and policies, but they were always easily suppressed.

To transfer the burden of integrating the Moros into the Filipino society, the Americans handed gradually their authority over the Moros to the Christian Filipinos through the creation of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes (1920-1937). In response, the Moros launched an armed struggle against the Filipinos. They were acts of open defiance to the obvious conspiracy of gradual inclusion of the Moros to the Philippine Republic, as well as an explicit protest to the existing Government run by the Filipinos who were considered by the Moros as foreigners. These efforts did not work. The Americans still demanded the Moro's integration to the Filipino society. Towards this end, a ten-year transitional Commonwealth Government, covering the entire Philippine Archipelago and the Moroland, was introduced by the Americans in 1936, to train the Filipinos the art of handling the affair of the future independent Philippine Republic.

At the beginning, the two warring groups, the Filipinos and the Moros seemed to have found their way to work together for the welfare of their would- be independent Republic. This led some Filipinos to assume that the Moros could be integrated with them. The assumption was supported by the active participation of some of the Moro leaders in the Government's activities, and even urged America to expedite the process of granting independence to the Philippines.

In addition, during the 1936 national election for the constitutional convention delegates, there were some Moro leaders who participated and won seats. Also there were Muslim leaders who had expressed their belief that through constitutional process, they could preserve their rights as a separate people from the Filipinos. This did not mean, however, that the Moros ceased their opposition to integration with the Filipino-run government. This was proven by the Moros rejection to the Philippine constitution when it was submitted before the public for approval. It is true that it was generally approved in the Moroland, but the Christian settlers were the ones who did it; the Moros rejected it with the ground that it would destroy their religion, rights, and marital customs. The resentment of the Moros to their inclusion to the Commonwealth government could be further attributed to the clear threat posed by the continuous influx of the government- sponsored Christian settlers from Luzon and Visayas to Mindanao. The resentment was further enhanced by the move of Manuel Quezon, the first president of the Commonwealth Government, to abolish the place for Muslim traditional leaders in the new regime and that the national laws would be applied to both Muslims and Christians equally.

Moreover, the resentment and dissatisfaction of the Moros towards the government run by the Filipinos that had been developed even before and during the time of the Commonwealth Government were further exacerbated by the integration of the Moroland, without consulting them, to the Philippine Republic which gained its nominal independence in 1946. The Moros considered this period as the beginning of the Philippine neo-colonial regime.

4. Philippine Neo-colonial Regime

Despite the Moros' resentment of the policies of the Commonwealth government, their homeland was finally annexed and was structurally integrated into the Republic of the Philippines, which was declared on July 4, 1946.

Inheriting the Moro problem, the new Republic adopted several measures and programs in search for suitable solutions to it. One of these solutions was the promotion of the integration of the Moros

to the mainstream of Philippine life, primarily through education and socio- economic development program. In 1957, the Philippine Congress created the Commission on National Integration, under Act 1888 to provide, among other things, scholarship for the Moro students enrolling in the Government schools and Universities. Although the program was almost successful in achieving its objectives, still there were many other Moros, who enjoyed the scholarships, but could not be integrated. The assertion of their *Islamic* identity became even more manifest, and many refused to regard themselves as Filipinos.

Among the reasons why the Moros could not identify themselves as Filipinos were firstly, the term Filipino is applicable only to those Indios who were Christianized by the Spaniards and submitted to their sovereignty. Secondly, the Moros could not tolerate to loose their identity, once they accepted that they are Filipinos. Finally, their religion, *Islam*, provides them a sense of belonging to the wider community of the Muslim *ummah*. This notion is strongly supported by the existence of the contemporary *Islamic* movement in south Philippines.

With this account, it clearly shows that it was the problem of integrating the Moros to the Filipino mainstream society, which the former did not like, that created a point of conflict between the Moros and the Philippine government today.

5. Post World War II Islamic Resurgence

The word resurgence means rising or tending to rise again. Based on this definition, we can define *Islamic* resurgence as rising of *Islam* again. A certain scholar defined *Islamic* resurgence as "an increase in *Islamic* activism" which became very common to the Muslim world after the Second World War II. The *Islamic* movements in the world foster this *Islamic* activism, locally or internationally in nature.

The resurgence of *Islam* in the Philippines was contributed by many factors. Among these factors are, firstly, the arrival of Muslim teachers and visitors from Egypt, Arabian Peninsula, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia to the Philippines, in the past quarter -century. Being usually well received, they have been able to arouse religious fervor, and in some cases influence the reform of Moro religious practices along normative *Islamic* lines. Secondly, thousands of young *Muslims* were granted scholarship to study in various *Islamic* institutions in the 'Arab world and the sub-continent. During 1950' and 1960's more than a hundred Moro students were admitted to al-Azhar University of Cairo, Egypt. Upon their return, they began to correct local practices that contravened the pure teachings of *Islam*; many of these young '*ulama*' (scholars) taught in *madaris* (*Islamic* schools), and some had

become vocal in expressing *Muslim* aspirations for the socio-economic and cultural development of their communities.

Another factor that contributed to the resurgence of *Islam* in the Moroland was the exposure of traveling abroad in recent years, thousands of them on Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca, and other purposes. The participation of some of the Moro traditional leaders in the meetings of different world *Islamic* bodies had also contributed to the *Islamic* resurgence in the area. They were given overwhelming welcomes and were showered with questions. This treatment in itself began to awaken within the Moro visitors a latent consciousness of *Islam* and their social duty to the community. Through these factors the *Islamic* institutions such as mosque, madaris, and *Muslim* organizations were proliferated and became visible. They strengthened the sense of Moro nationalism and solidarity. The term Bangsamoro emerged as an identity for the *Muslims* of Mindanao and Sulu. Some times they called themselves *Muslims* so as to distinguish themselves from the Christian Filipinos. They referred to the Manila Government as foreign government, or Christian Government to whom no real *Muslim* owes allegiance. The cry for establishing *Islamic* government in the Moroland as the only solution to the Moro problem becomes widespread.

Finally, the Moros became more articulate in defense of their faith as they become more knowledgeable about the doctrines and duties in *Islam*. Their concern was the preservation of their community (*ummah*) and elevation of their *Muslim* identity.

6. Deepening Sense of Deprivation

During the reign of President Magsaysay (1953-1957), thousands of pardoned criminals and ex-communist members, who surrendered to the Philippine authority, were granted homesteads in the Moro traditional lands. The Government established colonies in the midst of the *Muslim* communal lands. It also facilitated the massive issuance of land titles to the Christian settlers it sponsored as well as to anyone literate enough to apply. Having owned the land titles, when land disputes between the new settlers and the native inhabitants (the Moros) arose, the former had little difficulty to persuade the authorities to evict the latter from their land. Thus, the migration of Christian settlers into the Moroland through the initiatives of the government, created a deep sense of deprivation to the Moros.

In 1950's, Kumander Kamlon, in Sulu Province and 100 of his followers declared war against the government and it took several years for the latter to pacify him, until he was persuaded to lay down his

arms. This was followed by the parliamentary struggle of Congressman Datu Ombra Amilbangsa of Sulu in 1961. He introduced a House Bill, calling for granting and recognizing the independence of Sulu; although nothing came to the Bill, it served as a symbol of discontent and resentment of the Moros towards the Philippine government. During the regime of President Ferdinand E. Marcos (1965-1985), the deepening sense of deprivation by the Moros reached its climax. Since then, different Moro movements for independence of the Moroland from the Philippines Republic were organized.

This kind of Moro reaction was a direct consequence of the 1970's Mindanao crisis which was precipitated by at least three important events: the infamous 1968 "**Jabidah Massacre**, the **Ilaga movement**, and the 1972 declaration of **martial law**.

7. The Jabidah Massacre

The Jabidah Massacre was the turning point of the reawakening of the Moro people. It happened when, between 28 and 64 Moro recruits undergoing training for sabotage, jungle warfare, and guerilla tactics in Corrigidor Island, just off Manila Bay, were summarily executed by their military trainers in late March 1968. It was widely believed that the purpose of the training was a secret preparation for the Philippine Military operation in Sabah-code named "Operation Merdika" (Operation independence). This belief was substantiated by the revelation of Jibin Arula (the lone survivor of the carnage) that they were shot because they refused to follow the order of their military trainers to invade Sabah. Indeed, the incident aroused the anger of almost all sectors of the Moro people. Two months later, Datu Udtog Matalam, the then Governor of the undivided Province of Cotabato declared Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) aiming at the establishment of an independent *Islamic Republic of Mindanao*.

8. The Ilaga Movement

The organization of this movement exacerbated the already deteriorating *Muslim-Christian* relation in the Moroland. With the backup of the government's military, the group brought reign of terror to the Muslim areas. On June 19, 1971, some 70 Moros, men, women, and children were mercilessly massacred by this group and its military backers at one mosque in Barrio Manili, Carmen North Cotabato.

In Wao, Lanao del Sur, a grenade exploded inside a mosque on July 4, 1971, and over 60 *Muslims'* homes were burnt by Ilagas. Hundreds of *Maranao Muslims* were evacuated over the mountain to Lake Lanao. Expectedly, the incidents ignited the *Muslim-Christian* conflict in the

area. That is why immediately after the incident, there were reports of Christians in Wao being ambushed and their houses burnt. The fire of conflict between Christians and the *Muslims* was thus ignited and become not easy to put off. As the conflict persisted, by the end of 1971, according to government sources, the Mindanao War had taken a toll of 800 lives and there were 100,000 refugees.

In 1972 the conflict spread to Zamboanga del Sur, where Ilaga bands appeared, and to Balabagan, near Malabang in Lanao del Sur, which like Wao had a mixed *Muslim*- Christian population. There were also reports that the Ilagas were preparing for an attack on Sulu province but it did not materialize. In July, the private armies (Barracudas), who belonged to *Muslim* politicians in Lanao, were reportedly conducting raids in Zamboanga. Everywhere in Moroland the atmosphere was tense. Here and there small-scale fighting occurred as the ILAGA and Philippine Armed Forces (AFP) squared off against Blackshirts or the Military wing of the MIM, and Barracudas.

9. 1972 Declaration of Martial Law

While the scourge of the Ilagas, whose collaboration with the Philippine armed forces persisted, its destructive effects became more serious by Marcos' declaration of martial law on September 21, 1972.

The move was an attempt, among other things to pacify the *Muslim*-Christian conflict in Mindanao through disarming the populace, including the Moros who could no longer trust the government. Instead of complying with the government's order, the Moros defied it and their first act of defiance was the attack staged by several hundreds of Maranao armed men on the Mindanao State University (MSU), Marawi city. The University campus was occupied for several days and was only regained by the government armed forces after several days of bloody encounter. It was after the declaration of martial law in 1972 that the Moro National Liberation Front arose and claimed the credit of armed confrontation with the Philippine government soldiers in a systematic and well-organized manner. The members of the group were mainly led by the youth who allegedly had undergone military training in Sabah and somewhere in West Malaysia between 1968 to 1969. The MNLF emerged as the strongest, most discipline and most coordinated of the Moro groups. It soon became the chief voice for the grievances and aspirations of the majority Moros. Moreover, the MNLF came to represent the plight of the Moros in the high councils of the *Muslim* world. The present *Islamic* movement or the MILF separated from the MNLF in 1978.

B. A Response

I. The term "MORO"

After "listening" to a *Muslim's* presentation of *Islam* in the Philippines, one immediate response is a question: What is this term "Moro"? (Experience of a Mindanawon on this term as a child, student in Manila, etc). Readings on this term lead to the following explanation:

"Moro" was the name given to the *Muslims* by the Spanish colonizers. According to Abbahil (1984:6-7), the *Muslims* in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan (considered their homeland) are popularly called Moros. Moro is the Spanish word for Moor, derived from the Latin word Maurus (pl. Mauri), the inhabitants of the ancient Roman province of Mauritania in Northwest Africa which today comprises the modern states of Algeria, Mauritania and the Kingdom of Morocco. With the rise of *Islam*, Mauritania became a *Muslim* province under the Ummayyad Caliphate. Not long ago afterwards, *Muslim* armies conquered and then ruled much of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) from 711 to 1492, a total of 781 years. For the Spaniards, the term Moro did not necessarily have a derogatory connotation.²

"Moro piracies" or "Moro raids" were the views popularized by the Spanish colonial writers to negatively picture Moro retaliations against the Spanish efforts to conquer the Moro homelands. The terms have connotations derogatory to the inhabitants of Mindanao, Sulu, Borneo, etc.³, acquiring a pejorative connotation, like pirates, and was much disliked by the *Muslims* themselves.

With the emergence in 1972 of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which bannered the name Bangsa Moro, Moro acquired a new dimension. Using it became a source of pride in itself. In their own words, the MNLF asserts that:

*"Originally, the use of the term Moro by the colonialists was meant to perpetuate an image of the Muslim people of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan, as savage and treacherous, while they are simply daring and tenacious in the defense of their homeland and faith. But despite its colonial origins the Moro National Liberation Front has cleansed the term of its unpleasant connotation by propagating the more correct view that the tenacity with which the natives conducted their war of resistance against foreign intrusion was a classic exercise in heroism."*⁴

² Nagasura T. Madale. "Malay Studies Program in the Philippines: Problems, Issues and Prospects" in *Essays on Peace and Development in Southern Philippines*, p. 94.

³ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴ Abdurasad Asni. n.d. *Moros – Not Filipinos*. Bangsamoro Research Center, p.1-2.

The same term, 'Moro' which was used earlier as a derogatory labeling against the *Muslims* in the archipelago, is now becoming a sign of identity for them, expressing their aspiration vis-à-vis present realities.⁵

2. Labels Associated with Muslims and Their Implications

Reportage on *Muslims* or on events associated with *Muslims* in the Philippines has promoted an adverse image of the *Muslims* as among the dregs of the earth. Kidnappers, bandits, corrupt politicians and all other undesirable characters in society are invariably associated with *Muslims*. The majority Filipino population, basically Christians and steeped in generally negative reportage on a "troublesome" minority population like the *Muslims*, is expected to react adversely to any perceived favor granted to the latter.

Few might dispute Shakespeare's verse arguing that a rose would smell as sweet given any other name. But among the *Muslims* in the Philippines, labels and names are significant markers in their identity as a people, and thus should not be taken lightly. For instance, the label "*Muslim*" is oftentimes used liberally to refer to any item, food, design, or dance that is associated with the various ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao. Newspaper reporters and correspondents are wont to describe dresses or any costume using motifs and hand-woven cloth from either the Maranaw or Maguindanaon as "*Muslim-inspired*" designs, or worse, as "*Muslim*" dress. The hand-woven tubaw, the square piece of cloth traditionally used as headgear by Maguindanaon men, is quite popular. Tubaw is oftentimes referred to as a "*Muslim*" scarf. The singkil, which has been popularized here and abroad by the Bayanihan Dance Company, is always referred to as a "*Muslim*" dance or one of the numbers in the Bayanihan's "*Muslim*" suite of dances. Even restaurants which do not serve pork advertise their food as "*Muslim* chow." And the languages spoken by the 13 groups of *Muslims* in Mindanao and Sulu are called "*Muslim* "dialects! (Do you know how to speak the *Muslim* dialect?)

The word *Muslim* connotes a universal religious identity. A *Muslim* is a *Muslim* anywhere in the world, although globally speaking there is no monolithic *Islamic* community. *Muslims* follow the same five pillars and six articles of faith, no matter what their sect is (Sunni, as the Philippine and most Southeast Asian *Muslims* are. Or Shi'ite, as some Iranian *Muslims* are). But they are of different cultures, speak

⁵ Sebastiano D'Ambra. "Christian-Muslim Relations in the Philippines" in *IslamoChristiana* (20) 1944. Rome: PISAI, p. 179.

different languages and have diverse ethnic customs and traditions. The use of the word *Muslim* to describe the kind of dress, food or dance debases the deep religious meaning attached to the word since only an individual is capable of submission to God's will. When the word is attached to a type of dance, it becomes downright blasphemous, as *Muslims* are enjoined to shun worldly pleasures like dancing, especially if it means close contact between the sexes.

Perhaps the worst abuse of the word *Muslim* is its use as a marker for a criminal: a thief, a kidnapper, or a corrupt politician. A *Muslim* has to submit to the will of God and follow the path of righteousness as spelled out in the five pillars and six articles of faith, so how can one be a *Muslim* while violating the will of God? The phrase "*Muslim* kidnapper" or "*Muslim* criminal" is, at the least, a contradiction in terms.

The word *Muslim* is used to identify a suspect in a crime. When a Christian is involved in a crime, no journalist would ever dare use the word Christian to identify the suspect. So why that norm should not be applied when a *Muslim* is involved? The answers range from a lack of awareness of the implications of the use of the term *Muslim* to a bias against the *Muslims* as a people. The worst argument for the insistence on the use of the term to identify a suspect was "it is an expression of our freedom of speech."

When suspects have names like Abdul or Jaafar or Alikhan, they would invariably be described as "*Muslim*" rebels, thieves, or what have you. When the controversy over the use of the word was discussed in national meetings of the Philippine Press Institute, Manila-based desk editors were quite cavalier about it: "...but it (the word *Muslim*) sells the story, you know!" Such attitudes are typical expressions of prejudice that dates back to the time the colonizers set foot on Philippine soil. The images of *Muslims* and *Islam* have been such as to justify the relentless campaign to subjugate and later assimilate/integrate them under a predominantly Christian government. When *Muslims* are depicted as blood-hungry bandits, it is easy to justify a massive military campaign to remove them from the face of the earth. On the other hand, when *Muslims* are told that a predominantly Christian government wants to decimate them because of their religion (*Islam*), it will not be difficult for them to hate the Christians. Religion cuts deep into a person's identity as a member of a community of believers. When an enemy is defined in terms of religion, it is easy to wage a war against that enemy.

Despite this question on the politically correct term to use to refer to *Muslims* in the Philippines, the fact remains that *Islam* has become a religion of only a fraction of the entire Philippine population.

Estimates of *Muslims* in the Philippines range from five to 10 million, although this number could be conservative, given the growing number of *Balik-Islam* (*Muslim* converts) in the entire country. Again, even in the reporting of statistics on the *Muslim* population, there is a prevalent perception among *Muslims* that this type of data could be manipulated for the benefit of the ruling majority. Some extremists would consider as “statistical genocide” the diminution of the *Muslim* population by an office that is run mostly by Christians.

Historical accounts explain the source of the distinctiveness of the *Muslims* in the Philippines as a people with their own cultural and political identity. This is the Bangsamoro’s basis for asserting their right to self-determination. They have expressed this right in various ways, from armed struggle to participation in partisan politics in order to gain influence in national policy and decision-making.

From the start of colonial domination, the portrayal of *Muslims* and *Islam* has been derogatory. Some *Muslims* think that this was necessary to perpetuate the colonizers’ dominion over the indigenous peoples of the country. Unfortunately for the colonizers, the *Muslims*, or Moros as they called them, were made of sterner stuff than their counterparts in the north. They continued to resist foreign domination, even if that meant the deterioration of their social formation. But what the colonizers, especially the Spaniards, may have failed to do in terms of proselytizing the *Muslims*, they might have succeeded in promoting an image of the *Muslim* as the dregs of the earth. The pacification campaigns where Christianized “Indios” from Luzon and Visayas were deployed to fight against the *Muslims* in the south left a lingering image of the *Muslims* as infidels (infidels/unbelievers). To reinforce this image, the Americans used education and “democratic” political processes like passing laws to bring out the differences between the Christianized Filipinos and the *Muslims*. Governor General Leonard Wood, the first American military head appointed by the US president to administer the Philippine Islands, used to refer to the *Muslims* as “bandits and outlaws.” He ordered the killing of thousands of insurgent Moros, justifying that a “good Moro is a dead Moro.” On one page of the multi-volume History of the Philippine Islands by Blair and Robertson, is a picture of a grim-looking man holding a kris (a bladed weapon common to the peoples in Mindanao and Sulu) with the following caption: “A savage-looking Moro.”

Regarding the use of politically correct terms, perhaps there is a need to be highly conscious of the distinctions of terms denoting religious identity and those used to refer to cultures or groups of people. One need to know when to use the word *Muslim* and cultural terms like Maguindanaon costume or language.

As we started with a presentation of a history of *Islam* in the Philippines, I would end with a note of a need to revisit the shared history of both *Muslim* and Christian communities, in view of promoting mutual understanding between the two faith communities. The Final Report of the Interreligious Assembly organized by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue held at the Vatican from October 25- 28, 1999 affirmed the “... the importance of *education* as a means for promoting mutual understanding, cooperation and respect. It implies (among other things):

Making sure that text books on history and religions give an objective presentation of religious traditions so that individuals belonging to these traditions can recognize themselves in that representation.

Experience of interreligious dialogue bears the fact that history needs to be rewritten to include the histories and participation of all groups involved. Increase in our knowledge on the shared history may bring both communities closer to one another and **together**, come closer to our common Origin and common Destiny.

3. Seeking Pardon for Church Sins

“... one of the most significant acts of his papacy, Pope John Paul II (is seeking forgiveness) ... for the many past sins of his Church, including its treatment of people of other religions.”
... *“The Pope also said Christians were ready to forgive others for the abuse suffered over the centuries.”⁶*

This is a statement of the Vatican in March, 2000. In this spirit, I, a Filipina Catholic Christian, convinced that this is a necessary step to a “purification of memory” so together our 2 faith communities could move forward, say to my brother here, Taj, and all the Muslims in the Philippines: “I am deeply sorry for the past sins committed of the Church as a community”.

PART VIII. ISLAM IN THE PHILIPPINES – CURRENT ISSUES

Prof. Taha M. Basman

The image that Islam and its followers – the Muslims – project in Philippine Society has not changed so much through the years. This “static” reality can be seen in the description of the situation in the book, “Autonomy in Muslim Mindanao: The RCC Untold Story.” written by this writer in 1989. Among the relevant excerpts of that book are the following:

⁶ Philippine Daily Inquirer, March 13, 2000, p. 11.

"It is now time that we resign to the belief that the Muslims in the Philippines know their place in society; they know what are due them; and they are conversant with the intricacies attendant to the struggle towards the achievement of their goal. It must be realized also that the Muslims do not belong to the bourgeoisie of society – centuries of unabated defense of their lot and identity from rampaging might of the colonialists, despite their relative isolation from the international Islamic community during the initial stage of the struggle, proves the point. And let it be noted that when the Muslims were pitted against Spain in the 16th century, they were actually dealing with a super-power that used to control world opinion and dictated the tempo of the international economy. This time, the Muslims are dealing with one which succumbs to world opinion and which thrives on a dependent economy. Considering these circumstances, no amount of rhetoric or cajolery can sway the Muslims into weakening their stand on the issues, and their familiarity with the terrain of their rightful place enables them to recognize vividly anybody venturing into their domain, however, camouflaged!"

Admittedly, the convening of the Commission raised so many eyebrows. On one hand, the *Mujahideen* (MNLF, MILF, and the MNLF Reformist Group) do not believe that a government-sponsored group can take up the cudgels for them in the peace negotiations. This is, of course, understandable. Since the *Mujahideen* occupy the other side of the table during the negotiations throughout the process and with due recognition from both international and domestic communities, common sense dictates that easing them out unilaterally is, to say the least, a violation of basic protocol aimed at muddling the real issue. As pointed out by a Maguindanao leader, Datu Macalimpowac Dilangalen, during a dinner-dialogue on Muslim Mindanao Autonomy sponsored by the Anshar-el-Islam at the Manila Peninsula Hotel on February 8, 1989, "The case of the Autonomy issue has always been between A and B. Now that it is being resolved, it is surprising that A is negotiating with C."

The national government, on the other hand, believes that a constitutional mandate had to be followed, and the RCC was clothed with the authority to play a vital role in the pursuit of the perceived solution to the problem – AUTONOMY. It, however, overshot the parameters of the issue. Through the Peace Commission, headed by then Health Secretary Alfredo Bengzon and then Deputy Commissioner Edilberto de Jesus, the guiding principle on which are anchored all efforts at solving the problem is, "not just MNLF but all the Muslim Filipinos; not just Muslim Filipinos but all of Mindanao; not just political, but all aspects of development."

Such guiding principle, advanced very subtly and beautifully, appears latently harmless, but a deeper analysis shows that it is actually a dormant booby trap. Although no debate is imperative to declare that the MNLF is not the totality of all the Muslims in the country, going several steps beyond by embracing the whole of Mindanao, to pursue a simple and particular task, whitewashes the issue. A different picture of reality is then painted wherein the cause commonly shared by the MNLF and the Muslim community is treated as the interest of any Tom, Dick and Harry.

With the sudden change of stance by the national government, the cause of the Muslims, including the MNLF, then loses its exclusive elements of peculiarity and primacy. The issue, therefore, is not addressed; and instead of directing all roads towards peace and development, we are merely warping matters.

In the Regional Consultative Commission (RCC, the constitutional body who drafted the Organic Act that govern the laws of ARMM), the effects of the booby trap were felt by the Muslim Commissioners. There was even a point in time when mentioning the MNLF or the Tripoli Agreement was virtually taboo. The Muslims had to toe the line every time they wanted to squeeze in their demands during the whole exercise. Instead of becoming the primary beneficiaries of the Autonomy being worked out, the Muslims became the convenient scapegoat to, ironically, legitimize the institutionalization of the political, economic, and administrative structures that were employed to oppress them in the past.

The country is now saddled with so many problems coming from different directions and manifested in several dimensions. It will not do well to complicate a simple problem. Likewise, it will not serve the purpose to regard the Muslims as namby-pamby. Rather than antagonize them, mobilize them in the development efforts of the government. The resort by the Muslims to Autonomy is not actually due to its being in vogue. It is mainly because of the believe that, once treated as equal partners, the Muslims can freely utilize their resourcefulness, as members of the UMMAH, to contribute to nation-building.

But the first thing to overcome is the "distrust" that the Muslims nurtured in their minds against the powers-that-be through the years. The feeling is mutual, as can be gleaned from recent development. In a talk with Gen. Jose Magno (Ret.) in Malacanang in May 1989, he expressed dissatisfaction over the non-appointment of Muslims in the Peace Commission – the body tasked to monitor the Muslim Problem, among others. Nonetheless, the national government, as the national authority, must show the way.

A. PROBLEMS OF THE MUSLIMS

1. Economic

- a. Many Muslim out-of-school youths and adults are either unemployed or underemployed so that they depend upon their relatives for support,
- b. Courses such as law or commerce which contribute little to national development find much attraction among Muslim students,
- c. Few cottage industries but with crude methods are found in the Muslim areas,
- d. Farming and fishing are still economically unfeasible.
- e. Laws on price manipulation, hoarding, etc. are never enforced.
- f. Credit facilities are lacking, or if available, require too much paper work.
- g. Population growth rate is phenomenal.
- h. Banking facilities and cooperatives are inadequate.
- i. Muslims do not know how to exploit natural resources.
- j. Trained manpower is very much lacking.
- k. Lack of the right type of vocational, trade and technical courses.
- l. Graft and corruption is rampant.

2. Socio-Political-Cultural

a. Continuing conflict and misunderstanding

- Many Filipino laws either discriminate against the Muslims or ignore their customs, traditions and society.
- Few, if at all, Muslims are deeply involved in policy-making bodies of the government.
- Many Christians are ignorant of the Muslims and vice-versa.
- The presence of crisis in leadership among the Muslims.
- Distorted image of Muslims is found in textbooks, supplementary readers, teachers' guides and other written materials.

b. Peace and Order

- Local, provincial and certain branches of the national government fail to perform their duties well.
- Military personnel assigned in Muslim communities abuse.
- Power politics still persist between Muslims and Muslims, Muslims and Christians and Christians and Christians.
- Existence of radical groups (Muslim and Christian).
- Peace talks not yet concluded

c. Inadequate Social Services

- Health and sanitation condition is very poor.
- Waterworks system and facilities are too meager for a developing community.
- Lack of community planning.
- Ineffective social services, programs and projects.

3. Educational

a. Low participation and high drop-out rates.

Too much poverty coupled with big family size make the Muslims unable to go to school. They also fail to assign more value to education because of certain customs, practices and beliefs. Due to this situation, the Muslims do not put so much premium on Western education.

b. Participation in the educational scheme is unsystematic.

Due to poor elementary and high school background, only few Muslims finish a college degree. In addition, parents choose the course for their children without any regard for intelligence, health or individual preference.

c. Poor quality of instruction.

Poor quality of instruction is a result of the following:

- Non-qualified teachers are often hired to teach because of politics.
- Textbook, reference materials and supplementary readers used in the schools are antagonistic to local customs, practices, and traditions or offend people's sensibilities.
- Curriculum is irrelevant and impractical.
- Lack of adequate buildings, playground and other physical plant facilities.
- Madrasah is not yet integrated into the Department of Education system.

B. OTHER ISSUES:

1. Balik Islam
2. ARMM Elections
3. Terrorism
4. Illegal Business
5. Federalism vs. Autonomy
6. Sha'ria Implementation
7. Interfaith

C. CONCLUSION

Like in the past, the acid test faced by the Muslims and Islam is just taken as a normal course of life. The Muslims still believe that God's will dictates the tempo and direction of events. As taught by Islam, the Muslims accept their fate as part of "Qadr."

APPENDIX :

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Theme: Pathway to Understanding Islamic Faith and Practice

It is wholesome for Christian circles to understand the theology and practice of Islam Faith. This will promote greater understanding of our brothers in the Muslim communities in the Mindanao area and elsewhere.

Target groups: Teachers to bond in this module Christians

I. Objectives

1. To understand the theology and practice of Islamic faith
2. To promote greater understanding of our brothers in the Muslim communities in Mindanao
3. For Christians to understand Islam and Muslims
4. What is the attitude of the Church towards Islam
5. To overcome prejudices against Muslims
6. To bring the module for Islam-Christian dialogue primarily to the *parishes*, then also to the *parish priests* and *lay Church workers*.
7. A cultural situationer for each country

II. Materials

1. video clip
2. map
3. writing materials (manila paper, bond paper, pentel pen)
4. PowerPoint presentation of Fr. Michel (for the theological aspect)
5. Lecture of Fr. Platti to be done with PowerPoint Presentation (also theological aspect)

III. Procedures

1. Dialogue of Life
2. Exposure/immersion
3. Approaches for teachers
 - a. Teachings of the Qur'an

- b. Common social issues that bring Christians and Muslims together
- c. Status and rights of women in Islam
- d. Major points of Islamic history
- e. Basic elements of theology and practice of faith in Islam
- f. Islamic spirituality
- g. Islamic calendar
- h. Explanation on the "Jihad"
- i. Some theological issues

IV. Bibliography

- 1. Tom Michel, A Christian explains his faith to Muslims
- 2. A Muslim explains her faith to Christians (Author: Muslim woman)

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Sufism and Islamic Spirituality

Nobody can claim a monopoly of spirituality. The Islamic believers' claim that their religion brings them to God indicates a unique kind of spirituality. The understanding of spirituality, hand in hand with Sufism will be advantageous for anybody who belongs to another faith persuasion.

I. Objectives:

1. To discover the unique spirituality of the Islamic believers
2. To deepen one's spirituality
3. Respect for one's religion and openness to other religious traditions
4. Explore some healthy aspects of religious Faith

II. Materials:

1. Audio-visuals/video clips/webpage
2. Powerpoint/slide presentation
3. Books, any other materials that are useful

III. Procedures:

1. Dialogue of Life (with good orientation) – many ways and exposure programme
2. Common Concern – Meeting point (Projects).
3. Do not compare religious traditions – They are sacred/unique

IV. Bibliography

- Qur'an
- Bible

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Militants in Islam: Distant and Recent Sects

The tragedies of hunger, terrorism and conflicts are everyday experiences in our world today. Some of these tragedies are attributed to some militant and fundamentalist groups from different faith persuasion. How do distant and recent sects of Muslims take this?

I. Objectives:

1. To understand the tragedies of hunger, terrorism and conflicts in our world today
2. To know the different Muslim militant and fundamentalist groups
3. To know the meaning of militancy
4. To examine militancy in the world today
5. To know the factors that lead to militancy
6. To know the difference between militant and revivalist Islamic groups.
7. To know the effects/impact of militancy

II. Materials:

1. Maps
2. Newspaper/magazine clippings
3. Internet Resources

III. Procedures:

1. Sharing of experiences
2. Research
3. Interact with Muslim Youth

IV. Bibliography

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Mohammad: His message and mission

Islam is one religion that claims strictly that Mohammad is its founder. He has a self-imposed mission and message to the universal world. How does the message of Mohammad differ from the other founders of religion?

The group also identified high and college students as the targets

I. Objectives:

1. To discern the message of Mohammad
2. To fulfill the mission of Mohammad to the universal world
3. To be able to know Mohammad – his message and mission

II. Materials:

1. Movie: "The Message"
2. DVD: "Mohammad: His Life"
3. Power Point Presentation of the Life of the Prophet

III. Procedures:

- A. Movie Viewing on the Life of Mohammad
 - Group sharing and discussions – identifying the virtues and extraordinary deeds of the prophet
- B. Power presentation on the Life and Missions of Mohammad
 - Group sharing and discussions - Identifications of his message
 - His mission
- C. The use of Hand outs and Pamphlets

IV. Bibliography

1. Qur'an
2. Seal of the Nectar
3. History Books

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Status of Women in Islam

Feminism has advanced in the recent years. It has a very specific message to Muslim women. How does Islam promote women advancement? Does Qur'an accept the complementary roles between man and woman? The speakers will identify the status of Muslim women.

I. Objectives:

1. To clarify the role of man and woman in Islam
2. To enhance the role of women in Islam
3. To know the position of man and woman in Islam
4. To understand the role of women in Islam
5. To clarify the difference between what is religious and cultural in Islam.

II. Materials:

1. Quotations from Quran, Hadidt, Fatwas
(need to clarify the concept of Fatwas)
2. Articles, Films, Experiences of Prominent Muslim women*

*Exemplary women in Quran/History/Contemporary Society

III. Procedures:

1. Discuss the student's views/image of Muslim women.
2. Use Quotations from Qu'ran, Hadidt and Fatwas to help students see what is the teaching of Islam with regard to women.
3. Use stories of women, past and present, to see how Islam is practiced.
4. Show through local examples, the difference between what are cultural and religious practices.

IV. Bibliography

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Questions of Islamic Law

Law is necessary to put order in the community. Universal laws are necessary to put order in the universal community. These are the issues that trigger more understanding of the Islamic laws and the state.

I. Objectives:

1. To read the letters of the Islamic law
2. To appreciate the spirit of the Islamic law and its relation to the state
3. To learn the basic elements of the Shariah as way of life.
4. To appreciate its spirit and relationship to the State.

II. Materials:

1. Slides of Fr. Michel on the Shariah as way of life
2. World map
3. Qur'an
4. Muslim Baul songs (from Sufis) of Bangladesh

III. Procedures:

1. Know the content of the branches of Shariah
2. Discuss the "ideal" and "reality" of Islamic Law
3. Knowledge of "personal law" and "territorial law"
4. Knowledge of what the Hadith is for Muslims
5. Knowledge of the three aspects of "Jihad" – interior, social, opposition to injustice

IV. Bibliography

1. Qur'an
2. Book of Fazlur Rahman: Islam
3. Book of Syafa'atun al-Mirzana: A Muslim explains her faith to Christians
4. Book of Christian Troll – a comparative study of Islam and Christianity

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Theological Questions that Affect Christian-Muslim relations

In the second half of the 80's the Holy Father called the meeting of different religions from all around the world. The meeting has increased positive mutual relations between Christians and Muslims. How can we further improve the Christian-Muslim relations?

I. Objectives:

1. To re-echo the call of the Holy Father for the different religions of the world
2. To improve the Christian-Muslim relations
3. To understand the view of the other, try to accept differences to ensure that there is no resort to violence

II. Materials:

1. Show Islam as respectable – so materials that emphasize this respect (Respect – Don't touch something that is Holy!)

III. Procedures:

1. Seek to do together the things we agree on
2. Promote the ideas that we are brothers and sisters – universal fraternity. Common humanity, so we respect one another.
3. Give emphasis on the positive things – remove prejudices; Understand the meaning of customs, gestures, why they are done so that these are appreciated for what they really are.
4. Emphasis dialogue of life, exchange of experiences
5. Promote commonalities on issues like: "Concept of Holiness in Islam and holiness in Christianity"
6. Start Respectability on an Issue like "Love of Nature" which is very interesting for Youth as entry point to understanding; Respectability of the things/beliefs in Islam.

7. Do activities on Openness as against Absolutism/ Fundamentalism

IV. Bibliography

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Islam in Asia: History and Current Issues

Recent issues of Islam in Asia are often the subject matter of journals, magazines, radio and television commentators. Islam in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Bangladesh has its own colors and perspectives. A brief but good historical perspective will describe the different expressions of Islamic Faith in Asia.

I. Objectives:

1. To understand the recent issues of Islam in Asia
2. To discover the colors and perspectives of Islam in the different regions of Asia
3. To understand the history of Islam and its relation to the current issues of Islam in Asia.
4. To discover the culture and perspectives of Muslims in the different regions of Asia.

II. Materials:

1. Multi-media, audio-visual materials
2. Hand-outs, textbooks
3. Maps: a) Chronological map b) Geopolitical map

III. Procedures:

1. Make the teaching of the history of Islam a part of the curriculum (in schools).
2. Develop a lecture series
3. Produce audio-visual materials
4. interactive programs: e.g. Question and Answer, theatrical plays
5. Immersion: visit to Mosques, Madrasah, and other Islamic institutions; living with Muslim families
N.B. immersion programmes should conclude with guided reflection about:
e.g. Positive experience, negative experience, experience that one did not understand, etc.

6. Interfaith Prayer or Sharing

N.B. Organizers should be aware of the different sensibilities of Christians and Muslims when inviting them to join prayer services:

- a) Invocation of Jesus' name
- b) Don't invite a Muslim woman if a Muslim man is present

IV. Bibliography

MODULE-MAKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

Islam in Philippine History and Current Issues

Finally, Islam in the Philippines is unique. It gained acceptance among the southern tribes. Why did the Badjaos, Tausogs and others easily accept the Muslim faith? Recent issues to bring peace to Mindanao have to be faced squarely and prudently in the name of harmony.

I. Objectives:

1. To appreciate the uniqueness of Islam in the Philippines
2. To foster harmony amidst the present issues confronting the Muslim faith

II. Issues:

1. Registration of birth or death certificates, land titles—no documents because of the inapplicability (but relative to country/system)
 - it becomes a cause for graft and corruption
 - requirement is a joint affidavit
2. Terrorism – labeling in most countries where there are Muslims
 - becomes political
 - oppression
3. Democracy and Justice – not practiced in many countries
 - kinship/dictatorship
 - campaign: Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy on bringing out Shariah as response to this call for democracy, e.g., to “police” Abu Sayyaf (in this case Muslim vs Muslim)
4. Globalization – threatening to our families/culture in Bangladesh, identified with Christian result in violence against them in USA, Muslims happy ever after 9/11.

Explanation of Human Rights:

- a. fundamentalists – put a stop on this
- b. ruining families
- c. media present issues against values: offensive
- d. issues dependent on culture, e.g., Pakistan, no TV at home
- e. adultery issue on Muslims ... sex on TV is cautious “Do not go near adultery”.
- f. In Pakistan, even no music, cyber café, cinema
- g. In Marawi, no clubs, no gambling; reactions of audience

5. Coexistence vs violence

- a. In Indonesia, mosque in front of a Cathedral
- b. In Bangladesh – houses burned; building wall; 56 yr old, college 85% Muslims
- c. Communal conflicts distinguished by the majority. – to understand better relations

III. Procedures:

1. Dialogue/round table discussions

- citing countries where there is peaceful co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims
- Respecting religious practices, holidays, e.g. prayer room
- emphasis on communities with working relationships including institutes
- early warning systems (for petty conflicts)
- create business professional networks (for bigger provocation)

2. Commitment and Prayer

Fostering more interfaith linkages (e.g. to visit communities) and be concerned with problems besetting communities.

3. Supporting our Muslim brothers and sisters in various issues;

4. Utilize multi media circulation to foster friendship and brotherhood to our Muslim brothers and sisters.

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