

THIS IS ISLAM

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**WE ARE ONES
WHO DEBATE ABOUT
THE RELIGION OF GOD**

The Prophet of Islam Muhammad (P)



Note: Referring to preponderant figures, such as Prophets or Imams (12 Descendents of the Prophet Muhammad who are Shi'ia Imams), or sacred women like Saint Mary or Fatima the daughter of Prophet Mohammed is written the initial (P) after the name. “(P)” means “Peace be upon him (or her, or them)”. When referring to the Prophet Muhammad, “(PBD)” appears after the name to indicate “God’s Peace and Blessings Upon him and his Descendents”.

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INTRODUCTION

By Mohammad Hassan Ghadiri Abyaneh

In the name of God, the All-beneficent, All-merciful

"There are indeed signs in that for a people who apply reason." (The Qur'an, 16:67)

In 1971 I was eighteen years old. I had just received my high school diploma in Tehran, and I was on my way to Florence, Italy, to study architecture. This was the beginning of my experience with Western thought in its many forms.

One day an Italian classmate asked about my religious views and I responded, with complete candor, "I am Muslim", to which he queried, "Why are you a Muslim?"

And I told him, again with candor: "I am Muslim because in my country and in my family everyone follows the faith of Islam."

After I said this, I thought a great deal about my reply. Had it been logical? After all, if religion, or faith, or one's vision of God, is predicated on the family's faith, or if it is based on the

customs of the majority of the people in one's country, then a Jew, a Christian, or a Buddhist also follows these teachings by default, and might just as well believe a cow is sacred or that the secrets of the universe are contained within a clay or a stone idol.

And so we come to the question: "Who or what is God?" If "there is no God but God", does that make Him a singular being? Or is God contained within a trinity, in which case "the father, the son and the holy ghost" are exactly the same as Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. Or is God implicit in a statue, or in fire or the cult of the Sun? Are these considerations inherent in a family legacy?

Somehow I was not convinced by this. It just has no logic. At that moment I resolved to take up the pursuit of the answer to my own questions, to read and study and find the truth, if such exists. I was perfectly prepared, at that point, to abandon Islam if my research proved its fallibility. I would accept another religion if I felt its teachings were true. I might even discard religion altogether, turn my back on God, become an atheist, declare God nonexistent.

Initially I thought my decision to pursue God in other faiths might be conceived as a "sin" by Islamic standards, until I found that The Qur'an confirmed my actions.

"When they are told, 'follow what God has sent down,' they say, 'We will rather follow what we have found our fathers following.' What, even if their fathers neither applied any reason nor were guided?" (The Qur'an, 2:170)

...give good news to my servants. Who listen to the word and follow the best of it. They are the ones whom God has guided, and it is they who possess intellect. ”. (The Qur’an, 39:17,

18)

The first task was therefore a definition of God. Does God exist or not? Does He appear as He is presented in other religions? Is He a person, a presence, a mystic conviction? Or perhaps He lies beyond the teachings of other faiths. In which case, how was I to find Him?

Studying in Italy, with the Vatican at its center, was an opportunity to come to terms with the Catholic Church. Yet Florence happened to be full of Iranian students in the pursuit of a wide range of political truths. They varied from far left to right and included pro-Chinese Maoists, pro-Soviet Communists, liberals, conservatives, as well as adepts of the broad spectrum of Italian political diversity. Thus I had the opportunity to probe divergent criteria.

And so I continued for two years, but finally I had to be honest with myself. After exploring all the avenues available to me, after interviewing everyone I met, after delving into the widest possible range of pursuits, including every religious, philosophical and political persuasion, I came to the following conclusion: Islam is the true and divine expression of God, and I accept it by conviction, not by tradition.

Thus does God clarify His signs for you so that you may reflect.” (The Qur’an, 2:219)

Even so, I maintained an open and receptive dialogue with many people, on many subjects, related to intellectual exploration of all kind.

And while I have not had the opportunity to study theology or attend Qur'anic schools, I have captured my thoughts in this book, in order to share my studies, my reflections and my experiences based on thirty-seven years of research. Thus I dedicate my work to those who like myself believe that the essence of God lies somewhere beyond family traditions or the reigning religious establishment in his country of origin.

I dedicate it as well to the reader who is prepared to apply logic rather than dogma in his thinking, who is able to free himself from preconceived notions of Islam, who is willing to open his mind to faiths other than his own.

I appeal to the reader who is able to contemplate my thoughts beyond the anti-Islamic prejudice of the West. I direct this work to an objective reader whose thinking is not influenced by the media, one who does not assume from the outset, based on fallacious hearsay, that Islam is a backward religion, violent and oppressive, with an intrinsic disregard for human rights, especially the rights of women.

This anti-Islamic propaganda has become particularly harsh in recent years, with the clear intention of damaging the image of one of the three great monotheistic religions and discouraging the public from learning more about Islam, as well as an awareness and understanding of the Muslim world.

My book is therefore intended to open the reader's mind, to offer information and analysis, while revealing the essential nature of the high moral and spiritual values of a religion with one and one-half billion followers around the world.

Islam is a vibrant, living force, based on logic and common sense. It is also revealing of justice and reason, with a profound and transparent ideology intended to dignify the vision of God, the prophets, including Jesus and Mary, who play an integral part in the story. One chapter or *Surat*, as it is called in the Qur'an, is named *Mary*. Another chapter, *Al Maede* ("The Table"), describes the meal served at the Last Supper as originating in Heaven.

Islam is an integral system of mystic as well as pragmatic thought, which proposes realistic solutions in both the life of an individual and his community. With a greater awareness of Islamic precepts, the reader is therefore better equipped to penetrate the reality of the Muslim world.

Considering that fifty-seven countries around the world enjoy a Muslim majority, in addition to large Muslim communities in other countries, mostly in the West, this book is an invaluable tool for students, diplomats or businessmen, among others, having dealings in this vast and varied moral, religious and geographical landscape.

I therefore propose an academic approach to this book, from the point of view of international relations and geopolitics, international commerce and trade, international law, human rights, world history, philosophy, communications and

culture, art history, strategic administration, theology, sociology, anthropology, public relations, journalism, travel and tourism, literature, political science, cinematography and documentary filmmaking, diplomacy, gastronomy.

Whoever reads this book will discover the key to better understanding the Islamic world and will find a path to improving relations among cultures, religions and civilizations, especially with Iran.

It will be my great pleasure to hear from you by email and to receive your comments on this book.

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To write my recent books about Islam, different person helped me. First of all was Mr. Habellyno Perez Perez (Mustafa Hassan) . With their help I wrote the first book “*Islam without distortion*” (*Islam sin distorsión*) in Spanish language (2009). Later I wrote another Book “*This is Islam*” (*Esto es el Islam*) in Spanish too, published April 2010.

Mrs. Carroll Miller translated the text in English. She had proposals adding to the book. I found them interesting and I added her arguments to the book. About the notes and references of the Qur’an and the Bible, as well as the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBD) and from the Shi’ite Imams (P) I used existing translations as well the annexes with the exception of the annexes of comparison which I wrote by myself and translated by her.

The ladies: Patricia Frias Moreno, Maribel Benitez Gonzalez, Martha Carrasco (Fatimah), Zahra Valadkhani and Tonantzin Martin Carrillo have helped me to prepare the book for its publication in both languages.

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Every time that in my residence a needed the computer and internet for my books, my 13 years old son Mohammad Hussein, resisted because he wanted to play games. I have to

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SECTION I

GENERALITY

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ISLAM AROUND THE WORLD

There are currently fifty-seven countries in the world with a Muslim population of over 50%.

There are over one and one-half billion Muslims on this planet. Islam is the world's second religion, just under Christianity as a whole, and exceeds the Catholic Church in the number of its adepts.

Only eighteen percent of all Muslims are ethnic Arabs.

France is home to Europe's largest Islamic colony, amounting to six million, or ten percent of its total population.

Almost ten million Muslims live in the United States, with another three million living in other counties in North and South America.

THE MEANING OF "ISLAM" AND "MUSLIM"

The word "Islam" means "total submission to God". The faithful place themselves in God's care and have every assurance of God's salvation.

"This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed my favor to you. I have approved Islam to be your religion". (The Qur'an, 5:3)

Islam is the third, that is, the most recent, of the world's three great monotheistic religions. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings Upon Him and his Descendents), the founding Prophet of Islam, was born in Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula in 570

A.D. This city is therefore considered sacred. Every Muslim, at some point in his or her life, if at all possible, is expected to make the pilgrimage, at least once. Muhammad (PBD) is considered to be the last of God's great prophets.

Islam is an attitude as much as a religion, voluntarily assumed, a concept regarding the world and its Creator, and in effect represents an acceptance of the practices considered relevant to its exercise. It is a way of life maintained within a doctrine that assumes all aspects of the human condition.

A *Muslim* is a person of the Islamic faith. The word originated in the Arabic language, the feminine is *Muslima*, and in either case refers to a faithful believer "who submits or delivers himself (or herself) to God's will". Thus anyone who submits to God is considered a *Muslim*, without fear of error. For this reason the prophets prior to Muhammad, such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as well as the Virgin Mary, among others, may be considered Muslims, for having submitted to Divine Will.

"He has named you Muslims before and in this so that the messenger (Muhammad) can be a witness for you and in order that you are witnesses against mankind". (The Qur'an, 22:78)

The Islamic faith is raised on principles known as "pillars". The first acknowledges the Oneness of God ("There is no God but God") and the second accepts Muhammad (PBD) as His final and principal Prophet. There are 1.5 billion people in this world who accept these two basic precepts.

THE ISLAMIC FAITH IS BASED ON LOGIC

...give good news to my servants. Who listen to the word and follow the best of it. They are the ones whom God has guided, and it is they who possess intellect. ”. (The Qur’an, 39:17,

18)

No dogma supports the Islamic faith. On the contrary, Muslims regard rational conviction as the basis for intellectual acceptance.

The world’s most prominent prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (Peace and Blessings Upon them All) as well as Muhammad (PBD), from the beginning of time, have preached the same.

Each individual is responsible for his own beliefs, based on his intellectual awareness of the principles that sustain them, independently of the faith of his family or society.

Countless quotes from the Qur’an confirm the worth of personal reasoning and discernment.

- *“It was He who produced for you hearing, eyes, and hearts whosoever calls upon another god, other than God, having no proof his reckoning will be with his lord (...).” (The Qur’an, 23:78, 117)*
- *“When they are told, ‘follow what God has sent down,’ they say, ‘We will rather follow what we have found our fathers following.’ What, even if their fathers neither applied any reason nor were guided?” (The Qur’an, 2:170)*

- *"O People of the Book! Why do you defy? God's signs while you testify [to their truth]?" (The Qur'an, 3:70)*
- *"Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships that sail at sea with profit to men, and the water that God sends down from the sky – with which He revives the earth after its death, and scatters therein every kind of animal – and the changing of the winds, and the clouds disposed between the sky and the earth, are surely signs for a people who apply reason." (The Qur'an, 2:164)*
- *"Do you suppose that most of them listen or apply reason?" (The Qur'an, 25:44)*
- *"But those who are faithless fabricate lies against God and most of them do not apply reason." (The Qur'an, 5:103)*
- *"And they will say, 'Had we listened or applied reason, we would not have been among the inmates of the Blaze.'" (The Qur'an, 67:10)*

Muhammad Prophet of God (PBD) had this to say about virtue and the benefits of true awareness:

- *"One hour devoted to thinking is better than seventy years of praying to God."*
- *"The first thing that God created was the intellect."*
- *"El intelecto es una luz que Dios ha creado para la humanidad y que Él ha ordenado para iluminar el corazón, para que con ella, podrá saber la diferencia entre las cosas visuales manifiesto y lo oculto las cosas».*
- *"The very basis of man is his intellect, and the man devoid of intellect has no religion."*

- *"Verily all good is grasped through the intellect, and the man devoid of intellect has no religion."*

THE BASIS OF ISLAMIC FAITH

"And whoever ascribes partners to God has indeed fabricated [a lie] in great sinfulness." (The Qur'an, 4:48)

The basis of Islamic faith is summarized in two phrases:

1. There is only one God. He is Unique and is like no other. (la ilaaha ila Al-lah)
2. Muhammad is God's Messenger (Muhammadan Rasul-ullah)

These two phrases are the testimony of devotion to Islam. To embrace the faith one only needs to rationally accept these two precepts, and express these words sincerely. These same words constitute the threshold of admittance into the faith and they represent the foundation of the very essence of Islam.

Islam is a completely monotheistic religion. No prayer is directed except to God himself.

"Say, 'O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but God, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides God.' But if they turn away, say, 'Be witnesses that we are Muslims.'" (The Qur'an, 3:64)

THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The pillars that sustain the faith are rational elements to be embraced by the heart and mind and discussed openly and clearly in order to know and accept God.

These constitute the path leading to the discovery of all Creation as the orderly work of a single Master.

These also constitute the awareness of the Prophets as having been sent to us by God, in order to lead and guide us to divine Prophecy.

God is our guardian, He sees to our welfare. On the Day of Judgement he provides unfailing justice for us all.

The Pillars of Islam are five:

1. Absolute monotheism.
2. The Prophecy, as a guide for all Humanity.
3. Resurrection on the Day of Final Judgment is relevant to the behavior of the believer during his lifetime.
4. Divine Justice.
5. Governorship of the Divine Word, that is, to act as an *Imam*, and service as a divine guide, at the Shi'ite School of Islam, acts as a complement to the Prophecy, in order to guarantee its careful preservation.

GOD IN ISLAM

“Among the people are those who dispute about God without any knowledge, and follow every forward devil” (The Qur'an, 22:3)

In Islam, God is known by many names: The Just, The Merciful, The Creator, among others.

Nonetheless, according to the Qur'an, *Allah*, the Arabic word for God, is commonly used and is considered the prevailing

The linguistic root of *Allah* indicates that He is the one and only Being worthy of worship and obedience. *Allah* is therefore, according to Islamic tradition, considered to be the all-encompassing word to express this principle, chosen by God Himself, and so revealed through Muhammad, his messenger. It is therefore normally preferred by Muslims.

Linguistically *Allah* is a unique word. It is generic and singular, and has no conjugation. This word reflects the singular Oneness as a concept of God, for Muslims, for whom God is not contained within a trinity. He did not incarnate in a son who died for mankind. He does not reside in Heaven removed from the affairs of the world. He is not revealed in human form. In Islam, God is One, Unique and Singular. He has no mother or father, no children, no companions, no associates, and is like nothing and no one else. He is not represented by any means, or object, or figure, he is not worshipped in any form or physical manifestation. God has no limits, he is not found in any geographical location, neither on Earth nor in Heaven and no place may be regarded as containing Him, yet nowhere is without Him or far from Him. He is Light, to be found everywhere, but without a defined presence.

“Look! To God indeed belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth. And what do they pursue who invoke partners besides God? They merely follow conjectures and they just make surmises. It is He, who made the night for you that you may rest in it, and the day to provide visibility. There are indeed signs in that for people who listen. They say, ‘God has taken a son!’ Immaculate is He! He is the All-sufficient. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. You have no authority for this [statement]. Do you attribute to God what you do not know?” (The Qur’an, 10:66-68)

“And God has said; do not take to yourself two gods. He is only one god; so have awe of me. 'To him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. This is the religion for ever. Would you then fear any but God?” (The Qur’an, 16:51-52)

Worthy of mention, at this point, is the reference from the Old Testament, which coincides with this description:

“So keep watch on yourselves with care; for you saw no form of any sort on the day when the voice of the Lord came to you in Horeb out of the heart of the fire: So that you may not be turned to evil ways and make for yourselves an image in the form of any living thing, male or female, Or any beast of the earth, or winged bird of the air, Or of anything which goes flat on the earth, or any fish in the water under the earth.” .” (The Bible, Deuteronomy 4:15-18.)

“All this he let you see, so that you might be certain that the Lord is God and there is no other. Out of heaven itself his voice came to you, teaching you; and on earth he let you see his great fire; and his words came to your ears out of the heart of the fire (...) So today be certain, and keep the knowledge deep in your hearts, that the Lord is God, in heaven on high and here on earth; there is no other God.” (The

Bible, Deuteronomy 4: 35-39)

In truth, even the millions of Arab-speaking Christians have no other word for God than “Allah”.

AWARENESS AND WORSHIP OF GOD

“We will show them our signs in all the horizons and in themselves, until it is clear to them that it is the truth.” (The

Qur’an, 41:53)

“Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those with minds. those who remember God when standing, sitting, and on their sides, and contemplate upon the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying:) 'Lord, you have not created these in falsehood. Exaltations to you! ” (The

Qur’an, 3:190-191)

Obedience and awareness of God assure God’s love and protection. It is important to preserve the Oneness of God, thus avoiding any devotion that might distract from this concept. It is also fundamental to refrain from any action that

might be interpreted as disdainful of God, or disregarding of God, or behavior that might be considered offensive to God. Omission is as offensive as commission.

A person is judged as *aware* of God based on three precepts:

1. Even though his prayers have not yet been answered he still sees beauty in God and still finds God worthy of his trust.
2. The beauty of his satisfaction with God for that which has been granted and
3. The beauty of the patience that places his trust in God for that which might yet be granted.

Imam Ali¹ (P) said:

“There are people who worship Allah to gain His Favors, this is the worship of traders; while there are some who worship Him to keep themselves free from His Wrath, this is the worship of slaves; a few who obey Him out' of their sense of gratitude and obligations, this is the worship of free and noble men.”

“My God. I don't pray you for fear of your punishment and nor for to be recompensed. But I pray you because I found you worthy to be prayed.”

¹ 'Alí ibn Abu Tálib (P) was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (PBD) and the first of the Muslims, considered together with Jadiya, Muhammad's first wife. According to the Shi'ite School of Islam, 'Alí is the legitimate successor of Muhammad (PBD) and Islam's first guide and spiritual leader (Imam), to be recognized at the end of the Prophet's life.

"Many persons get nothing out of their fasts but hunger and thirst, many more get nothing out of their night prayers but exertions and sleepless nights. Wise and sagacious persons are praiseworthy even if they do not fast and sleep during the nights."

MAN'S RELATION TO GOD

"When My servants ask you about Me, [tell them that] I am indeed nearest. I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me. So let them respond to Me, and let them have faith in Me, so that they may fare rightly." (The Qur'an, 2:186)

One can only know God through God's own concept of Himself. God may not be perceived by any of the five senses, nor can He be determined by scientific investigation. God lies beyond man's scientific resources, because God, in fact, is the Creator of all things. The believer is nevertheless in possession of the elements necessary for an awareness of God.

With this, God is revealed in the contemplation of all that lies around us and within us.

God has not abandoned humankind. He has provided proof of his Existence and has indicated the way or the path leading to Him.

Islam places considerable emphasis on the role of knowledge and right conduct, which should be perceived as the path to salvation, as well as a direct connection with God. God is his only master and savior.

The Prophet (PBD) said:

"When God wants to answer or respond to His servant, He allows him to supplicate."

"Ask God and ask Him in abundance, for verily there is nothing too great for Him."

"Verily your Lord is bashful and kind. He would be too ashamed for His servant to open his hands to Him [in supplication] and for Him to return them empty."

JUDGEMENT DAY

"Indeed those who stray from the way of God – there is a severe punishment for them because of their forgetting the Day of Reckoning.'" (The Qur'an, 38:26)

The Day of Final Judgment is considered to be the second phase of life eternal; it takes into account all humans, and the Earth itself. The entire Universe thus passes into a new phase of existence, with a renewed appearance.

The Holy Qur'an tells us of the great fulfillment in the Resurrection. This event coincides with the extinction of the stars and the Sun, the drying up of the seas and oceans, the disintegration of the mountains, earthquake and storm, transformations before unheard of.

Everything in the world will be displaced by destruction, disintegration and annihilation, only to be afterward renewed.

According to Islam, true faith will be joined in the belief in the One God and the Final Judgment. If it were not so, says God, our faith in Him would be unworthy. If we discount the day of Final Judgment we also discount the Creation of splendor, beauty, majesty and perfection, and assume it will be destroyed and after a brief passage of time vanish from existence. This is not acceptable.

ORIGINAL SIN

"Adam disobeyed his Lord, and went amiss. Then his Lord chose him, and turned to him clemently, and guided him. He said, 'Get down both of you from it, all together, being enemies of one another! Yet, should any guidance come to you from Me, those who follow My guidance will not go astray, nor will they be miserable.'" (The Qur'an, 20:121-123)

Islam makes no allowance for "original sin". According to the Qur'an, Adam (P) and Eve failed in their obligations, but they were forgiven. Their children were never burdened with blame. For Islam, each human being is born in purity and innocence, free of any stain, corruption or transgression.

"Whosoever is guided is only guided for his own self, and whosoever goes astray it is only against it. No soul shall bear another's burden. Nor do we punish until we have sent a messenger." (The Qur'an, 17:15)

We were created in order to enter Paradise. In the words of Imam Ali (P):

"Your price is Paradise. Do not sell yourself for less than Paradise."

Once any man or woman reaches maturity he or she alone is responsible for both actions and decisions, and never responsible for the actions either of their ancestors or their contemporaries.

"If they deny you, say, 'my deeds belong to me and your deeds belong to you: you are absolved of what I do and I am absolved of what you do.'" (The Qur'an, 10:41)

He is therefore endowed with free will, in order to choose, himself alone, between the possibilities of good or evil. In this way he accumulates merits or failings, and will receive his Judgement on the Final Day. This is reason enough to encourage awareness, control over one's behavior, and responsibility for one's actions. This is one of the reasons that all substances that weaken or distort man's state of balance, or put him into an altered state, such as alcohol, are prohibited.

"And whoever commits a sin, commits it only against himself" (The Qur'an, 4:111)

"Surely God does not do any injustice to men, but men are unjust to themselves" (The Qur'an, 10:44)

Within Islam's vision, we are just passing through this world. Here man submits to a trial by God. No man is punished here for the failings of Adam (P) and Eve, his forebears, nor is this world a place of permanent residence, beyond which lies nothing.

All human beings must leave this world in order to enter into their permanent resting-place. For this reason we must die, as death, which is not a punishment, serves as the portal to another state of being.

The Prophet ^(PBD) said:

“God will say to Adam on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Stand at the scale and see what is shown to you from their works. He whose good deeds outweigh his bad deeds even by one atom’s worth, he will go to Heaven, so that you may know that I do not admit any of them to Hell, unless they do wrong.’”

As far as Islam is concerned, at no time did Jesus ^(P) or any of the prior prophets refer to an “original sin”. There was never a blame to be washed away by baptism.

A quote from the Old Testament reaffirms this position:

“The soul which does sin will be put to death: the son will not be made responsible for the evil-doing of the father, or the father for the evil-doing of the son; the righteousness of the upright will be on himself, and the evil-doing of the evil-doer on himself.” (The Bible, Ezekiel 18:20)

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

“And those who, when they commit an indecent act or wrong themselves, remember God, and plead [God’s] forgiveness for their sins – and who forgives sins except

God? – and who do not persist in what they have committed while they know." (The Qur'an, 3:135)

"Whoever commits evil or wrongs himself and then pleads God for forgiveness, will find God all-forgiving, all-merciful." (The Qur'an, 4:110)

"Except he who repents and believes and does good works those, God will change their evil deeds into good deeds; God is ever forgiving and merciful. He "who repents and does good works truly turns to God in repentance" (The Qur'an, 25:70, 71)

No rite exists in Islam regarding a confession, in which a person speaks of his transgressions, and in which penance is assigned, thus freeing him of his sins. Such a procedure, in itself, from the Islamic point of view, constitutes a very grave sin. No person or institution has the right to assume the role corresponding to God Himself, but rather it is through God's will, and direct intervention, that forgiveness is granted. Only God Himself is worthy of worship and an appeal for forgiveness. God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent and requires no associates to forgive our shortcomings.

"Your Lord has said, 'Call Me, and I will hear you [r supplications]!' Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility." (The Qur'an, 40:60)

In the words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBD):

"Blessed is he who weeps before God, in repentance for his transgression, whom nobody knows about his sin other than God."

In Islamic terms, a person should repent with all sincerity, plead only the forgiveness of God, resolve never again to commit this transgression and make every effort to repair any damage caused by his action.

"Your lord knows what their chests hide and what they reveal." (The Qur'an, 28:69)

"...and there does not lie concealed from your lord the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heaven, nor any thing less than that nor greater, but it is in a clear book" (The Qur'an, 10:61)

The faithful should thus procure forgiveness and correct their actions before their time on this earth has expired. This world is the plane for man's actions, and the lifetime granted him is sufficient for achieving right conduct and salvation.

"But [acceptance of] repentance is not for those who go on committing misdeeds: when death approaches any of them, he says, 'I repent now.' Nor is it for those who die while they are faithless" (The Qur'an, 4:18)

If one recognizes his shortcomings, and forgiveness is adequately interpreted by the transgressor, this action in itself has a positive influence and serves to diminish the

rebelliousness of his soul, encourage right conduct, and fortify his best intentions toward virtue and wisdom.

In the words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBD):

“Verily the angels spread their wings over the seeker of knowledge and seek forgiveness on his behalf.”

SECTION II

THE PROPHETS (P) AND DIVINE JUSTICE

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THE PROPHETS (P) AND DIVINE JUSTICE

“Whosoever is guided is only guided for his it-self, and whosoever goes astray it is only against it. No soul shall bear another's burden. Nor do we punish until we have sent a messenger.” (The Qur'an, 17:15)

God exists. He has created the world and everything in it. He is Unique and He is One Alone. He is Prudent, Wise, and is aware of all that occurs and takes place in this world of his creation. He is Omnipotent. His essence is Just. In God's Justice all creatures, though they are inherently endowed with different aptitudes, are considered worthy. God has granted grace to all His creatures relative to their aptitudes and abilities. God has denied grace to no creature regardless of its capacity and possibilities.

God is Just, He loves Justice, and He is Just in his Conduct as in all things. Divine Justice may be observed in all things.

This Justice implies His presence and His message, to all of humanity, as a guide leading to wellbeing and joy: the Prophecy and the Revelation of the Divine Word. God has sent guides and leaders who serve as an example and a model, to lead directly to goodness and away from ignorance and doubt. It is not possible to conceive of concepts such as punishment or reward (or Paradise or Hell) without an awareness of the worthiness which merits the former or the error that leads to the latter.

Thus Islam provides for the mission of the Prophets (P) within the concept of Divine Justice.

"Whosoever is guided is only guided for his own self, and whosoever goes astray it is only against it. No soul shall bear another's burden. Nor do we punish until we have sent a messenger." (The Qur'an, 17:15)

All the Prophets, beginning with Adam (P), up to and including Muhammad (PBD) were sent with the same message from God.

They were especially assigned three duties:

1. Spread the message of God's Oneness and His Good Will toward Humanity, His Justice and the Resurrection.
2. Command goodness and forbid evil, as well as provide the teachings which emphasize the difference between the two.
3. Invite all others to follow the path of Righteousness in order to obtain Divine Mercy.

"The duty of the messenger is only the delivery (of the message). God knows what you reveal and what you hide." (The Qur'an, 5:99)

"Our messenger comes unto you to make things plain unto you after an interval (of cessation) of the messengers, lest ye should say: there came not unto us a messenger of cheer nor any warner. Now hath a messenger of cheer and a warner come unto you. God is able to do all things." (The Qur'an, 5:19)

Among the Prophets (P) are those who have been assigned responsibilities of leadership, among them David (P), Salomon (P) and Muhammad (P).

Nothing forces us to choose one path or the other. We are invited by the word of God as expressed by the Prophets (P), and we are invited by Satan to follow a path, one way or the other. After God's appeal for goodness, His warnings against evil and his call to the right path, God establishes "the Final Day of Judgement" on which all actions will be judged.

"And your lord never destroyed the towns until he raised in their metropolis a messenger, reciting to them our communications, and we never destroyed the towns except when their people were unjust." (The Qur'an, 28:59)

"God does not wrong mankind a thing, but they wrong themselves." (The Qur'an, 10:44)

"On the day of resurrection we shall set up just scales, so that no soul shall in the least be wronged, even though it is the weight of a grain of mustard seed we will bring it we suffice as reckoners." (The Qur'an, 21:47)

ISLAM CONFIRMS THE REVELATIONS PRIOR TO THE QUR'AN

"People of the book! Our messenger (Muhammad) has come to clarify to you much of what you have hidden of the book, and to forgive you much. A light has come to you from God and a clear book, with which God guides those who seek his pleasure to the paths of peace. By his permission he takes them out from darkness to the light, and guides them to a straight path." (The Qur'an, 5:15, 16)

For Muslims, God's revelations, prior to the existence of the Qur'an, are considered of great value. They are nonetheless subject to controversy, since their content, intentionally or otherwise, is dubious, more than anything else as a result of the time elapsed between their utterance and their documentation. As we are well aware, both the Torah and the Bible were written several centuries after the demise of the Messengers, to whom the Revelations were entrusted by God.

The Revelation contained in the Qur'an is thus both the confirmation and the complement, of the Revelations as originally revealed.

"And we have revealed to you the book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what God has revealed, and do not follow their low desires (to turn away) from the truth that has come to you; for every one of you did we appoint a law and a way, and if God had pleased he would have made you (all) a single people, but that he might try you in what he gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to God is your return, of all (of you), so he will let you know that in which you differed" (The Qur'an, 5:48)

Muslims do not believe any contradiction exists in any of the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but the avatars of the time have diluted or annexed other Sacred Texts, therefore preventing our access to the original intentions of the Word. Muslims nevertheless fully respect Jews and Christians, and interpret the teachings which we share as having in common a joint labor, directed toward

peace, justice, and the struggle against corruption as conceived in the degradation of moral values.

ADAM AND EVE ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN

"To Adam we said: 'dwell with your wife in paradise and both eat of it as much as you wish and wherever you will. But neither of you should come close to this tree or else you shall both become transgressors.'" (The Qur'an, 2:35)

Adam (P) was created in order to represent God on Earth, as the first among his progeny. Adam was not created with the intention of his inhabiting Paradise, although it would have been better if he had given no cause for his expulsion. He might have remained there, in honor and high regard, and both he and his wife might have enjoyed the blessings and the gifts of the Angels.

"We said, 'O Adam! This is indeed an enemy of yours and your mate's. So do not let him expel you from paradise'" (The Qur'an, 20:117)

When Adam and Eve took fruit from the forbidden tree, God told them they had distanced themselves from him, and with this they spent a time without his protection, until such time as God accepted their repentance. According to Islamic tradition, Adam and Eve had twenty sons and twenty daughters during their lifetime.

The Qur'an establishes an analogy regarding the creation of the Prophet Jesus (P) and assures us of the parallel with the

creation of Adam, with this rejecting the divine conception of Jesus (P). Therefore, although Adam and Eve had no father or mother, they were nonetheless human. By the same reasoning, the Prophet Jesus (P) was born without a human father, by Divine Miracle, and God said to him: *“Be” and he WAS.* (The Qur’an, 3:59)

And the Prophet Muhammad (PBD) said:

“God will say to Adam on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Stand at the scale and see what is shown to you from their works. He whose good deeds outweigh his bad deeds even by one atom’s worth, he will go to Heaven, so that you may know that I do not admit any of them to Hell, unless they do wrong.’”

THE PROPHETS (P) IN ISLAM

“We have sent you with the truth, a bearer of glad tidings and warning, for there is no nation, that has not had a warner pass away in it. If they belie you, those before them also belied. Their messengers came to them with clear signs; the psalms, and the illuminating book.” (The Qur’an, 35:24- 25)

There is no figure in human history to surpass, or even to equal, the model of the Prophets (P). Their exemplary lives, their right conduct and their teachings have served as a shining example, without blemish, through the long centuries, thus illuminating succeeding generations in every period of history.

Through the pages of the Qur'an, and the teachings we received as a legacy from the Prophet Muhammad (PBD), we have testimony of the lives of the Prophets prior to Islam, and their teachings serve as a model for Mankind, in every period of history, without discrimination.

According to the Shi'ite School of Islam, there were one hundred and twenty-four thousand Prophets. Among them, five Prophets are considered to be in possession of the Shari'at (Divine Law), which contain the foundations for the pillars of the Prophecy. The principal Prophets, and founders of religious law, were Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (PBD).

DUTIES OF HUMANITY TOWARD THE PROPHETS

Humanity is indebted to God for His having sent the Prophets, as a guide to discernment. This debt implies the duty to hear the message of the Prophets and proceed accordingly, in order to model a life based on Divine Guidance, as God has wished.

The Old Testament coincides in defining this responsibility:

*"I will give them a prophet from among themselves, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will say to them whatever I give him orders to say. **And whoever does not give ear to my words which he will say in my name, will be responsible to me.**"* (The Bible, Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

"And he said, If with all your heart you will give attention to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his

eyes, giving ear to his orders and keeping his laws, I will not put on you any of the diseases which I put on the Egyptians: for I am the Lord your life-giver.” (The Bible, Exodus 15:26)

*“So then, (...) Who is to be kept in heaven till the time when all things are put right, of which God has given word by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been from the earliest times. For Moses said, The Lord will give you a prophet from among your people, like me; you will give ear to everything which he will say to you. **And every soul who does not give attention to that Prophet, will be cut off from among the people.**” (The Bible, Acts 3:19-23)*

And God said in The Qur'an:

“And when God took the covenant of the prophets: 'that I have given you of the book and wisdom. then there shall come to you a messenger (Muhammad) confirming what is with you, you shall believe in him and you shall support him to be victorious, do you agree and take my load on this? 'They answered: 'we do agree. 'God said: 'then bear witness, and i will be with you among the witnesses. 'Whosoever turns back after that, they are the transgressors. Are they seeking a religion other than that of God?, and to him whosoever is in the heavens and the earth has submitted willingly and unwillingly. To him they shall be returned? say: 'we believe in God and in what is sent down to us and in that which was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to (prophets) Moses and Jesus, and the prophets from their lord. We do not differentiate between any of them. To him we are submitters (Muslims). He who chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be

accepted from him, and in the everlasting life he will be among the losers. How shall God guide a people who lapse into disbelief after they believed and bore witness that the messenger is true, and after receiving clear proofs! God does not guide the harm doers. Those, their recompense shall be the curse of God, the angels, and all the people there they shall live forever. Their punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be given respite. Except those who afterwards repent and mend their ways, God is forgiving and the most merciful. Indeed those who disbelieve after they have believed and increase in disbelief, their repentance shall not be accepted. These are those who are astray." (The Qur'an, 3:81- 90)

"We have inspired you, as we inspired Noah and the prophets after him. And we inspired Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, the Patriarchs, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon. And we gave David the Psalms. Messengers we have told you about, and messengers we never told you about. And God spoke to Moses directly. Messengers as bearers of good news and warners, so that the people will have no excuse when they face God, after all these messengers have come to them." [The Qur'an, 4:163-165]

ABRAHAM (P), PROPHET OF ISLAM

"Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Rather he was a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists. Indeed the nearest of all people to Abraham are those who follow him."

(The Qur'an, 3:67- 68)

Abraham, as an emblematic figure, is the key to the common bond among millions of human beings. Abraham, the man, was capable of listening, believing and trusting God to the extent of offering his son as God commanded on the mountain. He is not only a father to his followers, but he is also a primary figure in all three of the world's most important monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. *Sura* number fourteen in the Sacred Qur'an is specifically titled *Abraham*.

In the sacred city of Mecca in Arabia, during the annual pilgrimage of piety and prayer, the faithful arrive from all over the world in order to walk around the *Kaa'ba*, the sanctuary ordered by God to be built by Abraham and his son Ishmael.

Abraham personifies the need and the desire of human beings for contact with God. Abraham is worshipped equally by Jews, Christians and Muslims, whose faithful share beliefs common to all three religions. The figure of the great Patriarch, in his role as father, has served to reconcile many aspects of the three great religions.

"Say, 'God has spoken the truth; so follow the creed of Abraham, and he was not one of the polytheists." (The Qur'an, 3:95)

MOSES (P), PROPHET OF ISLAM

"To Moses we gave the book and after him we sent other messengers." (The Qur'an, 2:87)

Interpreters of the Bible define the word *Musa* or Moses as a term derived from the Coptic language, prevalent in ancient Egypt. The name consists in two parts, "Mu", which means "water", and "sa" which means "tree". This personage was thus described as *Moses* since the basket that bore him was found next to a tree growing in the waters by the side of the river. His lineage, extends to Prophet Jacob (Ia'qûb).

Moses was raised in the Pharaoh's palace, and was treated with deference and respect until he grew to adolescence, and began debating the Oneness of God. Pharaoh initially gave no importance to Moses' words, until one day, infuriated, he threatened him with death. Moses fled the palace and found refuge in another city.

It was there that God spoke to him of his prophetic mission, and assured him of the aid and support of his brother Aaron, in order to free the "Children of Israel" from Egyptian slavery, and so God instructed Moses to reclaim the Tablets of the Law, and to bring them down from Mount Sinai. Moses (P) occupies an important position in Islam, and is considered among the most significant of God's Prophets.

The Qur'an relates many of Moses' (P) most noteworthy miracles. He struck a stone with his rod and water sprang forth. He transformed the rod into a serpent. He opened the waters of the Red Sea in order to provide a path for the people of Israel to escape the pursuit of the Pharaoh's army. As it happens, among holy books only the Qur'an speaks of Pharaoh's body returned to earth after drowning in the sea. Pharaoh's mummy was in fact discovered by modern

archaeology and proven to have died by drowning. Muhammad (PBD) learned of all this more than thirteen hundreds years *before* the mummy was excavated and brought to light. There was no prior historical record. We will deal with this subject separately. According to the Qur'an:

"We brought the children of Israel through the sea, and pharaoh and his legions pursued them arrogantly and frantically. But as he was drowning he cried out: '(now) I believe that there is no god except Him in whom the children of Israel believe. I am of those that surrender. '(God said): 'now (you believe)! But before this you rebelled and were of the corrupt. We shall deliver you (Ramses II) with your body this day, so that you may be a sign to those after you. Indeed many people pay no heed to our signs!" (The Qur'an, 10:90-92)

SECTION III

MARY AND JESUS (P) IN ISLAM

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MARY AND JESUS (P) IN ISLAM

Mary and Jesus (P) occupy an important place in the Qur'an.

One chapter of the Holy Qur'an is titled *Mary* and another is called "The Table" (*Al Maede*), which speaks of the meal known to the Apostles as "The Last Supper", sent by God from Heaven. There is also another chapter called *Ale-omran*, "Family of Omran", which refers to Miriam's lineage.

The name of "Jesus", or *Isa*, is mentioned forty-five times in the Qur'an, he is referred to eleven times as "The Messiah" (*Masih*), which amounts to thirteen chapters of the Qur'an, that is, more than ten percent of all the chapters in the Holy Book. The Qur'an consists in total of one hundred and fourteen chapters.

The Gospel is mentioned twelve times in the Qur'an, confirming it as the Book of God, but according to Islam, the present-day version of the Gospel is not the original one.

THE VIRGIN MARY (P) IN ISLAM

"And when the angels said to Mary: 'God has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you above all women of the worlds.'" (The Qur'an, 3:42)

The Virgin Mary (P) is highly regarded in Islam, and occupies a position of admiration and respect, which correspond to her celestial attributes and exquisite qualities, as virgin and

celibate, pure and holy. The Holy Qur'an and Islamic tradition refer frequently to these qualities.

God held her in such high esteem as to send the Angel Gabriel, known as "Pure Spirit" or "Holy Ghost", to express His honor and regard, and to fulfill His design for the future of Mankind, as the angel imparted his news, on behalf of God Almighty, and so revealed God's intentions to her.

The Virgin Mary (P), by virtue of this Revelation, carried an enormous burden of responsibility, and therefore she is included among those chosen and guided by God, and God sent the Angel Gabriel to her, to bring her the message of God. The Qur'an in fact relates miracles performed on Mary's behalf, such as God sending her the fruits of Paradise for her sustenance.

Muslims believe wholeheartedly in the sanctity of the Virgin Mary (P), who never married. One of Islam's enduring and pervading characteristics is the homage paid to women, as it reaffirms their potential for perfection in their obedience and devotion to God, in their piety, chastity, and both inner and outer purity.

Every Muslim woman who emulates the essence of the Virgin Mary (P) is held in equal regard, as she dedicates her life to purity, chastity, devotion and compliance, while she covers herself in modesty.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS (P)

"When the angels said, 'O Mary, God gives you the good news of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, distinguished in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near [to God].'" (The Qur'an, 3:45)

In the Qur'an (chapter Mary) is written:

"And mention in the book, Mary, how she withdrew from her people to an eastern place and she took a veil apart from them; we sent to her our spirit (Gabriel) in the resemblance of a perfect human. And when she saw him) she said: 'I take refuge in the merciful from you! If you are fearful. 'I am the messenger of your lord, ' he replied, 'and has come to give you a pure boy. "How shall I bear a son, ' she answered, 'when I am not touched by a human and not unchaste? ' "Even so" he replied, "as such your lord has said: 'easy it is for me. And we shall make him a sign to mankind and a mercy from us. It is a matter decreed.' " (The Qur'an, 19:16-21)

FROM HIS BIRTH JESUS (P) SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE

"When the angels said, Oh Mary, God gives you the good news of a Word from Him, whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary. Distinguished in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (to God). He will speak to people in the Cradle and in adulthood, and will be one of the righteous." (The Qur'an, 3:45, 46)

The Qur'an describes Mary's concern and astonishment at the moment of giving birth to Jesus (P).

"How can I bear a son, when no man has touched me, and I am not an unchaste woman?" The angel replied, "So shall it be. Your Lord says, 'This is an easy thing for me to do, and we will do so in order to make that boy a Sign for the people and a blessing from Us, and this must happen.'" Accordingly, Mary conceived the child, and with it she went away to a distant place. Then the throes of childbirth urged her to take shelter under a date palm. There she began to cry, "Oh! Would that I had died before this and sunk into oblivion." At this the angel at the foot of her bed consoled her, saying, "Grieve not at all, for your Lord has set a spring under you; as for your food, shake the trunk of this tree and fresh, ripe dates will fall down for you; so eat and drink and refresh your eyes; and if you see a man, say to him, 'As I have vowed to observe the fast (of silence) for the sake of the Merciful, I will not speak to anyone today' Then she brought the child to her people" "" (The Qur'an, 19:20-27)

After this no one saw Mary again in the Sanctuary. A number of people went in search of her, until Zacharias found her with her son. The people of Israel asked her:

"Then carrying him she brought him to her people. They said, 'O Mary, you have certainly come up with an odd thing! O sister of Aaron [s lineage]! Your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother unchaste.' Thereat she pointed to him. They said, 'How can we speak to one who is yet a baby in the cradle?' He said, 'Indeed I am a servant of God! He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. He

has made me blessed, wherever I may be, and He has enjoined me to [maintain] the prayer and to [pay] the zakt as long as I live, and to be good to my mother, and He has not made me self-willed and wretched. Peace is to me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised alive'."

(The Qur'an, 19:27-33)

And continued:

"That is Jesus, son of Mary, a Word of the real concerning whom they are in doubt. It is not for God to take a son. Immaculate is He! When He decides on a matter, He just says to it, 'Be!' and it is. 'Indeed God is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is a straight path.' *(The Qur'an, 19:34-*

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JESUS (P), PROPHET OF ISLAM

"People of the book, do not exaggerate your religion. Do not say about God except the truth. Indeed, the messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only a messenger (and prophet) of God, and his word (be) which he gave to Mary, and a (created) spirit by him. So believe in God and his messengers and do not say: 'trinity. 'Refrain, it is better for you. God is only one god. Exaltations to him that he should have son! To him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth, it is sufficient that God is the guardian. The messiah would not despise being a worshiper of God" *(The Qur'an, 4:171-172)*

As far as Muslims are concerned, Jesus (P) is one of God's greatest prophets, in effect, the Messiah promised the people of Israel. But he is not "the son of God" nor is he "God

Incarnate” or “God the Son”, one third of a Trinity. In fact, in the Prophecy of the Old Testament to which Christians refer, there is reference to the promise of “a Prophet”, but never “the Son of God” in any form.

“I will give them a prophet from among themselves, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will say to them whatever I give him orders to say. And whoever does not give ear to my words which he will say in my name, will be responsible to me.” (The Bible, Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

The new Bible Testament affirms that Jesus was, in effect, the Prophet promised in these verses. Thus God speaks of a Prophet and not of “his son”.

“So then, (...) Who is to be kept in heaven till the time when all things are put right, of which God has given word by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been from the earliest times. For Moses said, The Lord will give you a prophet from among your people, like me; you will give ear to everything which he will say to you. And every soul who does not give attention to that Prophet, will be cut off from among the people.” (The Bible, Acts 3:19-23)

Muslims therefore reject absolutely the notion of a trinity or the divinity of Jesus (P).

“The unbelievers are those who say: 'God is the messiah, the son of Mary. ' but the messiah said: 'children of Israel, worship God, my lord and your lord.' he who associates anything with God, God has indeed forbidden paradise to him, and his abode shall be in the fire. The harm doers shall

have no helpers. Indeed those who say: 'God is the third of the trinity' became unbelievers. There is but one god. if they do not desist in what they say, a painful punishment will afflict those of them that disbelieve. Will they not turn to God in repentance and ask his forgiveness? He is forgiving, merciful. The messiah, the son of Mary, was not except a messenger, other messengers had gone before him. His mother was in the state of sincerity, they both ate food. See how we make plain to them our signs. Then, see how perverted they are." (The Qur'an, 5:72-75)

Jesus (P) was a human being, just as all the other Prophets. He was born of a virgin, with no father, thus constituting a Divine Miracle.

And so as God created Adam (P), without a father or mother, He created Jesus (P) without the intervention of fecundation and this is included among the miraculous signs to be interpreted by the people of Israel as verification of the awaited Messiah, according to the Law of Moses (P).

Indeed the case of Jesus with God like the case of Adam: He created him from dust, and then said to him, 'Be,' and he was. This is the truth from your Lord, so do not be among the skeptics. (The Qur'an, 3:59-60)

"Such was (prophet) Jesus, the son of Mary, a saying of truth, concerning what they doubt. it is not for God to take a son! Exaltations to him! When he decrees a thing he only says: 'be, ' and it is. Indeed, God is my lord and your lord therefore worships him. That is the straight path." (The Qur'an,

Independently of his divinity, or lack of it, Jesus (P) had an undeniable and understandably important impact as one of the leading figures in history, Mankind's guide sent expressly by God.

IN THE CHRISTIAN GOSPELS JESUS (P) REFERS TO HIMSELF AS A PROPHET

Jesus (P) refers to himself as a Prophet and "the son of Man" in various texts among the Christian gospels. For example, he is never described as *deified*.

"And he said to them, Without doubt you will say to me, let the medical man make himself well: the things which to our knowledge were done at Capernaum, do them here in your country. And he said to them, truly I say to you, No prophet is honored in his country." (The Bible, Luke 4:23-24 and its correlations:

Matthew 13:57, Mark 6:4 and John 4:43-44, leaving no doubt of consensus)

"And he said, Go and say to that fox, I send out evil spirits and do works of mercy today and tomorrow, and on the third day my work will be complete. But I have to go on my way today and tomorrow and the third day, for it is not right for a prophet to come to his death outside Jerusalem." (The Bible, Luke

13:32-33)

In this same reference, Jesus (P) alludes to his own death—seen by Christians as described above, a discrepancy with the Muslim view—replying with irony that as many Prophets have died in Jerusalem, it behooves him to follow their

example. In this, as in other references, he is called “Prophet”, not “son of God”.

By the same token, Christian gospels describe a number of his contemporaries, followers of Jesus (P) or people who have witnessed his miracles, who equally consider him a Prophet, not a “son of God”.

“And when he came into Jerusalem, all the town was moved, saying, Who is this? And the people said, This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee (...)And when his stories came to the ears of the chief priests and the Pharisees, they saw that he was talking of them. And though they had a desire to take him, they were in fear of the people, because in their eyes he was a prophet.” (The Bible, Matthew 21:10-11, 45-46)

“Then stopping, and looking sadly at him, one of them, named Cleopas, said to him, Are you the only man living in Jerusalem who has not had news of the things which have taken place there at this time? And he said to them, what things? And they said, The things to do with Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, great in his acts and his words, before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers gave him up to be put to death on the CROSS.” (The Bible, Luke 24:18-20)

It is therefore illogical to accept the divinity of Jesus (P), or his “redemption” by crucifixion as the “Son of God”, even by consulting Christian sources. The very Gospels themselves tend to ambiguity regarding the figure of Jesus, since depending on whichever reference one has at hand, Jesus (P) might equally be considered the “Son of God”, the Messiah,

the awaited prophet, the return of the prophet Jeremiah, the return of the prophet Elijah, or John the Baptist resurrected, extending by inference to a charlatan, a liar or a blasphemer...divergent opinions concurrently emitted. Muslims believe that this confusion seriously undermines the credibility of the figure of Jesus (P), therefore the Qur'an has a more positive approach:

"People of the book, do not exaggerate your religion. Do not say about God except the truth. Indeed, the messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only a messenger (and prophet) of God, and his word (be) which he gave to Mary, and a (created) spirit by him. So believe in God and his messengers and do not say: 'trinity.' Refrain, it is better for you. God is only one god. Exaltations to him that he should have son! To him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth, it is sufficient that God is the guardian." (The Qur'an, 4:171)

According to the Old Testament (God speaking to Moses):

"I will give them a prophet from among themselves, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will say to them whatever I give him orders to say. And whoever does not give ear to my words which he will say in my name, will be responsible to me." (The Bible, Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

The new Bible Testament affirms that Jesus was, in effect, the Prophet promised in these verses.

"So then, (...) Who is to be kept in heaven till the time when all things are put right, of which God has given word by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been from the earliest

times. For Moses said, The Lord will give you a prophet from among your people, like me; you will give ear to everything which he will say to you. And every soul who does not give attention to that Prophet, will be cut off from among the people." (The Bible, Acts 3:19-23)

Now the question is: Would Jesus (P) be happy to be consider the son of God if he is a prophet!?

The prophet Muhammad (PBD) had this to say:

"Do not elevate me above my rightful position, for verily God has made me a servant before He made me a prophet."

THE TRINITY IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It is essential that the reader, of any faith, take into account the beginnings of Islam in the seventh century, in the domains of the Byzantine Empire, which had presented an antecedent interpreted by many as "blasphemous". The first Ecumenical Council (derived from the Greek *oikoumenikos*, this is, "worldwide") of the Christian Church, at Nicaea (now Iznik, in Turkey), called by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 325 A.D., was an attempt to consolidate the various sects and tangents of the Christian Church, including Manicheists, Nestorians and others, and with this managed to establish a precedent for subsequent Synods of Bishops, to create canons of doctrinal orthodoxy. This resulted in the first uniform Christian doctrine, which came to be described as the "Creed of Nicaea" The council did not create the doctrine of the deity

of Jesus as is sometimes claimed but it did settle to some degree the debate within the early Christian communities regarding the divinity of a messenger from the One God. By this time Jesus had become known as "The Christ", or "the Enlightened One", in the same fashion as the Buddha ("Enlightened"), Zoroaster (as the emissary of Ahura Mazda, a god of light), among other examples of the Creator or God Almighty interpreted as "light", "clarity of action and thought", and "enlightenment", therefore everywhere at once but nowhere to be seen, with this establishing the need for a tangible emblem or image to translate His magnificence. The idea of Christ as a messenger from the One God ("The Father") had long existed in various parts of the Roman Empire. The divinity of Christ had also been widely endorsed by the Christian community in Rome when it was still a city consecrated to Jupiter, Saturn and Bacchus. The Nicaean Council, with this, affirmed and defined what it believed to be the teachings of the Apostles regarding the identity of "Jesus Christ", as the one true God in deity with the Father. In this prevailing political and theological maelstrom another Prophet emerged, in Muhammad (PBD), with a new approach to the Oneness of a Creator God, and this was confirmed by the Holy Qur'an which defined him as the messenger of a unique God, a God of Oneness, stating as the first "pillar" of the new faith, that "There is no God but God", or "Only God is God", in effect disclaiming the Trinity. Islam has been greatly misunderstood throughout the centuries because this fundamental principal, in no way anti-Christian as such, has not been interpreted in its historical context.]

JESUS' REGARD FOR MARY

According to Islam Jesus always held Mary in the highest regard and showed her never-failing respect.

According to the Qur'an, when Jesus was still a baby, he began to speak to the people of God's miracle, and said thus;

"I am a servant of God: He has given me the Book and He has appointed me a Prophet... He has made me dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me oppressive and hard-hearted. (The Qur'an, 19:30-33)

"'O John!' [We said,] 'Hold on with power to the Book!' And we gave him judgment while still a child, and a compassion and purity from us. He was Godwary, and good to his parents, and was not self-willed or disobedient." (The Qur'an, 19:12-14)

Islam maintains that the verses of the Bible quoting Jesus as refusing to receive his mother are a distortion and are completely false:

The Bible says:

"While he was still talking to the people, his mother and his brothers came, desiring to have talk with him. And one said to him, See, your mother and your brothers are outside, desiring to have a talk with you. But he in answer said to him who gave the news, who is my mother and who are my brothers? And he put out his hand to his disciples and said, See, my mother and my brothers!" (The Bible, Matthew 12:46-50)

The Qur'an says:

"(Remember) when we made a covenant with the children of Israel, you shall worship none except God. Show kindness to your parents, to kinsmen, to the orphans, and to the needy, and speak of goodness to people. Establish your prayers and pay the obligatory charity. But, except for a few, you all turned your backs and gave no heed." (The Qur'an, 2:83)

"And we charged the human concerning his parents, for his mother bore him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning was in two years. Be thankful to me and to your parents, to me is the arrival." (The Qur'an, 31:14)

THE HUMILITY OF JESUS (P)

Islamic tradition indicates that Jesus (P) actually said:

"My assistants are my hands; my feet are my transport; my bed, the earth; my pillow, the stone. In winter I take refuge in the heat of the earth, and my bedside lamp is the light of the moon, my stew is hunger, and my night shelter, the fear of God. My dress is made of wool (gross), and my fruit and vegetables are plants that emerge from the earth at night I sleep, while not taking anything with me, and in the morning lift my head from the ground, and I have not anything anyway on earth there is no one more rich than me."

JESUS' (P) MIRACLES

"when God said: '(Prophet) Jesus, son of Mary, remember the favor upon you and on your mother; how I strengthened you with the holy spirit (Gabriel), to speak to people in your cradle and of age (when he descends and dies); how I taught you the book and wisdom, the torah and the gospel; and how, by my permission, you fashioned from clay the likeness of a bird, and breathed into it so that, by my permission, it became a living bird. How, by my permission, you healed the blind man and the leper, and by my permission you brought the dead forth; and how I protected you from the children of Israel when you brought them clear signs; whereupon the unbelievers among them said: "this is nothing but plain magic". (The Qur'an, 5:110)

The Qur'an and Islamic tradition recognize more of Jesus' (P) miracles than are claimed by any other Holy Scripture. Islamic tradition has narrated these in precise detail, as follows:

Islam's messenger (PBD) spoke thus: "The people of Jesus (P) and his apostles have asked that food be brought from Heaven. God then sent a Revelation to his messenger, acknowledging that it would be so:

"When I revealed to the disciples to believe in me and in my messenger they replied: "we believe, bear witness that we submit. When the disciples said: 'o (prophet) Jesus, son of Mary, can your lord send down to us a table from heaven? 'He replied: 'have fear of God, if you are believers. 'we wish to eat of it, ' they said, 'so that we can satisfy our hearts and

know that what you said to us is true, and that we become witnesses to it. 'God, our lord, ' said (prophet) Jesus, the son of Mary, 'send down upon us a table out of heaven, that shall be a festival for us the first and the last of us and a sign from you. and provide for us; you are the best of providers. 'God replied: 'I am sending it to you. But whoever of you disbelieves thereafter I shall punish him with a punishment that I do not punish anyone from the worlds. '” (The Qur'an, 5:111-115)

According to Islamic tradition: “Jesus and the Apostles received the meal from Heaven; nine different dishes and nine different loaves of bread, supported by golden chains.”

The story continues: “Jesus (P) had a close friend, who died. He therefore presented himself, together with his friend’s mother, at the man’s grave, and with God’s permission restored him to life. He pleaded with God and his prayers were answered, and his friend inhabited the Earth during twenty more years.”

And there is more: “Jesus, son of Mary (P), traveled together with a man who shared his trust. When they reached the sea, Jesus (P) invoked the name of God and walked across the water.”

REGARDING THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS (P)

“And for their saying, 'we killed the messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger (and prophet) of God. 'they did not

kill him, nor did they crucify him, but to them, he (the crucified) had been given the look (of prophet Jesus). Those who differ concerning him (Prophet Jesus) are surely in doubt regarding him, they have no knowledge of him, except the following of supposition, and (it is) a certainty they did not kill him. Rather, God raised him up to him. God is almighty, the wise." (The Qur'an, 4:157-158)

Having confirmed, as established by Islam, that "the original sin", as such, does not exist, the death and resurrection of Jesus (P), by the same token, may no longer be considered as redemption, and instead become one more sign of his veracity, one more proof of his authenticity, just as his virgin birth and other portents and miracles bear witness. Yet the manner of his death in no way alters his mission as a Prophet.

According to Christian tradition, Jesus (P) predicted his treason by Judas Iscariot, and told Peter, "He will deny me three times before the cock crows". He also assured him that he, Jesus, would be crucified as a sign of redemption for all of Humanity, and he would reappear, resurrected, after three days' time, in order to ascend to Heaven as proof of this redemption.

If Jesus was aware of all that would transpire, and accepted his fate as the Will of God (independently of the deified figure that would later be displayed), how, then, is it possible, to conceive of his outburst during his agony, as he called out, "My God, why have you abandoned me?" This is just one example that comes to mind as we examine the testimony put forth by Christians.

According to Islam, Jesus never had reason to question God, or to feel he had been abandoned, at any time during his mission as a Prophet.

For Muslims, Jesus (P) was not put on earth to die on the cross. Jesus (P) was a Prophet.

"No bearer shall bear another's burden, and should one heavily burdened call (another) to carry it, nothing of it will be carried, even if he were a near relative. You can only warn those who fear their Lord in secret, and maintain the prayer. Whoever purifies himself, purifies only for his own sake, and to God is the return" (The Qur'an, 35:18)

He was neither "God incarnate" nor "the son of God". As a Prophet his mission consisted in the transmission of a message, therefore the manner of his death in no way altered his purpose. He might just as well have died battling his enemies, of disease or old age.

"People of the book, do not exaggerate your religion. Do not say about God except the truth. Indeed, the messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only a messenger (and prophet) of God, and his word (be) which he gave to Mary, and a (created) spirit by him. So believe in God and his messengers and do not say: 'trinity. 'Refrain, it is better for you. God is only one god. Exaltations to him that he should have son! To him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth, it is sufficient that God is the guardian" (The Qur'an, 4:171)

According to the Old Testament (God speaking to Moses):

"I will give them a prophet from among themselves, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will say to them whatever I give him orders to say. And whoever does not give ear to my words which he will say in my name, will be responsible to me." (The Bible, Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

The new Bible Testament affirms that Jesus (P) was, in effect, the Prophet promised in these verses. Thus God speaks of a Prophet and not of "his son". This statement is confirmed in Peter's address to the people of Jerusalem from the gates of the Temple of Salomon, as documented by Luke in the (reference)

"So then, (...) Who is to be kept in heaven till the time when all things are put right, of which God has given word by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been from the earliest times. For Moses said, The Lord will give you a prophet from among your people, like me; you will give ear to everything which he will say to you. And every soul who does not give attention to that Prophet, will be cut off from among the people." (The Bible, Acts 3:19-23)

JEW, CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

Muslims not only believe in the Qur'an, the Revelation of God through the Prophet Muhammad (PBD), his messenger, but in prior revelations as well: the Torah of Moses, the psalms of David and the gospel of Jesus. But these are consolidated in the Qur'an, [a later and therefore ratified version] as Definitive Revelation, referred to as follows:

"That is the (holy) book, where there is no doubt. it is a guidance for the cautious (of evil and hell). Who believe in the unseen and establish the (daily) prayer; who spend out of what we have provided them. Who believe in that which has been sent down to you (Prophet Muhammad) and what has been sent down before you (to Prophets Jesus and Moses) and firmly believe in the everlasting life." (The Qur'an, 2:2-5)

"Say: 'we believe in God and in what is sent down to us and in that which was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to (prophets) Moses and Jesus, and the prophets from their lord. We do not differentiate between any of them. to him we are submitters (Muslims).'" (The Qur'an, 3:84)

"Say: 'people of the book, let us come to a common word between us and you that we will worship none except God, that we will associate none with him, and that none of us take others for lords besides God. ' if they turn away, say: 'bear witness that we are Muslims. '" (The Qur'an, 3:64)

This is the oldest known call contained in a Sacred Text expressing an inter-religious dialogue, an appeal to *common cause* as recourse against the imposition of worldly powers, therefore a call to join forces in the belief in the One and Only God Almighty.

Recently Hans Küng, an eminent Catholic theologian, in his book *Islam, History Present and Future*, stated: *"After the time of Jesus, real and legitimate Prophets appeared and it is only dogmatic prejudice which prevents Christians from recognizing Muhammad*

as such. Recognition would do much to encourage an understanding between Christians and Muslims."

CHRISTIANS IN THE QUR'AN

Amicable relations between Christians and Muslims are documented from the beginning of the existence of Islam, more than fourteen centuries ago:

"You will find that (...) the nearest in affection to the believers are those who say: 'we are Christians.' That is because amongst them there are priests and monks; and because they are not proud. When they listen to that which was sent down to the messenger, you will see their eyes fill with tears as they recognize its truth. They say: 'lord, we believe. Write us among the witnesses. Why should we not believe in God and in the truth that has come down to us? Why should we not hope for admission among the righteous? '" (The Qur'an,

5:82-84)

"Yet they are not all alike. There are among the people of the book an upstanding nation that recite the verses of God (the Qur'an) throughout the night and prostrate themselves, who believe in God and the last day, who order honor and forbid dishonor and race in good works. These are the righteous. Whatever good they do, for them it shall not be denied. God knows the cautious. As for those who disbelieve, neither their riches nor their children shall help them a thing from God. They are the people of the fire, and there they shall remain for ever. The wealth they spend in this worldly life is like a freezing wind that smites the harvest of a people who have wronged

themselves and destroys it. God has not wronged them, but they wronged themselves." (The Qur'an, 3:113-117)

ASCENT OF JESUS (P) TO HEAVEN

The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBD) said:

"The fiftieth year and one from the government of Ibn asij Ashkan, Jesus son of Mary (P) was chosen as Prophet. He went to Jerusalem and to the age of thirty-three year invites the children of Israel to worship the One God, until the Jews captured and assumed that he had been killed. However, God Almighty had closed any way for the Jews could refer to Jesus (P), and they believed they had killed the Prophet."

Islamic tradition Shi'ia the Imam Bâqir (P) fifth Imam shiita: said:

"The night agreed to the ascension into heaven of Jesus (P), the twelve apostles gathered in a house. Then Jesus (P) sitting in the spring that was inside the house, shook his head and said: "Soon I'll get rid of the Jews and ascend to heaven. Now who among you is willing to be crucified in my place for God to grant the same status as I have been given to me? "A young man from the present accepted this commitment. Jesus (P) informed him: "Very soon one of you will betray me, and after this event the Children of Israel will be divided into three. Two of these groups will be burned by the flames of Hell, and only the group that Simon will follow salvation." That night the Jews sought to Jesus (P), house by house and captured two of the apostles. One of them was the one who

agreed to be crucified instead of Jesus (P), and one of them was one that Jesus (P) had predicted his betrayal. "

And The Qur'an says:

"When God said: ' (Prophet) Jesus, I will take you to me and will raise you to me, and I will purify you from those who disbelieve. I will make your followers (who died before Prophet Muhammad) above those who disbelieve till the day of resurrection. Then, to me you shall all return, and I shall judge between you as to that you were at variance. (The Qur'an, 3:55)

PROPHETS AFTER JESUS (P)

"Be on the watch for false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inside they are cruel wolves. By their fruits you will get knowledge of them. Do men get grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree gives good fruit; but the bad tree gives evil fruit. It is not possible for a good tree to give bad fruit, and a bad tree will not give good fruit. Every tree which does not give good fruit is cut down and put in the fire. So by their fruits you will get knowledge of them." (The Bible, Matthew 7:158-20)

The verse cited, if one is to believe he made such a statement, implies that following Jesus (P) *other prophets* would make their appearance, and that it would be necessary to confirm their veracity and the worth of their words, that is "their fruit", since it would be to no one's advantage to herald the appearance of "false prophets" bearing "damaged fruit". On

the other hand, there would be much to gain from the veracity and worthiness of a true prophet.

If we read between the lines we can detect here the evil intent of many against the Prophet Muhammad (PBD), and against Islam as well. There were those who twisted his message and intent, and who altered his enlightened teachings and great wisdom, distorting them until they had “disguised them as rotted fruit”, in order to prevent Humanity from perceiving the truth in the “exquisite fruit” borne by the Prophet Muhammad (PBD), by means of the Qur’an as a Sacred Text, and Islam as a religion.

Once more we turn to Hans Küng, who said:

“After Jesus there would be true Prophets, and it is only due to dogmatic prejudice that Christians doubt Muhammad as such.”

SECTION IV

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBD)

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THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBD)

“O prophet, we have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings, and to bear warning”. (The Qur’an, 33:45)

“People of the book! After an interval during which there were no messengers, our messenger (Muhammad) has come to clarify (your religion) to you, lest you should say: ‘no bearer of glad tidings or a Warner has come to us. ‘Indeed, there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner. God has power over all things. (The Qur’an, 5:19)

“In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful your companion is neither astray, neither errs, nor does he speak out of desire. Indeed it is not except a revelation which is revealed, taught by one who is stern in power. of might, he (Gabriel) stood firm while he was in the highest horizon; then he drew near, and became close he was but two bows' length or even nearer, so (God) revealed to his worshiper (Gabriel) that which he revealed (to Prophet Muhammad).” (The Qur’an, 53:1-10)

The Prophet of Islam, *Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah* (PBD), popularly known to English-speaking people the world over as Mohammed, or Mohammad (PBD), is a descendent of the prophet Abraham and his first-born, the prophet Ishmael, father specifically of the ethnic Arabs among the Semitic peoples.

Muhammad ^(PBD) was born in Mecca, the city in which the prophet Adam built the first temple dedicated to God. This temple was destroyed during the deluge in the time of Noah, and rebuilt later on the same site by Abraham and Ishmael, according to tradition between day twelve and day seventeen in the month of *Rabbi' al-Awal*, although this has never been confirmed, in the year 570 of the Christian era.

Muhammad's ^(PBD) grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttalib, gave him a name "previously unknown to any human being". He called him "Muhammad" (or "Muhammad"), which means "most praised" or "most eulogized". When asked why he had chosen such an unusual name, he replied, "I want him to be praised in Heaven as well as on Earth", which would indicate that he had an inkling, perhaps a premonition, of the future that awaited his grandson.

'Abdul Muttalib was the keeper of the keys at the *Kaa'ba* and the patriarch of the clan of the Bani Hashim. His father, Hashim, was a prominent descendant of Fihir, also known as Quraysh, patriarch of all the tribes that inhabited Mecca.

Muslim historians who have devoted their research to the life of Muhammad ^(PBD) indicate that the future Prophet of God arrived in this world accompanied by dazzling and prodigious "signs", among the most noteworthy the description of the three hundred idols that enclosed the *Kaa'ba* falling to the ground.

It is told that Muhammad (PBD) was born already circumcised and without an umbilical cord, and that the moment he appeared he spoke:

“God is great, the grandest, He is the most deserving of praise and eulogy. Glory to this morning and afternoon.”

No organized, unified or established system of government existed among the Arabs of the time. Each tribe or clan looked to its own patriarch, or its elders, for authority. Order was maintained by means of the scrupulous application of the Law of Talion, respected among the tribes, thus nobody of any one tribe attacked the members of any other tribe, in order to avoid the demand of compensation for damages on the part of the victim's tribe.

Nevertheless, discord and disagreements from time to time occurred. Fights would break out, men would be killed, livestock would be stolen, and women would be captured and raped. For the majority of these men the birth of a girl was considered a misfortune, and often a father would take an infant daughter out into the desert and bury her alive.

Bedouins, cattlemen, merchants, warriors, most of them illiterate nomads, nevertheless adored poetry and story telling and they had prodigious memories. With this they preserved their heritage and described their experiences verbally. They turned “oral history” into an art form. At the time of Muhammad's (PBD) birth, barely four or five among the inhabitants of Mecca had acquired the skills for reading and writing, and in fact, Muhammad (PBD) himself never learned.

The majority of these people still worshipped stone idols, they drank alcohol, and lived in the middle of the desert far from the watchful eyes of Byzantium or Persia, the predominate empires of the time.

Muhammad (PBD), at approximately the age of forty, began to perceive the presence of the Angel Gabriel, who brought him Divine Revelations. None of his fellow-tribesmen, nor his neighbors or the clients of his trade, gave credence to his tales, which they discounted as just another story to be told around the campfire, despite the fact that Muhammad (PBD) was known for his honorability, his rectitude and veracity—he was even known as *Al-Amin*, “worthy of trust”—but despite their doubts he persisted, proclaiming in Mecca the Oneness of God, and begging his companions to abandon idolatry.

Muhammad (PBD), as we have said, was not a lettered man, he therefore had no way to prove that the Revelations had been delivered to him alone, or that he, or any other human being, had composed these profound, complex, and incredibly beautiful phrases, sublime in their magnificence and wisdom, which he called “Qur’an”, in Arabic “Qur’an”.

From the first moment of his prophetic mission, he encountered the resistance of the powerful leaders of Mecca. They tried to dissuade and then silence him. Initially they tried to tempt him with promises of power and wealth, and this was followed with mockery and indifference, eventually with boycott of his trade, physical aggression, and threats of death, until he was obliged to abandoned his native city and find refuge in the oasis of Yatrib, the birthplace of the family of

his mother's line. In time the name of this place gradually changed until it was known as *Medina*, "The Citadel [or 'fortress'] of the Prophet".

For twenty-three years—thirteen in Mecca and ten in Medina—he preached his message proclaiming equality before the law for all human beings, with no distinction between races or social position. He extolled the dignity of women, their right to study, to be entitled to gainful employment, to receive the rewards from their own wealth, to enter into marriage and also to have the right to divorce.

Arabian leaders tried in vain to silence him. He had endangered their power structure, their regimes based on the abuse of women and of those weaker than themselves, their use of slavery as opposed to remuneration for employment.

They pursued and slaughtered Muhammad's (PBD) followers, and threatened war when his position in Medina had found support and strength, but they were unable to silence his message of justice, equality and freedom, which spread through Arabia like a wildfire, and extended beyond the desert through the entire Near East, then the world.

The Prophet (PBD) died in the year 632 of the Christian era at the age of sixty-three, and according to many, without fear of exaggeration, he was the man who most influenced the course of history (see *Annex 1*). One and one-half billion followers on five continents vouch for his leadership and brilliance.

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBD) HAD THIS TO SAY

About knowledge

- *One hour of thinking is better than seventy years of prayer to God.*
- *Ink from the pen of the scholar is more valuable than the blood of the martyr.*
- *One should try to get more knowledge from the moment of birth until death comes.*
- *Honor your sons and give them educations in good shape, well, you will be the subject of forgiveness.*
- *Who has two same days (i.e., without progress), which is a really frustrated.*

[See the annex III]

About Justice

- *One hour of justice is better than seventy years of prayer to God.*
- *To defend the oppressed in the presence of a bloodthirsty tyrant is a sign of faith in God.*
- *The rights of the needy are the property of the wealthy.*
- *The people of the society in which there is a hungry are far from the Divine Mercy.*
- *Render the rights of the poor that God accept your prayers.*
- *Anyone who regains the right of an oppressed from the hand of an oppressor will be in Paradise in my same grade.*
- *Anyone who confesses a crime after having been frightened, his confession has no legal value.*

- *If my community becomes indifferent to the fact of ordering good and forbidding what is evil, it should know, it has been at war with God, High is.*
- *Whoever looks at a heinous act that has to be rejected with his hand if it's possible, otherwise it may well reject it with his tongue, and if so can not reject it, reject it with his heart.*
- *Two types of people will not be included in my intercession: the tyrannical and iniquitous ruler, and the heretical extremist in matters of religion, who has digressed from it and who is neither repentant nor willing to give up [his heresy].*
- *The tyrants and the arrogant people will be raised on the Day of Judgment in the form of tiny particles, which the rest of the people will trample underfoot – as a sign of their low esteem before God.*
- *There are two things that God punishes in this world: who do an oppression and aggression and second, to harm to the parents.*
- *Poverty is worse than killing.*
- *He who treats people in such a way that he never wrongs them, and speaks to them and never lies to them, and when he makes a promise to them he never breaks it, such a person is perfect in his valorous qualities, his justice is manifest, and it becomes obligatory to consider him as one's brother and prohibited to backbite him.*
- *Anyone who dies and leaves a good, it belongs to his heirs, and anyone who leaves a debt, it belongs to the government.*

About promises

- *“And those who fulfil their covenants when they pledge themselves.*
- *Muslims [make and] fulfil their promises according to what is permissible.*
- *Verily whoever is not true to an agreement, or breaks it, or promises beyond that which he is capable of, or omits something from it without good intention therein, then I will hold it against him on the Day of Resurrection.*
- *When they break a covenant, God allows their enemy to gain mastery over them.*
- *He who does not keep a promise has no religion.*

About women

- *Women are like flowers, not treat them with violence.*
- *The Paradise is under the feet of mothers.*
- *I swear to God who chose me as a Prophet to be affectionate with her mother for a night, is better than a year to fight the cause of God.*
- *When a child is born, is a godsend. When a girl is born is a sign of God's mercy for her family.*

[See the section V]

On the tongue

- *A conflict that causes the tongue is larger than the stroke of the sword.*
- *There is nothing that deserves to be imprisoned so long as the language.*

- *Leave the gossip is more beloved to God, imposing and majestic, than ten thousand meritorious inclinations in prayer.*

About generosity

- *Ask God and ask Him in abundance, for verily there is nothing too great for Him*
- *Verily your Lord is bashful and kind. He would be too ashamed for His servant to open his hands to Him [in supplication] and for Him to return them empty.*
- *The generous person is close to God, close to people and close to Paradise.*
- *Who comforts the grieving brother of a worldly life, God will comfort of one of the afflictions of the Day of Resurrection.*
- *The creatures are sustained by God, so that the creature most loved by God is the one that makes a profit to reach sustained by God, and to convey the joy to people of a house.*
- *When the charity comes from the hands of its owner (this) give five sentences: the first is: I did not exist and I realized, was small and you make me big, I was an enemy and you wanted me, you were watching me, and now I watch for you until the Day of Resurrection.*
- *Spend and Heal your patients, as alms away accidents and diseases, and increases your lives and good deeds.*

About intentions

- *Who orients towards the good way is like who does.*
- *When someone with good habits does something good it is accepted from him, and even if he makes a mistake, he is forgiven for it.*

- *The intention of the believer is better than his action, and the intention of the disbeliever is worse than his action, and every doer does according to his intention.*

About poverty

- *The poor are the friends of God.*
- *Poverty is worse than killing.*
- *Who humiliates poor for their poverty or admire a rich for their wealth, is at war with God.*
- *Whoever degrades a believer, male or female, or humiliates him because of his poverty or lack of ability, God, most High, will promulgate him on the Day of Resurrection and then disgrace him.*
- *He who wakes up in the morning unconcerned about the situations of fellow Muslims is not a Muslim.*

About other issues

- *Enjoinment of Visiting Each Other for the Pleasure of God*
- *He who goes to visit his brother in faith at his home, without any motive on his part, is recorded as having visited God, and God honours His guest by His own right.*
- *The Prophet (PBD) said, 'Shall I tell you who is the toughest and strongest from among you? The one who controls himself when he is angry.'*
- *Verily God, most High, loves for you to perfect a good deed when you perform it.*
- *A man who expects to be alive tomorrow is a man who expects to be alive forever.*
- *Verily every religion has a natural disposition and the natural disposition of Islam is modesty.*

- *Being amicable towards people is half of faith, and being gentle and kind to them is half of life.*
- *Breaking the branch of a tree is like breaking the wing of an angel.*
- *Address hygiene is a sign of faith in God.*
- *Who buys and sells, must refrain from five things, but not to sell or buy at all: usury, swear, hide the defect, praise (goods) to sell, and denigrate the purchase.*
- *Accept six things about me that I will accept you into Paradise: When you speak not lie, if you promise not withhold, if not betray confidence in you, get off your eyes (to the opposite sex to avoid falling into temptation), protect your parts privates, and hold your hands and tongues (from the forbidden).*
- *Take advantage of five things before they happen other five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your rest before your occupation, and your life before your death.*
- *Who commands the good way and forbid what execrable, is the representative of God on earth and (so is) the representative of His Messenger.*
- *My community will remain in a good state while (its members) to order the good, forbid the execrable and cooperate on the basis of benevolence and piety, and if not do so, shall be deprived of blessings.*
- *Honour your children and refine their manners, and your sins will be forgiven.*
- *Anger faith corrupts as well as vinegar corrupts honey.*

THE IMAM 'ALI (P) HAD THIS TO SAY

The first *Imam* or religious leader of the Shi'ites and legitimate successor in direct line of generation of the Prophet Muhammad (PBD), spoke thus:

- *He who accepts oppression is an accomplice of the oppressor!*
- *Whoever wants to be a leader should educate himself before educating others. Before preaching to others he should first practice himself. Whoever educates himself and improves his own morals is superior to the man who tries to teach and train others.*
- *Whoever comes to power must not gather around their loved ones and relatives, so they can not violate the rights of people and find opportunities for abuse.*
- *God has compelled the Islamic governor that his life and his family are on the same level of the lowest individual of the society.*
- *Society can not be happy without executing justice.*
- *If you overpower your enemy, then pardon him by way of thankfulness to Allah, for being able to subdue him.*
- *Poverty is the worst form of death.*
- *One, who acquires power cannot avoid favoritism.*
- *Oppression and tyranny are the worse companions for the Hereafter.*
- *One, who starts tyranny, will repent soon.*
- *One who comes into power often oppresses.*
- *Only he who has the power to punish can pardon.*
- *Inspect and control markets and prices is a necessary and corrupt inspectors should receive the strongest punishment.*

- *I shall extirpate from the mouths of the powerful the right of the poor and I shall strengthen the poor until they regain all their rights.*
- *The wise men of the city are responsible before God, both for the plight of the poor as the financial power and influence of the rich.*
- *In an Islamic government, there will be no injustice to a human being not only Muslim and no one shall be deprived and suffer shortages, although not a Muslim.*
- *The worst provision that a human being can send to his other life is to oppress others and violate the rights of others.*
- *Do not blame a man who delays in securing what are his just rights but blame lies on him who grasps the rights which do not belong to him.*
- *The application of penalties is beneficial to safeguard the purity of society. But if you repent is much better.*
- *Certainly the perfection of religion is in the seeking of knowledge and the fact act upon the same, is not it true that your obligation to seek knowledge is greater than that of seeking the wealth?*
- *A group worships God in the hope of His forgiveness, and this is the worship of traders, another group worships God for fear, and this is the worship of the slaves, a third group worships God to thank, and this is the worship of which are free.*
- *There's nothing that causes more to alter the grace of God and hasten His punishment perpetrating oppression, which by the way that God hears the call of the harassment and is on the lookout for the oppressors*
- *Blessings are for the man who humbles himself before Allah, whose sources of income are honest, whose intentions are always honorable, whose character is noble, whose habits are sober, who gives away in the cause and in the Name of Allah, the wealth*

which is lying surplus with him, who controls his tongue from vicious and useless talk, who abstains from oppression, who faithfully follows the traditions of the Holy Prophet and who keeps himself away from innovation in religion.

- *Son of Adam, if you have collected anything in excess of your actual need, you will act only as its trustee for someone else to use it.*
- *One who takes account of his shortcomings will always gain by it; one who is unmindful of them will always suffer. One, who is afraid of the Day of Judgment, is safe from the Wrath of Allah. One who takes lessons from the events of life, gets vision, one who acquires vision becomes wise and one who attains wisdom achieves knowledge.*
- *Silence will create respect and dignity; justice and fair play will bring more friends; benevolence and charity will enhance prestige and position; courtesy will draw benevolence; service of mankind will secure leadership and good words will overcome powerful enemies.*
- *If you want to pray to Allah for better means of subsistence, then first give something in charity I appreciate an old man's cautious opinion more than the valor of a young man.*
- *People often hate those things which they do not know or cannot understand.*
- *Your supremacy over others is in proportion to the extent of your knowledge and wisdom.*
- *Death is never very far.*
- *If you find that somebody is not grateful for all that you have done for him, then do not get disappointed because often you will find that someone else feels under your obligation though you*

have done nothing for him and thus your good deeds will be compensated, and Allah will reward you for your goodness.

- *A greedy man will always find himself in the shackles of humility.*
- *One who says unpleasant things about others, will himself quickly become a target of their scandal.*
- *A fool's mind is at the mercy of his tongue and a wise man's tongue is under the control of his mind.*
- *Contentment is the capital which will never diminish.*
- *If you are greeted then return the greetings more warmly. If you are favored, then repay the obligation manifold; but he who takes the initiative will always excel in merit.*
- *Do not feel ashamed if the amount of charity is small because to refuse the needy is an act of greater shame.*
- *If you cannot get things as much as you desire than be contented with what you have.*
- *A friend cannot be considered a friend unless he is tested on three occasions: in time of need, behind your back and after your death.*
- *He who practices moderation and frugality will never be threatened with poverty.*
- *Loving one another is half of wisdom.*
- *One, who adopts patience, will never be deprived of success though it may take a long time to reach him.*
- *You have been shown, if you only care to see; you have been advised if you care to take advantage of advice; you have been told if you care to listen to good counsels.*
- *One, who seeks advice, learns to realize his mistakes.*

WHAT IS THE QUR'AN?

"We have sent down to you the book making everything clear, as guidance, and mercy, and glad tidings..." (The Qur'an,

16:89)

The Holy Qur'an (in Arabic *Al-Qur'an* from the root *qara'a*, meaning "to read", "to recite", that is *The Reading* or *The Recitation*, in the use of the superlative), is the Divine Revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad (PBD) from Almighty God, delivered through his messenger, Gabriel, the Angel of the Revelation, known in the Qur'an as "The Holy Spirit". There are no "versions" of the Qur'an. All editions of the Holy Scripture contain the same revelations in the Arabic language as spoken to the Prophet (P) and sent by God.

The Qur'an was revealed by God Almighty to the Prophet Muhammad (PBD) over the last twenty-three years of his noble life, approximately fourteen hundred years ago. The Holy Book includes one hundred and fourteen chapters or *suras*, of which one is entitled *Mary* and as the name implies, relates episodes from the life of the Holy Virgin (P). Another of the chapters is known as "*The Table*" (*Al-Maida*) and describes the meal sent by God from Heaven to Jesus (P) and his apostles, on the occasion of the event known to Christians as "The Last Supper".

The Qur'an is one among the Holy Books, which include as well the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospels, but is unique among them by virtue of being the last, that is, the most recent in history, from the time chronologically closest to our own.

The Qur'an was recorded, as it was revealed, during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBD) himself, who personally supervised this task, taking care to permit no alterations, modifications, omissions, additions or distortions of any kind.

The original Sacred Qur'an, as it was written in Arabic, in the most elegant and exquisite calligraphy, using rhymed prose, that is, "free verse", is divided into one hundred and fourteen chapters or *suras* of varying length, which contain between two hundred and eighty-six and three verses or *ayat* (halleluiahs). [Refer to www.iqna.ir and www.quran.net]

THE TRUE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an proclaims true justice so that all who live under the canopy of its blessed protection can achieve perfection.

The Qur'an endeavors to support all people in their valiant struggle against violent oppression of any kind, including political, economic and cultural, any place and at any time, thus enabling them to defeat despotism and tyranny.

The Qur'an encourages people to totally comprehend the truths of Creation, receiving knowledge from every phenomenon of existence, in order to experience and develop their mental faculties to the fullest extent of the intellect.

The Qur'an encourages people to reform corrupt societies and tyrannical governments, at any time deemed necessary, in order to reclaim the rights of the oppressed and light the flame

of revolution and reform in order to liberate mankind from despotism and evil.

The Qur'an endorses Muslims as messengers of peace and security for all the world, in support of noble and worthy governments, without exceeding the limits established by God and without oppression or coercion of any person, Muslim or otherwise.

The Qur'an encourages all people to embellish the life of others, to make it more agreeable and satisfying, and to avoid selfishness in any form, or the monopolizing of resources to the detriment of the rights of others.

The Qur'an says that goods and resources should not remain in the hands of a single group, but should be shared in order for all people to prosper, just as blood circulates in the body.

The Qur'an asks that people do not tell lies, which they do not haggle, or resort to offence, in order to diminish the value of the goods in a business transaction, that they do not swear or use bad language, that they refrain from harming, or wishing harm, to their fellow man.

The Qur'an desires that all Muslims be brave, strong, fearless fighters, and guardians of the limits established by the Qur'an and by Islam, on behalf of the benefit and development of human beings everywhere.

The Qur'an honors the human being, and monotheism, at whose center the human being is free to live in justice, liberty,

and the development of both of his essential dimensions, the material as well as the spiritual.

The Qur'an speaks on behalf of those who fight in defense of exalted values and principals, in order to support mankind's human and divine development, "and for them there will be great rewards".

The Qur'an tells us that anyone who kills an innocent person might just as well have killed all mankind.

(Extract from the letter by Muhammad Reza Hakimi to Fidel Castro, 2002).

THE QUR'AN AND MODERN SCIENCE

From the point of view of Islam, religion and science have always gone hand in hand, as twin brothers. From its very beginnings Islam has encouraged the development of science and knowledge. The application of this precept has led to noteworthy advancements in every aspect of human endeavor, among them mathematics, physics, astronomy, geology, navigation, architecture, medicine and pharmacology, philosophy, theology, psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, navigation, surveying, agriculture, textiles, glassmaking, ceramics, metallurgy, agriculture, animal husbandry and poetry, among others, far in advance of Western thinking especially during the many great eras of Islamic achievement, without which Western Europe would never have reached the Renaissance or the Age of Enlightenment.

Dr. Maurice Bucaille, renowned French scientist, has shared his thoughts on this in his book *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*:

The Qur'an deals with many subjects relevant to science. Islam has always supposed that the information contained in the Qur'an is in accordance with scientific fact, and a modern look at the Islamic Revelation has done nothing to alter this position. Among the profusion of observations in the Qur'an dealing with the very nature of science, there is not a single one that could be interpreted as contrary to the scientific point of view. It was in the most objective manner possible, with no preconceived notions, that I first examined the Qur'anic Revelation. I was seeking the degree of compatibility between the text of the Qur'an and data concerning modern science.

I knew from translations, that the Qur'an alludes to all manner of natural phenomena, but I had only a superficial awareness of this. It was when I examined the Qur'an in depth in its original Arabic text, that I was able to really study it, after which I was obliged to accept the evidence I had before me: that the Qur'an contains not one single asseveration that can be refuted in modern scientific fact.

A SIGN FOR HUMANITY

Pharaoh's fate

It has been told, that the Prophet Moses (P) and his followers crossed the Red Sea and emerged on the other side, safe and

well. Yet, when the Pharaoh and his army, in furious pursuit, followed them on the path that had opened for them, the sea closed around them. Three different versions, in three different holy books, describe what happened after that.

According to the Old Testament the Pharaoh, together with his entire army, perished in the sea (Exodus, 14, 15).

In the New Testament it is told that the Pharaoh's army perished without specifying the Pharaoh's presence or absence among his dead soldiers.

According to the Qur'an, the Pharaoh and all his army died, but God rescued Pharaoh's lifeless body and returned it to the shore. His remains were thus preserved in order to serve as a sign for the people of the future.

"We brought the children of Israel through the sea, and Pharaoh and his legions pursued them arrogantly and frantically. But as he was drowning he cried out: '(now) I believe that there is no god except him in whom the children of Israel believe. I am of those that surrender (Muslims). '(God said): 'now (you believe)! But before this you rebelled and were of the corrupt. We shall deliver you with your body this day, so that you may be a sign to those after you. Indeed many people pay no heed to our signs'" (The Qur'an, 10:90-92)

In the twentieth century, with modern archaeological instruments and knowledge, a body corresponding to that of the pharaoh has been found.

Muhammad (PBD), Prophet of Islam, more than six hundred years after the time of Jesus (P), had no way of knowing what had transpired with Pharaoh's body nineteen hundred years earlier. Thirteen hundred years had passed, from the time of Muhammad (PBD) until the discovery of the Pharaoh's mummy, yet scientific analysis of the remains, (according to Islamic tradition), verified that the body had died in the water, after which the lifeless Pharaoh reached the shore.

Thus Maurice Bucaille, a man of international repute, through the application of scientific methods of examination and analysis, was able to verify the words of the Qur'an. According to Bucaille, this can only be interpreted as Divine Revelation.

Bucaille, after this, dedicated himself to a profound study of religious phenomena in their relation to science. His findings are made public in his book, *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science*.

FORGIVENESS IN ISLAM

"Indeed God is all-excusing, all-forgiving." (The Qur'an, 4:43)

- *"It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants, and excuses their misdeeds and knows what you do."* (The Qur'an, 42:25)
- *"Your Lord has said, 'Call Me, and I will hear you [r supplications]!' Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility."* (The Qur'an, 40:60)
- *God will not take you to account for a slip in your oaths. But he will take you to account for what you pledge in earnest. Its*

expiation is the feeding of ten needy (people) with such food as you normally offer to your own people; or the clothing of them; or the freeing of a slave. He who does not have must fast three days. That is the expiation of your oaths when you have sworn; but keep your oaths. God makes plain to you his verses, in order that you are thankful.” (The Qur’an, 5:89)

- *“Excepting those who repent, attain faith, and act righteously, for such, God will replace their misdeeds with good deeds, and God is all-forgiving, all-merciful.”* (The Qur’an, 25:70)
- *“The requital of evil is an evil like it. So whoever pardons and conciliates his reward lies with God. Indeed He does not like the wrongdoers.”* (The Qur’an, 42:40)
- *“... those who spend in ease and adversity, and suppress their anger, and pardon [the faults of] the people, and God loves the virtuous.”* (The Qur’an, 3:134)

The Prophet (PBD) said:

- *“Remorse is repentance.”*
- *Repentance erases whatever precedes it.*
- *He who repents for his sin is like one who has no sin.*
- *There is nothing more beloved to God than a penitent believer – man or woman.*
- *It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants, and excuses their misdeeds*
- *But whoever repents after his wrongdoing, and reforms, then God shall accept his repentance. Indeed God is all-forgiving, all-merciful.*
- *But [acceptance of] repentance is not for those who go on committing misdeeds: when death approaches any of them, he*

says, 'I repent now.' Nor is it for those who die while they are faithless.

- *Indeed I am all-forgiving toward him who repents, becomes faithful and acts righteously, and then follows guidance.*
- *A man who repents before he sees [the angel of death], God will accept his repentance.*
- *Sincere repentance is remorse for the sin as soon as it slips out from you; then you ask God for forgiveness, then you never return to it.*
- *The man who has no debt to people is more comfortable than the one indebted, even if he repaid his debt; and similarly the man who has not committed any sins is more comfortable than he who has committed sins, even if he has sincerely repented and returned [to the right path].*
- *Make repentance for every sin; public [repentance] for public [sins] and private [repentance] for private [sins].*
- *He who performs good acts after having embraced Islam will not be punished for anything that he did in his pre-Islamic state, whilst he who continues to commit bad after having embraced Islam will be taken to account for everything from beginning to end.*
- *If you are faced by anger, avert it through pardon, for verily a caller will call out on the Day of Resurrection: 'Whoever has a claim for a reward from God should stand up' and none will stand except the pardoners. Have you not heard the verse of God, most High, "So whoever pardons and conciliates his reward lies with God"?!*
- *Verily God is all-pardoning and loves pardon.*

- *Pardoning is incumbent upon you, for verily pardoning [others] only increases the servant's honour, so pardon each other's faults and God will grant you honour.*
- *He who pardons much is given an increase in his lifespan.*
- *Excuse the lapses of those who make mistakes frequently and God will protect you against misfortunes.*
- *"He whom pardons when having the power to punish, God will pardon him on the Day of great difficulty [i.e. the Day of Resurrection]."*
- *The one who condemns a fellow brother for a sin that he has already repented for will not die before committing it himself.*
- *The Prophet (PBD) said to a man who came to him complaining about his servants, 'Pardon their faults and through it their hearts will improve.' So he replied, 'O Prophet of God, verily they vary in their bad behavior', so he replied, 'Pardon them', so he did.*
- *The Prophet (PBD), when ÝÀ'isha asked him about what to supplicate on the grand Night of Ordainment (laylat al-qadr), replied, 'you should say: O God verily You are all-pardoning and You love to pardon, so pardon me.*

Said Imam Ali (P) to some sinners:

"Do not come to me to confess your sins and to run them off. The imposition of sentence is beneficial to safeguard the purity of society and exalt humanity, however if you repent is much better."

He also said:

- *I wonder at a man who loses hope of salvation when the door of repentance is open for him.*

- *He is the wisest and the most knowing man who advises people not to lose hope and faith in the Mercy of Allah and not to be too sure and over-confident of immunity from His Wrath and Punishment.*
- *The best deed of a great man is to forgive and forget.*
- *It is wiser to abstain than to repent.*

REGARDING THE TRINITY IN THE QUR'AN

“The unbelievers are those who say: 'God is the messiah, the son of Mary. ' but the messiah said: 'children of Israel, worship God, my lord and your lord. 'He who associates anything with God, God has indeed forbidden paradise to him, and his abode shall be in the fire. The harm doers shall have no helpers. Indeed those who say: 'God is the third of the trinity' became unbelievers. There is but one god. if they do not desist in what they say, a painful punishment will afflict those of them that disbelieve. Will they not turn to God in repentance and ask his forgiveness? He is forgiving, merciful. The messiah, the son of Mary, was not except a messenger, other messengers had gone before him. His mother was in the state of sincerity, they both ate food. See how we make plain to them our signs. Then, see how perverted they are.” (The Qur'an, 5:72-75)

And in the Old Testament:

“So keep watch on yourselves with care; for you saw no form of any sort on the day when the voice of the Lord came to you in Horeb out of the heart of the fire: So that you may not be

turned to evil ways and make for yourselves an image in the form of any living thing, male or female, Or any beast of the earth, or winged bird of the air, Or of anything which goes flat on the earth, or any fish in the water under the earth (...).All this he let you see, so that you might be certain that the Lord is God and there is no other. So today be certain, and keep the knowledge deep in your hearts, that the Lord is God, in heaven on high and here on earth; there is no other God.” (The Bible, Deuteronomy 4:15-16, 35-36)

With this we come to a basis, contained within Christian scripture that confirms the position of Islam And regarding this subject a number of points are raised, but all of them are weak. If we consider the concept of the “Trinity” as it is plainly stated, obvious doubts are raised, regarding the “relationship” of Mary (P) and her mother and father with Jesus as a “God-son” and with “God-father”. By means of logical analysis it is evident that Mary was the mother of the “God-son”, who is likewise the grandson of Mary’s (P) mother and father, who by the same reasoning consider the “God-father” their son-in-law. But one must also allow that they, that is, Mary (P), and her mother and father, were born normally on the Earth, descendents of Adam and Eve, these latter created by God. Then how can they be the mother, the grandparents and the in-laws of God? There is considerable inconsistency in this premise, and it therefore becomes difficult to reconcile these various asseverations. It is only natural that Muslims cannot accept this.

THE MEANING OF MUSLIM PRAYER

Every Muslim should pray to God five times a day, in the direction to Mecca, (The Kaa'ba) called the house of God, which is located in Arabian Peninsula.

Below are some parts of what Muslims say in the Islamic daily prayer. Some of these phrases are repeated in the same prayer:



- *God is Great*
- *In the Name of God, the most Compassionate, the Merciful. All praises belong to God the Cherisher, the Sustainer, Developer and Perfectioner of the worlds, The most Compassionate, The Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgement. Thee only do we Worship, and Thee alone do we ask for help. Keep us along the straight path, the path of those whom Thou has blessed. Not of those whom Thou art angry, nor of those who go astray.*
- *In the Name of God, the most Compassionate, the Merciful. Say He is God, the One, the Unique. God the Changeless, the Independent. He begets not, nor is He Begotten. And there is no one equal to Him.*
- *Glory to God.*

- *Free from All Defects is my Lord, and with His praise I bow.*
- *Free from all defects is my All-Highest Lord, and with His praise I adore Him.*
- *I ask God, my Lord, to cover up my sins and unto him I turn repentant.*
- *Our Lord! Bestow upon us good in this world. And good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.*
- *I bear witness that there is no God except God. He is One, without any partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.*
- *Our God, bless Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad.*
- *Glory to God, all praise belong to God, and there is no God but God and God is Great.*
- *I ask God, my Lord, to cover up my sins and unto him I turn repentant. I bear witness that there is no God except God. He is One, without any partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. Our God, bless Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad.*
- *Peace be unto thee, O Apostle and the mercy of God and His bounties. Peace be unto us and unto the virtuous servants of God. Peace be unto ye all, and the mercy of God and his bounties. God is Great. There is no God but God our God, bless Muhammad, and the Progeny of Muhammad.*

As we saw in the Islamic prayer Muslims say: "Thee only do we Worship, and Thee alone do we ask for help."

The Prophet Muhammad (BPD) said:

- “God does not empower anyone over man except one whom he fears. If man was to fear none but God, God would not allow anyone else to dominate him other than Himself. Man is not assigned to anyone except him in whom he places his hope and if he hopes in none but God, he will not be assigned to anyone other than Him.”
- “God, Mighty and Exalted says, ‘I will cut off the expectation of every believer who places it in someone other than Me [and replace it] with despair.’”

THE KAA’BA, “THE HOUSE OF GOD”

This is the most sacred site in Islam. It is to be found in the city of Mecca, on the Arabian Peninsula, birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (PBD). This cubic construction (*Kaa’ba* meaning *cube* in Arabic) is symbolically known as “*The House of God*”.

It is told in the Qur’an, as well as in Islam tradition, that when Abraham was on the verge of offering his first-born son in sacrifice, it was on this very spot that God stopped him and sent a lamb instead, to be sacrificed in place of Ishmael, and blessed both father and son for their faith and fortitude, and then he ordered them to raise a structure on the site, as a commemoration of these events.

In the eastern corner is to be found The Black Stone which, according to Tradition is an aerolite delivered to Abraham by the Angel Gabriel. Abraham and his son Ishmael placed it there when they finished the construction of the *Kaa’ba*.

Here are also to be found the tombs of Agar, the second wife, and Ishmael, the first-born son, of Abraham (P). At a short distance from the cube, just a few meters, is to be found the water well called *Zam Zam*, which according to Tradition was excavated by the Angel Gabriel, in order to keep Agar and her son Ishmael from dying of thirst in the desert.

It is precisely facing Mecca that all Muslims, anywhere in the world, direct their five daily times of prayer. Furthermore, every Muslim must, if it is at all physically or economically feasible, at least once during his lifetime, make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

"And when we settled for Abraham (and Ishmael) the place of the holy mosque, (we said): 'you shall not associate with me anything. Purify my house for those who circumambulate it and those who stand, for those who bow and prostrate.'" (The

Qur'an, 22:26)

The pilgrimage is one of the pillars of Islam, to be made during the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar.

This staggering concentration of human beings amounts to two and one half million persons every year, all bonded together as a single community, without regard for race, gender or social status.

The pilgrim leaves behind his worldly cares, the things he most loves in his home, his comfort, his wealth, in order to

enter into a hallowed state of spiritual communion with God. The experience produces profound inner changes in each pilgrim.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) renewed this tradition after his triumph over the idolaters who in his lifetime had taken possession of the *Kaa'ba*, thus restoring the purity of the cube, and reinstating it as the universal core of adoration for the One God.

The Pilgrimage and its rites were first carried out during the lifetime of the Prophet Abraham (P), who with his son Ishmael built the *Kaa'ba*.

As a result, the Prophet Abraham (P) returned to Mecca on pilgrimage each year, and after his death his son Ishmael continued this practice.

Many events are honored at the annual Pilgrimage; among them the willingness of the Prophet Abraham (P) to sacrifice the life of his son, therefore in commemoration a lamb is sacrificed. The pilgrim also walks seven times the distance between two spots called *Safa* and *Marwa*, as a reminder of the wandering of Agar, wife of Abraham, when she and Ishmael, their son, were seeking water, when Ishmael was just a small baby. After that, the pilgrim drinks from the well of *Zam Zam*, which Tradition says was created by the Angel Gabriel in order to save Agar and Ishmael from dying of thirst in the desert.

Also part of Islamic Tradition are the three spots on Abraham's (P) journey where, it was said, as he was about to

deliver Ishmael to God, the Devil appeared before him, trying to dissuade him from his purpose, but before capitulating, Abraham (P) replied by throwing stones at the Devil. The modern pilgrim still throws stones at the three pillars that symbolically represent the Devil, at these three sites. This practice is known as the Stoning of the Devil.

Islamic Tradition explains the merits of the Pilgrimage to Mecca, which include forgiveness of all prior sins. God only grants this promise on one other occasion, that is, the conversion to Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD), furthermore, emphasizes the importance of the Pilgrimage as he states: *“God’s reward for the Pilgrimage is Paradise.”*

SHI’ISM IS SYNONIMOUS WITH ISLAM

Some years following the death of Muhammad (PBD) the first Islamic Juridical School was created, in order to systematize the religious sciences and teachings of the Holy Qur’an and the Prophet Muhammad (PBD). This school was founded by the *Imam Ya’far As-Sádiq (P)*, descendent of the fifth generation of the Prophet (PBD), and this was the Shi’ite or Imamate School.

The school is based on the knowledge transmitted from generation to generation by the descendents of the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBD), as they were closest to him and knew better than anyone else his thoughts and teachings, and were considered the most qualified as leaders and spiritual

guides (*Imams*) among Muslims. They were in fact designated by the Prophet himself, implicitly and explicitly, during his lifetime.

But the descendents of the Prophet (PBD) persistently suffered the opposition of the governing officers, in the defense of Islamic values and the struggle against injustice. As a result, the political hierarchy turned its back on the Imamate School and rejected its values.

The Shi'ite School, nevertheless, continued growing and incorporating new adepts, forming important nuclei in key centers of the Muslim world. Today, when speaking of Islam, it is necessary to refer to two groups, Sunni and Shi'ia, and even the heads of the Al-Azhar University in Egypt, the most important educational institution in the Muslim world, is Sunni, but recognizes the Shi'ite Imamate School as the legitimate Juridical School of Islam. (There are four other Sunni schools: Hanafí, Malikí, Shafi'I and Hanbalí). There is really no major point of discrepancy among the basic religious concepts in the five existing and recognized Juridical Schools, since they all represent Muslim principles, and their theological foundation is the same: a belief in the One God and the Qur'an as the Sacred Book, in Muhammad (PBD) as the last Prophet of God, and in the Day of Final Judgement and Resurrection.

The only differences are to be found in their access to the knowledge of the religion and details of its practice, which in the case of the Shi'ite School can be traced directly to the *Imams* descended from the Prophet (PBD).

Shi'ism is originated specifically in Islam, and is the motivating force behind the Islamic summoning to faith. Islam has grown under its protection, which guarantees the transmission of the Message of Islam without alteration or subterfuge. [Refer to www.ahl-ul-bait.org and www.leader.ir]

THE TWELVE IMAMS

Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBD), spiritual guides were needed in order to lead the Islamic community, so they would not stray from the path indicated by God and transmitted to them by His Messenger. This was to assure that Islam would not abandon or deviate from the religious dictates spoken by the Prophet Muhammad (PBD) himself, when he personally led the faith.

These spiritual guides, or *Imams*, (P), are:

1. *Imam* 'Ali Amir Al-Mu'minin: born twenty-three years before the *Hegira* [that is, Muhammad's (PBD) flight, in 622 A.D., from his pursuers in Mecca, which led him to the city that came to be known as Medina]. 'Ali died in the fortieth year of the lunar *Hegira*, equivalent to the year 600-661 of the Christian era. He was a cousin of the Prophet (PBD), and had lived with him since his earliest childhood. The *Imam* 'Ali was the first man after Muhammad (PBD) himself to embrace Islam; he was then ten years old. He would later become the son-in-law of the Prophet (PBD) when he married Muhammad's (PBD) daughter Fátimah, the union

which produced the lineage of the *Imams* described as follows. [Refer to www.balaghah.net]

2. *Imam Hassán*: first-born son of the *Imam 'Ali* and grandson of the Prophet (PBD). He was born in the year 2 and died in the year 50 of the lunar *Hegira* calendar, equivalent to 670 A.D.
3. *Imam Hussein Saiidu Al-Shuhada*: Second son of the *Imam 'Ali* and grandson of the Prophet (PBD). He was born in the year 3 and died in the year 61 of the lunar *Hegira* calendar (626-680 A.D.). He struggled on behalf of Islam and served the cause of Justice. He was (brutally) massacred (by an ambush) together with a caravan of eighty people, both men and women, by an army sent by order of the tyrannical governor of the time (near Karbala, in what is now southern Iraq). His martyrdom remains, even today, as one of the crowning symbols of Shi'ite Islam, and an example for all time of resistance and sacrifice.
4. *Imam Zainu'l'Abidin*: Born in the year 38 and died in the year 95 of the lunar *Hegira* calendar (659-713 A.D.)
5. *Imam Muhammad Al-Baquir*: Born in the year 57 and died in the year 114 of the lunar *Hegira* calendar (676-733 A.D.)
6. *Imam Y'far As-Sadiq*: Born in the year 83 and died in the year 148 of the lunar *Hegira* calendar (702-765 A.D.). He systematized the teachings transmitted verbally

from one generation to the next, by previous Imams, and founded the Shi'ite Juridical School of Islam.

7. Imam Musa Al-Kadim: Born in the year 128 and died in the year 183 of the lunar Hegira calendar (746-799 A.D.)
8. Imam 'Ali Ar-Ridá: Born in the year 148 and died in the year 203 of the lunar Hegira calendar (765-818 A.D.)

[Refer to www.aqrazavi.org]

9. Imam Muhammad Al-Yauad: Born in the year 195 and died in the year 220 of the lunar Hegira calendar (811-835 A.D.)
10. Imam 'Ali Al-Hadi: Born in the year 212 and died in the year 254 in the lunar Hegira calendar (827-868 A.D.)
11. Imam Hassan Al-Askari: Born in the year 232 and died in the year 260 of the lunar Hegira calendar (846-874 A.D.)
12. Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi: Born in the year 256 of the lunar Hegira calendar (869 A.D.) and to the present day, that is, by the Grace of God, he lives on after nearly 1141 years, by the reckoning of the year 2010 A.D.

The last Imam (P), according to Islamic tradition, is poised to reappear, to lead Mankind toward God and to abolish all injustice, corruption and immorality before the Day of

Final Judgement. He is prepared to assist all adepts of monotheism toward final victory.

The Imam Mahdi (P) is the magnificent sign and evidence of God in our time. By the design and intentions of the Almighty he is the awaited Savior. May God hasten his arrival and facilitate his journey, in order for him to cover the earth with his justice, abolish oppression and destroy those who oppose God.

According to Islamic Tradition the Twelfth Imam (P) will be accompanied by the Prophet Jesus (P), who will descend from Heaven to lead this revolution to its inexorable victory. [Refer to www.mahdawiat.com]

SECTION V

WOMEN IN ISLAM

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WOMEN IN ISLAM

A woman represents inestimable worth; she is the basis of the family, the nucleus of society.

Among the initial purposes of Islam was the protection of women from the deplorable conditions to which they had been subjected, and to elevate their position, in order to put an end to the injustices they had endured, and to provide them with a place in society, with guaranteed rights and privileges, such as the free access to their goods and properties, and the right to will these as they desired.

Islam in no way prohibits women from working, if they have the need or desire to do so, nor does it prohibit them from holding high office. They may occupy any post or position consistent with their nature, experience and capabilities, in the career of their choice.

Yet a woman's career should in no way distract or interfere with her home life, nor her duties to her husband and children, because there is no doubt that the family is the nucleus of society; and the undermining or destruction of the family are seen as the undermining and destruction of society.

Neither does Islam exclude a woman from the right to an education, quite the contrary; knowledge is considered to be an obligation of Islam, equally for the man as for the woman. A woman is valued in an Islamic society for her intelligence and virtue.

Thus we must affirm that the inferior position of women in certain societies is the result of ignorance in these societies, and has nothing to do with the legislation, the traditions or customs, of Islam.

JUSTICE AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Speaking of the rights of women has raised a controversy regarding the nature of human rights in general, as to whether the rights of men and women are to be considered equally. Islam believes that even though men and women are different, and have different requirements according to their diverse nature, they are complementary, and have the same right to justice, since both men and women are seen according to the logic of the Creation.

Modern scientific advancement has further clarified and documented, with regard to biology and psychology, both the differences between the sexes and their mutual complementation, (which in no way alters a concept of legal justice).

Women are created free and equal, with regard to all human beings. But they are also beings to be considered with particular conditions, characteristics and psychology. In recent times a situation has presented itself regarding the “manliness” of women, that is, her denigration of her own nature in order to behave like men, to the detriment of her femininity.

Women have suffered because their innate nature, their mission, their needs, and their special capacities, have often been ignored, but that in no way makes her equal to a man. To not decree and define her particular rights is to commit an act of prejudice against her. Of course a woman may serve in the military or accept another kind of work as options, but only if it is her personal wish. Since a woman is endowed with the gift of bringing new life into the world, her pregnancy represents demands on her body and on her time, both before and after the birth of her child, so should taken into consideration in order to define her rights.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) spoke regarding the condition and worth of women during the gestation of a child:

"When a woman becomes pregnant is the position of one who fasts in the day, remains upright in the night praying and fighting with his person and property in the path of God, when she gives birth is a reward that you can not imagine Because of its enormity, when breastfeeding is each feed the equivalent of freeing a slave of the descendants of Prophet Ishmael (P), and when full sucking, angels will announce: 'Return to start, since you've been forgiven' "

Islam advocates a system of justice which includes the rights of both men and women. This is very different from saying that the two are *equal* as such, since they are two separate beings designed for different purposes. Equality is not a synonym for justice.

Countless quotes exist, derived from Islamic Tradition, with regard to justice, and the condemning of oppression, which

extol the pedestal reserved in Islam for women, and the respect for woman demanded of all the faithful.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) had this to say:

- *The Paradise is under the feet of mothers.*
- *Women are like flowers, not treat them with violence.*
- *I swear to God who chose me as a Prophet to be affectionate with her mother for a night, is better than a year to fight the cause of God.*
- *When a child is born, is a godsend. When a girl is born is a sign of God's mercy for her family.*
- *"In the period from pregnancy until stop breastfeeding, women have a reward like that of guard for the sake of God protects the borders of Islam, and if she dies in that time, she has the position of the martyr"*

ISLAMIC DRESS

"O Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters and the believing women to draw their veils close to them, so it is likelier they will be known, and not hurt. God is the forgiver, the most merciful." (The Qur'an, 33:59)

Islamic dress preserves the dignity and integrity of women, who are valued by society on the basis of their human and intellectual capacity, not because of their figure or their physical appearance. Islamic dress in no way curtails the woman's ability to study, work or participate within a society.

The garments imply a specific and precise moral conduct, which extends to the lowering of the eyes upon encountering a person of the opposite sex. If the woman's body is exposed, the man also lowers his eyes. This implies discretion, respect and modesty.

The covering of women is stricter than with regard to men, since their hair, neckline and body represent a provocation, as they are particularly attractive to men. Scientific studies verify that visual pleasure is more pronounced in men, thus a woman's discretion is intended to avoid temptation and immoral conduct.

Westernized societies have deceived women with false notions of freedom and "feminist" rights. The woman has been led to believe that the exhibition of her body in accordance with fashion, thus presenting her as a merely decorative object of desire, has somehow enhanced her worth, to the extent that she lends herself to the commercial promotion of products. By Islamic standards she has simply demeaned herself, until she has become an artificial feminine stereotype.

Anti-Islamic propaganda propitiates a notion of the Muslim woman as oppressed, as deprived of her rights, and insists that her religion has obliged her, against her will, to cover her hair and neckline. Does perhaps the Westernized woman live happily? Is she liberated from the prison of her figure? Or is she a hostage to her appearance, victim of circumstantial discrimination, which only offers desirable working conditions to a woman of "good appearance".

Islamic dress projects the same philosophy as the image of the Virgin Mary (P). Nowhere is she represented on the basis of physical appearance and her garments are modest and chaste. There has never in all of history been a literary reference to her physical appearance. The Bible has this to say regarding women's garments:

“And those women may be dressed in simple clothing, with a quiet and serious air; not with twisted hair and gold or jewels or robes of great price” (The Bible, 1 Timothy 2:9)

DISCRIMINATION OF WOMEN

Considering women's physical appeal and attaching a commercial or social value to it, which results in discrimination, humiliation and oppression for the woman, is not acceptable in a Muslim society. The use and exhibition of a woman's body for purposes of publicity or product promotion is considered by Muslims as an insult to human dignity. In the West it is often heard that the garments of the Muslim woman are a “violation of her human rights”, but Muslims believe that the true violation of human rights is patent in the prohibition, in certain Western countries, of Islamic garments in schools and the work place.

This is a frank violation of freedom of thought and creed which are implicit in the right to an education, as well as access to remunerative labor. They constitute a clear oppression of the right of women to free will, including the exercise of her beliefs.

They also encourage discrimination and abuse on the part of her classmates or working associates. With this her academic development may be obstructed at an early age, thus limiting her professional development or her acquiring of marketable skills.

Women's rights, from the Muslim point of view, are interpreted in her value as a human being, with regard to her abilities and qualities, eliminating sexual attraction in any social, commercial and professional relation. Islam sees the discrimination against Muslim women in Western countries as unjust. Muslim women are mocked or rejected because they cover their bodies, and refuse to capitalize on their physical appeal in public as a basis for a social relationship of any nature.

By contrast, the exhibition of the female body is not only permitted, but is applauded, in beauty contests, even to encouraging "beauty contests" among very young girls, by all accounts small children, which can only lead to their corruption. Communities of homosexuals, (deplored by Muslims), are encouraged and special schools are provided for them. (By Islamic standards) this is a complete and absurd contradiction.

Suffice it to say that the Virgin Mary, whose concept of dress was exactly the same as that of a Muslim woman, and whose image is highly respected in Islam, is considered pure, holy and celibate, to the extent that a chapter in which she appears prominently, called "Mary" is included in the Qur'an. She is an icon, of abnegation and devotion, yet if she lived in many

parts of the Western world of today she would not be allowed to attend school or find a job.

This analogy warrants serious reflection.

SEX IN ISLAM

Sexual relations are considered by Islam to conform to a biological human necessity, and imply, in themselves, nothing evil, shameful or wrong. A natural and reciprocal physical attraction is normal between men and women. To be beautiful, or attractive, is God's blessing.

Muhammad (PBD) spoke thus: *"Marriage is half of Religion."*

By the same token, sexual relations are to be encouraged, and marriage is considered not only acceptable but favorable. Sexual relations should be confined to the framework of marital values, and not be considered as a social or commercial value. A woman who wears make-up and presents herself as attractive and sensual to her husband, just as a man who keeps himself as attractive as possible for his wife, have God's blessing.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) spoke thus:

- *"And it is her duty (of the woman to her husband) that perfumes with her best perfume, wear their best clothes and ornaments"*
- *"The best of your women is the caste (to safeguard their modesty in front of others) and earnest (with her husband)"*

- "*That man tells a woman 'I love you' is something that will never leave the heart of her*"

Sex should not be made a part of social, commercial or professional relations. For this reason, when Muslim men and women depart the exclusivity and protection of their private home, the woman, in public, covers herself. She should not be judged on the basis of her figure. Within the confines of their home, however, the woman is not required to cover herself, unless she receives visitors who are not relatives. (She would not have to cover herself in the presence of blood relatives and sons-in-law.)

Islam considers it an insult to use the physical features of a woman for purposes of promotion and publicity. This is humiliating, and demeaning. Sexual harassment in order to obtain an employment is also humiliating and demeaning, and so it is considered *not only* in a Muslim context. Any woman, in any culture, who is subjected to harassment, is humiliated and debased.

What is the proper role for a woman? What is best for society? Is it ennobling to use sex as a social value, or is it not? Does the worth of a woman really depend on her weight, height, or the measurements of her waist? Or does she count for her wisdom, faith, the goodness of her heart, the compassion in her social and political actions, the humanity in her everyday relations, and her role as a mother.

MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

"And of His signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort in them, and He ordained affection and mercy between you. There are indeed signs in that for a people who reflect." (The Qur'an, 30:21)

"Marry off those who are single among you ... If they are poor, God will enrich them out of His grace, and God is all-bounteous, all-knowing." (The Qur'an, 24:33)

The family unit is the basis of a healthy and stable society, and Muslims feel this can only be maintained by means of marriage. In order to preserve pure relations among men, women and children in society, Islam absolutely prohibits adultery, promiscuity and homosexuality.

The Prophet (PBD) said:

- *Whoever wants to find God in pure and purified state, find him taking a wife.*
- *Anyone who is married has safeguarded the half of their religion. And in another hadith says: "fear God in the other half or in the remainder."*
- *There is no institution in Islam more beloved and dearer to God than marriage.*

Islam permits marriage in three ways. The legitimate union of a man and a woman may take place on a permanent basis, which includes provisions for polygamy. There are also provisions for temporary marriage and we will deal with this,

and other subjects, later when we clarify issues regarding the Shi'ite School of Islam.

In a permanent marriage the man is responsible for his family, therefore, he assumes the obligations for everyday expenses, such as clothing, rent, education, family travel and amusement, as well as all expenses for medical treatment or medicines, and anything that might contribute to the family's prosperity.

If the woman works, she has the right to do as she pleases with her income. She may contribute to the family's expenses if she wishes, but she is not obligated by domestic labors. By the same token, men and women have mutual rights of inheritance, that is, they may will their property to each other.

In the case of permanent marriage, neither of the two parties, without the consent of the other, may practice birth control, nor do anything to inhibit the desire to have children.

Worthy of mention here is the fact that marriage may take place by mutual consent, without the need of intermediaries, or the intervention of the clergy, that is, by simple agreement on the part of the man and woman concerned, within the framework of Islamic customs and dispositions. Islam considers that once a girl is physically mature, that is, she has passed puberty, if she is marrying for the first time, she needs her father's permission. A divorced woman or a widow has no need of the father's permission.

For any marriage, the man must contribute a dowry, and the woman must be in agreement regarding the amount. These

goods or properties belong to the woman, from the moment she is married.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) said:

“The best women of my community are those that have the prettiest faces and the smallest dowries.”

If all conditions for marriage have been met, for the ceremony, only two phrases are required. The woman says: *“I accept marriage with you, considering the dowry agreed upon.”* And the man replies: *“I accept this marriage.”* And with that, they are married.

The subject of matrimony has inspired a number of comments, or narrative on Islamic tradition, extolling the worthiness and blessings of marriage.

Here are a few examples, as spoken by the Prophet Muhammad (PBD):

- *Marry to the unmarried among you, because God will improve morale, extend their livelihoods and increase their reputation.*
- *By the way, the virgin maidens are like the fruit of a tree when mature and are not collected; the sun does corrupt and spread by the wind. It also happens to virgins when they reach that reaching women, have to get married, and if it doesn't happen, nothing will keep them safe from falling into corruption, since they are human.*
- *Two units of prayer performed by a married person are better than seventy units performed by an unmarried person.*

- *A sleeping person married is better before God than one who fasts and spends the night standing in prayer, being single.*
- *A man's sitting beside his family is more beloved in the sight of God than his spending the night in worship in this mosque of mine.*

Selecting a Spouse

- *Marriage should be established based on faith and sincerity.*
- *When someone comes to you with a proposal and you are well-pleased with his faith and his integrity then accept him in marriage, for if you do not, discord and corruption will prevail in the land.*
- *The beauty of a woman's faith must be given priority over the beauty of her face.*
- *Whoever marries a woman, having done only for her beauty, it will not see in her what they want, and who gets married with the richness of women, having done just that, dependent God will do it.; so, you should marry the one with religion.*
- *A man's telling his wife 'I love you' never leaves her heart.*

POLYGAMY

“If you fear that you cannot act justly towards the orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you; two, three, four of them. But if you fear that you cannot do justice, then one only, or, those you possess. It is likelier then that you will not be partial.” (The Qur’an, 4:3)

Polygamy in Islam is in fact a practice that benefits society, since normally women outnumber men. The numerical imbalance is augmented by war or migration and in certain territories may amount to millions.

In the West, (with rare exceptions), polygamy is not permitted. Divorce, on the other hand, is allowed. With this the number of women abandoned, divorced, single mothers and widows, increases.

A man, according to Islamic law, may take a number of wives only if he can provide equally for them all, in everything that regards marriage, including the time he devotes to each of them. If this is not the case, he is allowed only one wife, in order to avoid committing an injustice.

Marriage in Islam is considered a woman's right, she may choose to marry or not, but she may never be obliged to marry. She also has the right to a justified divorce, and she may decide whether or not she wishes to have children. Normally she would prefer a man who is unmarried, but depending on the circumstances she may also decide freely to marry a man who already has one or more wives. A woman in the West has no legal rights to make such decisions, and therefore does not have these options available.

The children of multiple unions have equal rights. The lawful paternity of a child is guaranteed, and is included within the responsibilities of a man, as well as the mother and society as a whole.

These customs do not prevail in systems that do not recognize either polygamy or divorce. In such cases a woman who wishes to exercise her right to marriage or maternity will be unable to do so, in which case she is obliged to a life of celibacy, and denied the possibility of motherhood.

The Prophet Abraham ^(P), as it happens, practiced polygamy, perfectly legitimate in his time. The custom was later accepted by Islam, as well as by a few specific Christian traditions. Only by rule of law and legitimacy might Abraham ^(P), therefore, have entertained the hope of progeny, since his first wife, Sara ^(P), was barren and he had no wish to divorce her, or for that matter, to relegate Agar ^(P). If polygamy had not been legitimate, Abraham ^(P), an example to society and a Prophet of God, would never have been remiss in his obligations.

Worthy of mention here is the tenth commandment, which according to the Bible, God “gave unto Moses”. The prohibition implied can also be interpreted as permissiveness. Man must not covet a married woman, but nowhere are single women prohibited from desiring married men. Polygamy, by inference, is therefore indulged.

“Or let your desire be turned to your neighbor’s wife, or his house or his field or his man-servant or his woman-servant or his ox or his ass or anything which is your neighbor’s.”

(The Bible, Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21)

Polygamy therefore avoids the predicament of a man who wishes to marry one woman while still being married to

another. The reasons may vary, and include infertility, illness or incapacity, anything that does not imply the destruction of the natural grounds for marriage. In a legally polygamous system, by complying with the requisites, the man enjoys the right to be a husband to both women, without discrimination of either.

This means that the man has two options: he may divorce the first wife or not, in order to marry the second. It is preferable to avoid divorce when possible. A man in the western societies may not choose between these two options, and must divorce the first wife, in order to marry the second.

In this social alternative a woman who might not otherwise be able to marry a bachelor exercises her right to free will, especially when women outnumber men in society. Polygamy, in effect, is a carefully devised measure to avoid divorce and discrimination, to insure the stability of society and to empower women with an instrument of social well-being, within their legal rights.

In societies where polygamy is outlawed, divorce and extra-marital relations are rampant, to the detriment of women, children and society. The offspring of illicit relationships are declared illegitimate and are denied their rights. Their development, education and maintenance are complicated. For all practical purposes, polygamy *is* practiced in the West, but without the legality or the responsibility, the guarantees or protection for women and children, that Islamic law provides.

And so we ask: should women be allowed the right to marry a man who is already married, providing both parties are in agreement? In the West a woman may be a mistress or a concubine, or even a prostitute, if she so desires. But she may not marry a man already married, either by choice or by right. The first wife in Islam has two options, to divorce or to remain the first wife. In the West, she can only divorce, even if she prefers to remain the first wife.

As for the man in the West, he has no choice other than to remain married to his first wife, or to divorce her, if he in fact wishes to spend his life with a different woman. In Islam, the man has the right and option, to marry another woman without divorcing the first wife, as was the case of the Prophet Abraham (P).

These various rights and options, in Islam, are available to both men and women, since Islamic law is characterized by its flexibility, and natural and biological needs, considering various situations that concern both individuals and society in general.

TEMPORARY MARRIAGE

“The good things have this day been made lawful to you. The food of those to whom the book was given is lawful to you, and your food is lawful to them. Lawful to you (in marriage) are the free believing women and the free women from among those who were given the book before you, provided that you give them their dowries in marriage,

neither committing fornication nor taking them as mistresses." (The Qur'an, 5:5)

According to Islamic Law as interpreted by the Shi'ite School, in order to accommodate singular and personal circumstances which prevent or delay permanent marriage, a provision exists for *temporary marriage*, as a solution for special cases.

In the case of a temporary marriage, a man and a woman may commit themselves to a union within a fixed period of time. This agreement may include specific provisions on both parts concerning the intimacy of the relationship, or abstinence from sexual relations or to prevent pregnancy. After the elapse of the specified time, if both parties agree, their arrangement may be extended, it may be made permanent, or they can separate.

The real and essential difference between permanent or temporary marriage consists in provisions regarding inheritance. In case of death, neither party can will his property to the other, although other obligations exist, as specified in their mutual agreement.

If children are produced in such a union, they are legitimate, and have the same rights as children born to a permanent marriage. The father, even though he has other children, is responsible for the progeny's maintenance and welfare, and the child enjoys rights of inheritance. For this reason a woman, at the conclusion of a temporary marriage, must remain single for at least one and half month before any other marriage agreement, in case she is pregnant, and if such is the case, inform the father in order for him to assume his rights

and obligations. If a woman has never menstruated or has reached menopause, the moment her temporary marriage has terminated she may enter into another marriage.

THE RIGHT TO DIVORCE

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) said:

“God has not made permissible anything more abominable to Him than divorce.”

It is natural in an Islamic marriage and consistent with Islamic Tradition that a woman be treated in her home with love and respect. The basic principle is defined as “an honorable regard”, without which the woman should be “allowed her freedom within a context of kindness”.

“Oh you who have faith! It is not lawful for you to inherit women forcibly, and do not press them to take away part of what you have given them, unless they commit a gross indecency. Consort with them in an honorable manner; and should you dislike them, maybe you dislike something while God invests it with an abundant good.” (The Qur’an, 4:19)

Islam regards a divorce with sadness, and does not favor the process, and in fact encourages everything possible to prevent it, but neither does Islam condone an arrangement which obliges the women to remain with her husband against her will. The divorce process is considered an option when there is really no other choice, in cases in which the essential basis for marriage has for whatever reason disintegrated.

“When you have divorced women and they have reached the end of their waiting period, either keep them in kindness or let them go with kindness. But you shall not keep them, being harmful, in order to transgress. Whoever does this wrong himself. Do not take the verses of God in mockery. Remember the favor of God upon you, and what he sent down to you from the book and wisdom to exhort you. Fear God and know that he has knowledge of everything.” (The Qur’an, 2:231)

Divorce is an option, and while it is not desirable, Islam permits it if it is necessary or if it is the decision of the couple in question. The couple needs no judge or clergyman, if both agree to the divorce. In order to divorce they only need to appear before two men, who are reliable and credible witnesses, of good reputation. If the husband says, with the intention of divorce, in the presence of these witnesses, “my wife (name) is free,” it is a legitimate divorce. The words must be uttered in the Arabic language, and if the man is unable to speak this phrase in Arabic, which is the language of the Qur’an, another person may act as his advocate. This constitutes a religiously valid divorce. Under civil law, if both parties agree to the divorce, they present themselves before a notary, accompanied by two witnesses, and an agreement is signed by all. This constitutes a civil divorce.

Women may not divorce during their menstrual cycle, because it is considered that during this period they might be excessively sensitive. Statistics prove that many women who have asked for a divorce under these circumstances later regret it.

After the divorce process, which has dissolved a permanent marriage, the woman must wait three months (three menstrual cycles) before remarrying, to assure she is not bringing to her new union a pregnancy from the previous one. If she is, in fact, pregnant, the woman must inform the father, in order for him to assume his legal rights and responsibilities, and she cannot remarry until after the birth of the child.

This time period also assures the possibility of reconsideration following a divorce. The woman, in fact, has nine months to consider reconciliation, providing she has not remarried during this time; and if the couple decides to remain together the divorce is automatically annulled without the need to remarry. This procedure may take place at most three times, unless interim marriage takes place. If the woman marries another man, and the marriage is consummated, and a divorce or widowhood occurs, only then, may she return to marry the original husband. This prevents divorce from becoming a habit and making a mockery of the law.

If the woman is divorced and pregnant, she may remarry, but only following the birth of her child.

“And if he divorces her, she will not be lawful for him until she marries a husband other than him, and if he divorces her, there is no sin upon them to remarry if they think that they can maintain God’s bounds. These are God’s bounds, which He clarifies for a people who have knowledge.” (The Qur’an, 2:230)

The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) comments on the lamentable circumstance of divorce and the negative aspects of marrying only for pleasure:

- *"Marry and do not divorce, since the divorce does shake the Throne Divine."*
- *"There is nothing more beloved to God, Awe and Majestic, a house founded in Islam through marriage, and there is nothing more abhorrent to God, Awe and Majestic, which a house destroyed in Islam by the separation (i.e., divorce) "*
- *"Actually, God, Awe and Majestic, hate-or cursed-each man or woman who by marriage and divorce only pretends to like the pleasure that is in marriage"*

WOMEN IN IRAN

In response to the negative attitude and distortion by the media in the West, regarding the circumstances of women in the Islamic world, let us refer to women in Iran.

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, women have never before been so prominent in public life in Iran, within the framework of Islamic values, and they are visible in every aspect of the country's social fabric, including the work force, government and politics, science and economy, as well as cultural life.

Examples as follows:

- The majority of university students in Iran are women.
- Sixty percent of the medical students in the country are women.
- Thirty-five percent of university docents are women.
- Eighty percent of school teachers are women.

Women in Iran are present in every phase of the life of the country, from politics such as the vice-presidency of the Islamic Republic, to the world of entertainment, with iconic film and TV stars, and this is without recourse to their physical appeal for such purpose, but rather their exceptional talent and hard work.

[Refer to www.iwna.ir and www.womennews.ir]

REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY AND INCEST

In Islam, as in all divine religions, sexual or marital relations between people created by God of the same sex are not considered normal and therefore are not acceptable. Homosexuality is considered to be a deviation and a grave sin, and is therefore prohibited.

Studies made in the U.S. have demonstrated that homosexuals enjoy a lifespan of a mere twenty-five years, less than the life expectancy for heterosexuals, data derived from factors associated with homosexuality.

The West permits and justifies homosexuality, on the basis of freedom of choice between two consenting adults.

If one permits such “basic freedoms”, by the same token incest can be justified, between fathers or mothers and their children or between brothers and sisters, assuming that both parties are exercising freedom of choice between two consenting adults.

The subject warrants reflection.

SECTION VI

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DUTIES BETWEEN MUSLIMS

According to the Sacred Qur'an all Muslims are "brothers", without regard for race, color, gender or social position, yet certain obligations exist among them.

Thus spoke the Prophet Muhammad (PBD):

- *He who wakes up in the morning unconcerned about the situations of fellow Muslims is not a Muslim.*
- *If your Muslim brother condemns you for whatever he knows about you, then do not condemn him back for whatever you know about him. You will have a reward whereas he will carry a sin.*
- *The one who condemns a fellow brother for a sin that he has already repented for will not die before committing it himself.*
- *The one who exposes someone's monstrous deed is as the one who initiated it, and the one who condemns a believer for something will not die before becoming guilty of it himself.*
- *Anyone who troubles a believer has troubled me.*
- *Whomsoever claims the property of a believer, usurping this by whatever pretext and without just cause, has provoked God's displeasure, has disdained just and bountiful action, and cannot be considered repentant until such time as he returns this property to whom it rightfully belongs.*

Imam Ali (P) said:

"Admonish your brother (comrade) by good deeds and kind regards, and ward off his evil by favouring him."

The Imam As-Sâdiq (P), a highly respected figure within Islamic Tradition, was asked for his views on the obligations of Muslims toward each other, and he had this to say:

“Seven duties concern thee, each one of them is an obligation, and were thee to be negligent in any of them, it would be considered that thou hast disobeyed the Creator.”

- 1. Wish for thy brother that which pleases thyself, and wish that whatsoever thou may abhor not befall him.*
- 2. Procure not anger for thy brother, but rather the contrary, try to please him and obey his wishes.*
- 3. Aid him with thy being, with thine goods, tongue, hands and feet.*
- 4. Be his eyes, his guide and mirror.*
- 5. Tend not to sate thyself while he goes hungry, do not drink while he is thirsty, and clothe not thyself while he goes without garments with which to cover himself.*
- 6. If thou art blessed with servants while he has none, send a servant to wash his clothes, prepare his meals and make his bed.*
- 7. Be faithful to any promise offered him and accept his invitation, visit him when he is ill, accompany his remains at his funeral and if news reaches you of his neediness, satisfy it before he so expresses his need.*

REGARDING ONE’S PARENTS

The Qur’an affirms respect for one’s parents, and especially emphasizes the respect for the mother.

God says in the Qur’an:

“And we charged the human concerning his parents, for his mother bore him in weakness upon weakness, and his

weaning was in two years. be thankful to me and to your parents, to me is the arrival.” (The Qur’an, 31:14)

“(remember) when we made a covenant with the children of Israel, you shall worship none except God. Show kindness to your parents, to kinsmen, to the orphans, and to the needy, and speak of goodness to people. Establish your prayers and pay the obligatory charity. But, except for a few, you all turned your backs and gave no heed.” (The Qur’an, 2:83)

“Be kind to parents and near kinsmen, to the orphans and to the needy, to your neighbor who is your kindred, and to the neighbor at your far side, and the companion at your side, and to the destitute traveler, and to that which your right hand owns. God does not love he who is proud and struts.”

(The Qur’an, 4:36)

“Say: ‘come, I will recite to you what your lord forbids you; that you shall associate anything with him; that you shall be good to your parents, that you shall not kill your children because of poverty, we provide for you and for them, that you shall not commit foul deeds whether openly or in secret, and that you shall not kill the soul that God has forbidden except by right. With such God argue you, in order that you understand.” (The Qur’an, 6:151)

“We have charged the human to be kind to his parents. with much pain his mother bore him, and with much pain she gave birth to him; his bearing and weaning are thirty months. when he grows to manhood and attains his fortieth year, he says: ‘make me so disposed my lord, so that I give thanks for the favors with which you have blessed me, my

father and mother, and that I will do good deeds that will please you. And, make me righteous and also my descendants. To you I repent, and I am among those who surrender. '” (The Qur’an, 46:15)

HYGIENE IN ISLAM

Cleanliness is paramount to Islam. The faithful make their ablutions before entering the mosque to pray, as a ritual. Bathing, brushing one’s teeth, washing the hair, are part of Islamic tradition. The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) said: *“Hygiene is a sign of faith in God.”*

In public toilets, even urination and defecation are performed without sitting on a toilet seat, but rather in such a manner that only the shoes touch the ground, and the delicate parts of the body should be washed afterward with water. Western toilet seat is considered a source of contamination to the delicate parts of the body.

The Prophet (PBD) said:

- *Indeed God is pleasant and loves all that is pleasant. He is clean and loves cleanliness.*
- *Keep yourselves as clean as possible, for God Almighty built Islam on cleanliness, and no one will ever enter Heaven unless they are clean.*
- *Indeed God loves the clean worshipper.*
- *Whoever wears clothes must clean them.*
- *Do not place dirt behind the door, for it is the shelter of the devil.*

- *Do not leave garbage overnight in your houses, and take it out in the daytime, for it is the dwelling place of the devil.*
- *When the Prophet (PBD) saw a man whose hair on his head was dishevelled, whose clothes were dirty, and who had a bad appearance, said, 'It is part of religion to enjoy oneself and to display one's bounties.*

PUNISHMENT IN ISLAM

"And those who, if they commit indecency or wrong themselves remember God and ask forgiveness of their sins for who but God forgives sins and those who do not persist in what they do while they know." (The Qur'an, 3:135)

Islam adheres to a legal and penal code, thus establishing and sustaining a rule of law in society, and by so doing, regulates proper conduct and a respect for order while specifying a penalty for delinquency.

Every matter in a man's life, individual as well as collective, is governed by norms which define limits and determine the fine or punishment in case of a transgression.

Severe penal considerations have been determined, for purposes of legal order, but also to maintain as a permanent consideration the laws of God, expressed through prayer. These actions have produced positive results.

The punishment for delinquency with regard to Islamic Law depends on the circumstances, the intention and the consequences. It would be impossible to apply absolute

parameters as each case is different, and are analyzed and judged in context. Only the affected party or his relations have the right to exempt the guilty from punishment.

The application of a punishment is never intended as cruelty, or in order to torment the transgressor. In fact, the punishment applied to a transgressor is the consequence of his own actions and is his own decision, made at the moment of committing the crime.

The true intention of the law is the discouragement of illicit behavior, in order to dissuade the delinquent, as well as to procure atonement, which serves society as an example. Thus a transgression may be rectified in this lifetime, and not be borne until the Day of Judgement.

The penalization of a transgression, as interpreted by Islam, has maintained a pure and law-abiding society, even taking into account that Islam outlaws the use of alcohol or drugs, prohibits pornography, prostitution, theft, and crimes in general, such as assault, public disturbance or homicide; and rape, which is rampant in the West, is punished by Islamic tradition with death, out of greater respect for the dignity of women. As a result, rape is extremely rare in the Islamic world.

Maintaining this rectitude comes with the price of penalization in the case of an offense. Islamic Law feels that lassitude in this regard would lead to corruption, immorality and perversion, the ruin of many lives, and a number of societies contaminated by a negative example.

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.” (The Qur’an, 99:7,8)

THE DEATH PENALTY

Islam considers capital punishment in the case of certain crimes, when these have been irrevocably verified and guilt established, according to the strict application of legal procedures.

In such an occurrence, Islam considers all the factors relative to an individual case, in order to apply reasonable justice. In the case of a premeditated murder, the right of life of another person has been violated. This is compensated with the forfeit of the life of the transgressor. The Qur’an is explicit on the subject, with the intention of discouraging the taking of the life of another (2:179).

At the precise moment of committing homicide the guilty party, not the judge, is deciding his destiny. The judge only responds by reviewing the evidence, and assuring that a crime has in effect been committed, beyond any doubt, therefore verifying the guilt of the transgressor. Then and only then is punishment announced and sentence passed.

“And whoever commits a sin, commits it only against himself and God is all-knowing, all-wise.” (The Qur’an, 4:111)

“Indeed, God does not wrong mankind a thing, but they wrong themselves.” (The Qur’an, 10:44)

In the case of premeditated murder, which warrants the death penalty, only the victim's parents may exonerate the killer and offer a reprieve from his execution.

The death penalty as punishment for certain crimes is a necessity, since its application is considered to be a greater good for society at large. Abstaining from this indispensable action is considered negative to the person involved.

Muslims take very seriously the Divine Mandate regarding "thou shall not kill", as it applies to deliberate homicide. Execution of an accused transgressor is not considered to be murder. These are two entirely different matters. The Qur'an has this to say:

"That was why we wrote (...) that who ever killed a soul, except for a soul slain, or for sedition in the earth, it should be considered as though he had killed all mankind; and that who ever saved it should be regarded as though he had saved all mankind. Our messengers brought them proofs; then many of them thereafter commit excesses in the earth." (The

Qur'an, 5:32)

PROHIBITION OF INGESTING PORK

Islam's dietary restrictions include the prohibition of eating pork or pork products, a fact more noteworthy given the popularity of pork among non-Muslims. Mosaic Law also forbids the use of pork meat or products.

The Old Testament of the Christian Bible has this to say:

“And the pig is unclean to you...their flesh may not be used for food, and their dead bodies may not even be touched.” (The

Bible, Leviticus 11:7-8)

Islamic tradition says, Jesus also prohibited pork. Nowhere is a miracle described that purifies the meat of this unclean animal. If today Christians permit the consumption of pork, this is considered a distortion of the original teachings of their faith.

Pork meat is genetically akin to our own flesh, to such an extent that the temperature of a pig is similar to our own, and pork is used in forensic medicine to ascertain the time of death of a human. Furthermore, certain types of heart surgery employ valves from the heart of a pig, and skin grafts may use pork skin. Since these operations are performed for reasons of saving lives, they are not prohibited by Islamic tradition. The Qur’an says, “Saving one person is like saving all humanity”, and so for this reason using animal or even human body parts is acceptable in surgical procedures in order to save a life.

However, numerous types of virus or cancer are passed by eating pork, and thus enter the human body by ingestion. This constitutes a health hazard for human beings. Scientific studies verify the virtual impossibility of obtaining porcine specimens free of such virus. The pig’s metabolism excretes a minimum of the waste products ingested. The rest are preserved in the animal’s fat. These substances are toxic and if ingested are also stored in the human organism.

The pig is a filthy and repugnant animal, a scavenger that eats whatever is available including offal, its own or that of other animals. Despite all this it is important to mention that Islam considers all life to be precious and worthy of respect, as it is God's creation and part of nature.

God, in His infinite wisdom, has forbidden Muslims from consuming pork, among several other animals, for example, any carnivore including cats and dogs, or simians (considered to be too similar to humans), for physical as well as for spiritual reasons. Islam places great emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene. Muslims eat the best that God has created and has spoken on the subject. The Prophet Muhammad (PBD) said: "Hygiene is a sign of faith."

THE PROHIBITION OF ALCOHOL

According to The Qur'an each individual is responsible for his own actions, and he and he alone, will account for them on the Day of Final Judgement.

In order to fully assume this responsibility, each person must exercise full control over his or her actions and be in dominion over his or her conscience. Any substance that alters this state or propitiates a loss of control over a person's behavior is prohibited by Islam. These substances include alcoholic beverages, as well as any noxious or narcotic materials which jeopardize health and human awareness.

A vast store of documented evidence based on case studies, as well as medical and scientific investigation, has established that drugs and alcoholic beverages are damaging to a person's health, and undermine his physical and mental condition. From the moral and social point of view, they also lead to a number of manifest evils. A man under the influence of alcohol loses control over his feelings and is therefore exposed or subject to unworthy or reprehensible actions.

In such circumstances, a person may commit a crime. These toxic substances have ruined many lives and destroyed many families. An addiction to these substances may represent a momentary gratification but the long-term effects are a living hell, and require an extended rehabilitation, which is not always effective.

Islam considers that each person is entitled to face life in the best interests of his natural talents and abilities, without damaging palliatives. Faith in God and the purification of our bodies is a Muslim truth.

The Prophet Muhammad (P) said:

- *"Alcohol is the mother of all indecent acts and grave sins."*
- *"All evil in its entirety has been gathered in one house and drinking alcohol is the key to that house."*

The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament has this to say on the subject:

"Wine makes men foolish and strong drink makes men come to blows; and whoever comes into error through these is not wise". (The Bible, Proverbs 20:1)

THE RIGHTS OF ANIMALS

As we near the end of our explanation of Islam it is only fitting that we express our views on the treatment of animals. For some this may seem a banal subject, but for many it is a vital concern. According to the teachings of Islam, anyone in possession of an animal, for whatever reason, is obliged to procure its well-being.

- If the owner of an animal is negligent in this regard, the Islamic government may oblige him to comply with his duty.
- It is not right to ride or work an animal to the point of exhaustion. If the animal has gone lame and is unable to walk with comfort, it should be treated gently. If the animal is being followed in the course of its duties by a new-born, enough milk should be left the mother to provide for it.
- Anyone charged with the care of an animal should do so with compassion and not with violence. No animal warrants oppression or mistreatment.
- An offence perpetrated on an animal, beating it or swearing at it, is prohibited. Anyone responsible for milking an animal should cut his nails in order not to harm its udders.
- "Hunting animals for pleasure alone, when the satisfaction of hunger is not a consideration, is prohibited, as is the robbing of poultry chicks from their nests."

The slaughter of animals for food is governed by Islamic ritual and is accompanied by pious words: “in the name of god, the clement and the merciful.” A Muslim should ask permission of God to kill any kind of meat, and that only in order to satisfy his physical needs. Such meat is known as *halal* and is permitted. A Muslim is not permitted to eat any sort of meat of any animal, except *halal*, and under these conditions.

Prophet Muhammad (PBD) said:

- *“No animal, including a bird or any other kind, is killed unjustly except that it will raise a complaint against him [the killer] on the Day of Resurrection.”*
- *“Whoever kills a sparrow in vain, it will cry out to God against him on the Day of Resurrection saying, ‘O my Lord, so and so killed me in vain and did not kill me for any useful purpose.”*
- *“May the curse of God be on the one who treats an animal harshly.”*
- *“A prostitute was forgiven when she passed a panting dog almost dying of thirst at the foot of a well, whereby she took off her shoe and tied it to her headscarf and lowered it into the well to extract water [for the dog], and for that action she was forgiven.”*
- *“The animal has six rights over its owner: once the owner has dismounted the animal he should allow it to graze, he should give it access to water if they pass by it, he should not hit the animal except when it truly deserves it, he should not burden it with a load that it cannot bear, he should not overtask it with a journey that it cannot endure and he should not sit on it for lengthy periods of time.”*

- *“Do not hit animals on their faces for verily they praise and glorify God.”*
- *“Every single Muslim that plants or cultivates anything of which humans, animals or birds may eat from is counted as charity towards them on his behalf.”*

SECTION VII

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ANNEX I

WHAT IS THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an is a divine revelation transmitted to Muhammad (Muhammad, 570-632) by Angel Gabriel throughout the course of twenty years (610-632). It is the God's words for all of humanity.

"This too is a blessed scripture that we have revealed, confirming the previous scriptures, that you may warn the most important community and all those around it." [6:92]

The Qur'an is the last of the sacred Scriptures revealed by God to guide humanity throughout the different ages, in all of the cultures and civilizations.

"Why do they not study the Qur'an carefully? If it were from other than God, they would have found in it numerous contradictions." [4:82]

"Say, 'My Lord prohibits only evil deeds, be they obvious or hidden, and sins, and unjustifiable aggression, and to set up beside GOD powerless idols, and to say about GOD what you do not know.' For each community, there is a predetermined life span. Once their interim comes to an end, they cannot delay it by one hour, nor advance it." (7:34)

The Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language:

"We revealed these laws in Arabic, and if you ever acquiesce to their wishes, after this knowledge has come to you, you will have no ally, nor a protector, against GOD." [13:37]

And it was memorized and copied by the disciples of Prophet Muhammad.

Upon the death of the Prophet, his followers decided to put it in writing and, upon realizing this, a group was formed for the recompilation.

The exemplary in Arabic that exist now are copies of the original text.

It may be possibly the only divine revelation that humanity completely conserved in the original language in which it was revealed.

All of the Scholars of the Islamic world without exception, from the very beginning to this day in age, have been and still are in agreement that the original Arabic text is absolutely loyal to the revealed words and that nothing was added nor removed from it.

Words for those who are alive:

"What we taught him (the messenger) was not poetry, nor is he (a poet). This is but a formidable proof, and a profound Qur'an. So that

anyone who is alive may be warned and that the word may come due against the faithless.” [36:69, 70]

A guide to help human beings who question the meaning of life:

“Your Lord is the one GOD, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then assumed all authority. The night overtakes the day, as it pursues it persistently, and the sun, the moon, and the stars are committed to serve by His command. Absolutely, He controls all creation and all commands. Most Exalted is GOD, Lord of the universe.”

[7:54]

It is a light.

“O people, a proof has come to you from your Lord; we have sent down to you a profound beacon.” [4:174]

“A beacon has come to you from GOD, and a profound scripture.” [5:15]

“Those who believe in him, respect him, support him, and follow the light that came with him are the successful ones.”

[7:157]

“You had no idea about the scripture, or faith. Yet, we made this a beacon to guide whomever we choose from among our servants. Surely, you guide in a straight path.” [42:52]

"Therefore, you shall believe in GOD and His messenger, and the light that we have revealed herein. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do." [64:8]

With that light, God guides those who look for something more than just brief pleasures in this world:

"This worldly life is no more than vanity and play, while the abode of the Hereafter is the real life, if they only knew." [29:64]

In regards to that there is no exception. All of the Sacred Scriptures are:

"We have sent down the Torah, containing guidance and light. "

"Ruling in accordance with it were the Jewish prophets, as well as the rabbis and the priests, as dictated to them in God's scripture, and as witnessed by them. Therefore, do not reverence human beings; you shall reverence Me instead. And do not trade away My revelations for a cheap price. Those who do not rule in accordance with God's revelations are the disbelievers." [5:44]

"Subsequent to them, we sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the previous scripture, the Torah. We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, and confirming the previous scriptures, the Torah, and augmenting its guidance and light, and to enlighten the righteous." [5:46]

"They never valued GOD as He should be valued. Thus, they said, 'GOD does not reveal anything to any human being.' Say, 'Who then revealed the scripture that Moses brought, with light and guidance for the people?' You put it down on paper to proclaim it, while concealing a lot of it. You were taught what you never knew - you and your parents. Say, 'GOD (is the One who revealed it),' then leave them in their heedlessness, playing." [6:91]

"If they disbelieve you, those before them have also disbelieved. Their messengers went to them with clear proofs, and the Psalms, and the enlightening scriptures." [35:25]

His message goes to all of humanity without distinction of the religion one professes:

"Say, 'GOD has proclaimed the truth: You shall follow Abraham's religion - monotheism. He never was an idolater.'" [3:95]

"Such was our argument, with which we supported Abraham against his people. We exalt whomever we will to higher ranks. Your Lord is Most Wise, Omniscient.

And we granted him Isaac and Jacob, and we guided both of them. Similarly, we guided Noah before that, and from his descendants (we guided) David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. We thus reward the righteous. Also, Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias; all were righteous. And Ismail, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot; each of these we distinguished over all the people. From among their ancestors, their

descendants, and their siblings, we chose many, and we guided them in a straight path.” [6:83-87]

The Qur’an teaches us that the soul is alive in this world and that it never dies. Each death translates into the birth on a superior dimension of life:

“He initiated you from one person, and decided your path, as well as your final destiny. We thus clarify the revelations for people who understand.” [6:98]

“Therefore, you shall race towards forgiveness from your Lord, and a Paradise whose width encompasses the heaven and the earth. It awaits those who believed in God and His messengers. Such is God's grace that He bestows upon whomever He wills. God is Possessor of Infinite Grace.” [57:21]

“O you who believe, if you are told, ‘Please make room,’ you shall make room for each other to sit. God will then make room for you. If you are asked to get up and move, get up and move. God raises those among you who believe, and those who acquire knowledge to higher ranks. God is fully Cognizant of everything you do.” [58:11]

While the soul ignores all of these truths, it is condemned to failure:

“Is one who was dead and we granted him life, and provided him with light that enables him to move among the people, equal to one in total darkness from which he can never exit?”

The works of the disbelievers are thus adorned in their eyes."

[6:122]

"Say, 'Shall I tell you who the worst losers are?' They are the ones whose works in this life are totally astray, but they think that they are doing well. Such are the ones who disbelieved in the revelations of their Lord and in meeting Him. Therefore, their works are in vain; on the Day of Resurrection, they have no weight." [18:103-105]

The Qur'an has been revealed to teach humanity how to correctly use the liberty that God has given us:

"We sent our messengers supported by clear proofs, and we sent down to them the scripture and the law, that the people may uphold justice." [57:25]

Those who do not know about the divine purpose with which God has created us and has created everything that exists, live like castaways in a dark ocean, without a lighthouse and without a guide:

"Indeed, the real blindness is not the blindness of the eyes, but the blindness of the hearts inside the chests." [22:46]

"Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, but We have opened them; and We have made of water everything living, will they not then believe?" [21:30]

"Whoever is guided, is guided for his own good, and whoever goes astray does so to his own detriment. No sinner will bear

the sins of anyone else. We never punish without first sending a messenger.” [17:15]

One of the major objectives of this divine guide is the establishment and defense of justice:

“Those who believe are fighting for the cause of God, while those who disbelieve are fighting for the cause of tyranny.” [4:76]

“Whoever mediates a good deed receives a share of the credit thereof, and whoever mediates an evil work, incurs a share thereof. God controls all things.” [4:85]

“Oh you who believe, you shall be absolutely equitable, and observe God, when you serve as witnesses, even against yourselves, or your parents, or your relatives. Whether the accused is rich or poor, God takes care of both. Therefore, do not be biased by your personal wishes. If you deviate or disregard (this commandment), then God is fully Cognizant of everything you do.” [4:135]

There does not exist injustice nor imbalance in the creation:

“Verily Allah will not deal unjustly with man in aught: It is man that wrongs his own soul.” [10:44]

It is the human being that generates this. However, finally, the injustice and the oppression will be defeated and the just beings will inherit the Land:

"We have decreed in the Psalms, as well as in other scriptures, that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous worshippers." [21:105]

"Verily, the Revelation that has come to you from your Lord (Allah) increases in most of them (their) obstinate rebellion and disbelief. We have put enmity and hatred amongst them till the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindled the fire of war, Allah extinguished it; and they (ever) strive to make mischief on the earth. And Allah does not like the Mufsidun (mischief-makers)." [5:64]

The Qur'an offers the disorientated human being without objective, captive of the material values, indifferent before oppression and injustice, a goal:

"Why should you not fight in the cause of God when weak men, women, and children are imploring..." [4:75]

"How many a prophet there has been with whom a multitude of godly men fought. They did not falter for what befell them in the way of God neither did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves; and God loves the steadfast." [3:146]

"Oh you who believe, you shall reverence God and believe in His messenger. He will then grant you double the reward from His mercy, endow you with light to guide you, and forgive you." [57:28]

The Qur'an is a Scripture that speaks about everything:

"We have revealed to you this book to provide explanations for everything, and guidance, and mercy, and good news for the submitters." [16:89]

It is not limited to relative topics of the divine kin, nor to the establishment of social justice:

"Certainly, those who stand up for their rights, when injustice befalls them, are not committing any error. The wrong ones are those who treat the people unjustly, and resort to aggression without provocation. These have incurred a painful retribution." [42:41-42]

"God has provided for some of you more than others. Those who are given plenty would never give their properties to their subordinates to the extent of making them partners. Would they give up God's blessings?" [16:71]

All of the topics covered are open to philosophical and metaphysical dimensions:

"For that cause We decreed for the Children of Israel that whosoever kills a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." [5:32]

"Anyone who gives up his home, emigrating to God and His messenger, then death catches up with him, his recompense is reserved with God." [4:100]

"Anyone who earns a sin, earns it to the detriment of his own soul. God is Omniscient, Most Wise." [4:111]

Over which bases are established a social model is poured over all of the most weak, the most defenseless, the neediest:

"They consult you concerning women: say, 'God enlightens you regarding them, as recited for you in the scripture. You shall restore the rights of orphaned girls whom you cheat out of their due dowries when you wish to marry them: you shall not take advantage of them. The rights of orphaned boys must also be protected as well. You shall treat the orphans equitably. Whatever good you do, GOD is fully aware thereof.'" [4:127]

We are called to reflect on the signs that surround us:

"They remember God while standing, sitting, and on their sides, and they reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord, You did not create all this in vain. Be You glorified. Save us from the retribution of Hell." [3:191]

"Do not corrupt the earth after it has been set straight, and worship Him out of reverence, and out of hope. Surely, God's mercy is attainable by the righteous." [7:56]

"He is the One who sends the wind with good omen, as a mercy from His hands. Once they gather heavy clouds, we drive them to dead lands, and send down water therefrom, to produce with it all kinds of fruits. We thus resurrect the dead, that you may take heed." [7:57]

As the great Andalusia Gnostic from the 7th century said:

“The Qur’an, maximum ocean, whose abyss is bottomless because it has no bed to reach, nor shore to draw into.”

Throughout the centuries, the scholars have written exegesis about this miraculous text, each from the field of their specialty, the grammar, medicine, metaphysics, law...without any of them being able to drain not even a little all of the teachings enclosed in it.

What was written is not equivalent to the Qur’an nor does it represent a complete interpretation of the Qur’an and all of its meanings. Its levels of reading are infinite and its comprehension encloses a relationship with the level of erudition and of spirituality of the reader.

Its passages, though revealed in specific moments and adequate to the events that were occurring, possess a generic and eternal value; it speaks to us about things that do not change in the human being:

“Have you noted the one whose god is his ego? Consequently, God sends him astray, despite his knowledge, seals his hearing and his mind, and places a veil on his eyes.”

[45:23]

And the concrete circumstances in which they were revealed represent examples of similar situations that continually hold a place in our everyday life and in the history of humanity, because of that, its verses speak to us directly. It connects with

what is happening to us and it responds to the questions that are burning in our mind and in our hearts at the same time in which we are reading:

“O you who believe, if you strike in the cause of God, you shall be absolutely sure. Do not say to one who offers you peace, ‘You are not a believer,’ seeking the spoils of this world. For God possesses infinite spoils.” [4:94]

The Qur’an has an anti-dogmatic text:

“We have sent down the Torah, containing guidance and light.” [5:44]

“The people of the Gospel shall rule in accordance with God’s revelations therein.” [5:46-47]

“We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, and confirming the previous scriptures, the Torah, and augmenting its guidance and light, and to enlighten the righteous.

You shall rule among them in accordance with God’s revelations, and do not follow their wishes if they differ from the truth that came to you. For each of you, we have decreed laws and different rites. Had God willed, He could have made you one congregation. But He thus puts you to the test through the revelations He has given each of you.

You shall compete in righteousness. To God is your final destiny - all of you - then He will inform you of everything you had disputed.” [5:48]

That calls for tolerance:

“You shall invite to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and debate with them in the best possible manner.” [16:125]

For modesty:

“You shall not walk proudly on earth - you cannot bore through the earth, nor can you be as tall as the mountains.” [17:37]

For honor:

“You shall not touch the orphans' money except for their own good, until they reach maturity. You shall fulfill your covenants, for a covenant is a great responsibility. You shall give full measure when you trade, and weigh equitably. This is better and more righteous.” [17:34-35]

For what is good:

“You shall cooperate in matters of righteousness and piety; do not cooperate in matters that are sinful and evil.” [5:2]

For justice:

"Oh you who believe, you shall be absolutely equitable, and observe God, when you serve as witnesses. Do not be provoked by your conflicts with some people into committing injustice. You shall be absolutely equitable, for it is more righteous. You shall observe God. God is fully Cognizant of everything you do." [5:8]

Islam does not confront the rest of the transcendences' beliefs. On the contrary, it considers all religions part of the Truth revealed and recognizes all of the prophets as part of one spirit and deliverers of the same message:

"Say, 'We believe in GOD, and in what was sent down to us, and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Patriarchs, and in what was given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them. To Him alone we are submitters.'" [3:84]

"Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in God, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve." [2:62]

"We have inspired you, as we inspired Noah and the prophets after him. And we inspired Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, the Patriarchs, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon. And we gave David the Psalms. Messengers we have told you about, and messengers we never told you about. And God spoke to Moses directly. Messengers as bearers of good

news and warners, so that the people will have no excuse when they face God, after all these messengers have come to them.” [4:163-165]

For value:

“Therefore, do not reverence human beings; you shall reverence Me instead. And do not trade away My revelations for a cheap price.” [5:44]

The Qur’an is not a history book, in a way which the wording respects some kind of order of events, but rather it is an educational book, a guide and a personal construction of human beings to which they return over and over again to the same topics, observing them from different point of views, focusing on different aspects of the same and interspersed commentaries.

“Oh people of the scripture, do not transgress the limits of your religion, and do not say about God except the truth.” [4:171]

ANNEX II

COMPARISONS

Islam, Catholicism and Judaism

[Refer to www.urd.ac.ir/english]

COMPARISON: THE CONCEPT OF GOD

Islam: One Omnipotent God, Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipresent.

Catholicism: Trinity of God (The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit).

Islam: God is the Creator. To refer to God as “the Father” is to reduce Him to the human dimension. It is, in fact, easier to be a father than a mother. Our father in Islam is Adam ^(P), who is the father of all Humanity.

Catholicism: God is the Father and the Creator.

Islam: God is without gender, and is neither man nor woman.

Catholicism: God is male.

Islam: God is without image.

Catholicism: God is represented in the iconography of two men and a dove.

Islam: God has no mother or father, and has no children.

Catholicism: God the Father has a son. God the Son has a father and a mother. He also has brothers, grandparents, and is the grandson of the father and mother of Mary. Seeing God in this way, it should also be said that the God Father has in-laws, and is the son-in-law of the father and mother of Mary ^(P). By this reasoning, Mary had two husbands, God the Father and Joseph the carpenter.

Islam: God is omnipotent and is not mortal.

Catholicism: God, the son, was mortal and was crucified.

Islam: The Holy Spirit is the Angel Gabriel who brought the word of God to the great Prophets.

Catholicism: The Holy Spirit is God, one third of the Trinity. He is Lord and Giver of Life. He spoke for the Prophets ^(P).

COMPARISON: PRAYER

Islam: Considers God to be Clement and Merciful. The clemency and mercy of God are not comparable to human clemency. Therefore Muslims in their prayers plead for God's clemency and mercy, regardless of whether they deserve it or are worthy of it. They ask God to judge them with His clemency, not with his Justice, because God uses his justice

rather than his clemency when we find ourselves in difficulties. For example, Muslims say:

My God, forgive me although I am undeserving and am unworthy of your forgiveness. Forgive me because forgiveness is worthy of you who are most Clement. My God, on the day of Justice, please use your clemency and not your justice.

When Y  'isha asked the Prophet (PBD) about what to supplicate on the grand Night of Ordainment (laylat al-qadr), replied You should say:

O Allah verily you are all-pardoning and You love to pardon, so pardon me.

Catholicism: In the oration known as “The Lord’s Prayer”, the faithful ask for forgiveness of “*our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*” In these terms the suppliant considers his own clemency greater than that of God’s, he therefore pleads to God to augment His clemency and mercy, but in the final analysis he is presenting himself as a model of clemency before God. He is thus asking God to increase His clemency and mercy until they have reached the suppliant’s own level of clemency. The suppliant would be correct if by saying:

“forgive our offenses and help us to forgive those who have trespassed against us.”

COMPARISON: FAITH

Islam: Faith in Islam is based on logic and reasoning.

Catholicism: Faith is based on unquestionable dogma, that is, blind faith or faith without reasoning.

Islam: Islam is the only religion inviting reasoning and analysis. Muhammad (PBD) Prophet of Islam, said: *one hour of thinking is worth seventy years of praying to God.* The Qur'an is full and rich with invitations to reason. According to Islam the Prophets of God, among them Jesus, invited reasoning. The dogma of faith is considered to be a distortion on the part of Catholicism.

Catholicism: Invites the acceptance of religious dogma with no thought or reason, that is, without rationale.

Islam: Education and study, as a positive objective, are considered to be prayers to God. Muhammad (PBD) said: *the wise man's ink is worth more than the martyr's blood.*

Catholicism: Galileo, who in his wisdom declared the earth was round, was condemned to death by the Church.

Islam: There are no intermediaries between man and God.

Catholicism: The Church and its clergy are considered to be the intermediaries between man and God.

Islam: Supplication and prayer are directed particularly to God.

Catholicism: Prayer is often indirect and is channeled through the Church.

Islam: God forgives. He is the Judge on the Final Day of Judgement. He punishes or forgives. Forgiveness is granted directly by God.

Catholicism: Forgiveness is granted by priests of the Church and often in return they receive a monetary recompense.

Islam: Forgiveness is petitioned directly to God, it is forbidden to confess sins to anyone other than God himself, since God is the final judge on the Day of Judgement and He is omnipresent and omniscient.

Catholicism: Invites the believer to ask forgiveness and indulgence of the priests of the Church, who are often paid in return.

Islam: In Islam it is a sin to confess or recant the sin to others, even to a member of the clergy. It is a private matter, and therefore he privately and directly asks for God's forgiveness. To ask forgiveness from anyone other than God is a greater sin, when considering that God is the judge on Judgement Day, and only God has the power of forgiveness, for He is omniscient. But if a person has committed an offense against another person, he may ask the offended person to forgive him. If a public sin has been committed, the transgressor should ask forgiveness in public.

Catholicism: Sin must be confessed to a priest, and this is interpreted by Muslims as a means of controlling society.

Islam: Islam speaks of love for God, and affirms the clemency and mercy of God. In the Qur'an, more is devoted to God's mercy than to the fear of God. Quote, Imam Alí.

Catholicism: The Church invites faith more on the basis of the fear rather than the love of God.

Islam: The ingestion of the flesh of another human being is considered a deplorable act.

Catholicism: The faithful symbolically ingest the flesh and blood of Jesus (P) as a positive sacrament of the Holy Communion.

Islam: Both Muslims and Jews forbid the ingestion of pork or pork products.

Catholicism: The eating of pork is permitted, despite the fact that its flesh is genetically similar to that of the human body, therefore susceptible to the transmission of virus.

COMPARISON OF JESUS AND MARY (P)

Islam: Jesus (P) is a human being and a great Prophet of God.

Catholicism: Considers Jesus to be the "son of God", one third of the Trinity.

Islam: The birth of Jesus (P) without a human father was a miracle of God's will, but he is nonetheless a human being and a great Prophet of God.

Catholicism: The father of Jesus was God himself.

Islam: Recognizes the purity and virginity of Mary (P), and accepts that Jesus was conceived without a father, because he was born of God's will.

Catholicism: Jesus was incarnate in Mary (P), of a virgin birth, but is the son of God.

Islam: Mary (P) was never married.

Catholicism: Mary (P) was married to Joseph when her son was born. Joseph doubted Mary's (P) virgin birth but the Angel Gabriel convinced him that he should accept (that his wife had served as a vehicle for the birth of the son of God).

Islam: A chapter of the Qur'an is called "Mary" and is devoted in part to her story. Another chapter called "The Table" describes "The Last Supper".

Catholicism: The Bible contains no chapter devoted to either "Mary" or "The Table" (*Al-Maeda*).

Islam: Islam attributes miracles to Mary (P) such as having received the fruits of Paradise sent by God.

Catholicism: The Bible recognizes no such miracles.

Islam: Islam attributes more miracles to Jesus than are described in the Bible, such as his having spoken in public only days after his birth, regarding the Prophecy. The Qur'an affirms that the miracles of the Prophets were granted by God.

Catholicism: The Bible attributes miracles to Jesus, but fewer than those related in the Qur'an.

Islam: Islam recognizes the ascension of Jesus (P) without his having been crucified.

Catholicism: Catholicism recognizes the ascension of Jesus (P) after his death on the cross.

Islam: Based on Islamic vision, a miracle occurred by which Jesus (P) was not crucified, but he did ascend to God. It was Judas the traitor, who in the eyes of the enemies of Jesus looked just like him, who was crucified in his place. The Qur'an affirms that: *"Certainly they did not kill him, rather God raised him up to Him."* (The Qur'an, 4:157-158)

Catholicism: Jesus (P) was crucified, suffered and was buried, then was resurrected on the third day, at which point he ascended to Heaven.

Islam: Jesus (P) had knowledge and awareness of God, and just as the other great Prophets, at no time believed that God had abandoned him.

Catholicism: According to the Bible, as he suffered on the cross Jesus (P) called out, *"Father, why have you abandoned me?"*, in which case he would have been unaware of God (and doubtful of God's unfailing presence).

Islam: Jesus (P) had no fear of death, because he knew that death was the portal to Paradise and a closeness to God.

Catholicism: Jesus ^(P) was afraid of dying. Before his crucifixion he lamented in Gethsemane and was anguished by the persecution he suffered.

COMPARISON OF THE ORIGINAL SIN

Islam: Adam and Eve ^(P) were created by God with no father or mother, and are the father and mother of all Mankind.

Catholicism: Adam and Eve ^(P) were created by God without father or mother and are also God's first progeny.

Islam: In Islam, Adam and Eve ^(P) were forgiven for their sins.

Catholicism: Adam and Eve were punished for their disobedience of God, were expelled from Paradise and lived a life of suffering and hard labor on earth.

Islam: Life begins in innocence, each child is born pure and blameless, and if a child dies before he reaches maturity he enters Paradise. There is no logic or justice in a child carrying the burden of the sins of others, especially of Adam and Eve ^(P), for a sin committed thousands of years before, and which according to Islam was forgiven.

Catholicism: Life begins in sin, each child is born in "original sin" because of the sin of Adam and Eve ^(P), therefore, although only a child, perhaps only a fetus, if it dies before baptism it cannot enter Paradise but must remain in Limbo. After the Vatican's claiming for centuries of the existence of Limbo, the Pope recently denied the existence of Limbo

without clarifying where dead children go if they have not been baptized.

Judaism: *"The soul which does sin will be put to death: the son will not be made responsible for the evil-doing of the father, or the father for the evil-doing of the son; the righteousness of the upright will be on himself, and the evil-doing of the evil-doer on himself."* (The Bible,

Ezekiel 18:20)

Islam: Each person is responsible for his own actions, from the time "he has use of reason", that is, his maturity. On the Day of Final Judgement he will answer for his actions, but not for those of others. According to Islam, each person will be questioned regarding his own actions, no one else's.

Catholicism: Each person bears the burden of the sin of Adam and Eve (P).

Islam: Jesus (P) and the other Prophets taught what was just, and invited others to follow their example. Each of us is responsible for our own actions.

"The duty of the messenger is only the delivery (of the message). God knows what you reveal and what you hide."

(The Qur'an, 5:99)

"No bearer shall bear another's burden, and should one heavily burdened call [another] to carry it, nothing of it will be carried, even if he were a near relative. You can only warn those who fear their Lord in secret, and maintain the prayer. Whoever purifies himself, purifies only for his own sake, and to God is the return" (The Qur'an, 35:18)

Catholicism: Jesus ^(P) forgave our sins, “washed us free of them”, by means of his sacrifice, more than two thousand years ago.

Islam: In order to assume responsibility for our behavior and actions we must be aware of ourselves. Thus anything that alters our state of awareness is prohibited, therefore alcohol is forbidden by Islam.

Catholicism: Alcohol is permitted and wine is drunk on the occasion of religious ceremonies, such as the Mass and liturgical acts.

Judaism: (The Bible, Old Testaments, Proverbs 20:1) Bible Quote, Proverbs 20:1

COMPARISON: MATRIMONY

Islam: Marital relations are necessary and marriage is considered, as Muhammad ^(PBD) said, to be “half of religion”.

Catholicism: Marital relations are established as an act that permits the procreation of children, and suggests, as in the case of priests, monks or nuns, that celibacy brings them closer to God.

Islam: Marriage is preferable to an unmarried state, and it is better to be married than to remain a virgin, or celibate.

Catholicism: It is preferable that nuns do not marry and so they must remain virgin.

Islam: Islamic clergy do marry. According to Islamic thinking, “marriage brings man or woman closer to God.”

Catholicism: The Catholic clergy, those (presumably) closest to God, such as monks or priests, must remain celibate and promote celibacy.

Islam: Divorce is a “permitted evil”. It could be seen as the solution to a marriage that has failed, in which the couple concerned no longer wishes to remain together.

Catholicism: Divorce (although today in many countries now tolerated), is strictly prohibited and only the Pope is empowered to annul a marriage.

Islam: Polygamy is permitted because it is interpreted as a viable social solution, when faced with a demographic imbalance, with more women than men. (It is also the response to other imperatives, according to the case). The Prophet Abraham (P) himself was polygamous.

Catholicism: Prohibits polygamy, regardless of demographics. In many countries, the female population greatly exceeds the male.

Islam: There are provisions in Islam for temporary marriage, which is allowed according to the precepts of the Shi'ite School of Islam.

Catholicism: Prohibits temporary marriage or free union.

Islam: There is no discrimination among the children born of various models or types of marriage. They are all legitimate and they all have equal rights of inheritance and the father is equally responsible for their maintenance.

Catholicism: Does not recognize polygamy and discriminates against children born out of wedlock. (They are considered “illegitimate”. No such stigma is attached to children in Islam.)

Islam: A clergyman is not required as an intermediary in order to perform the marriage ceremony in Islam. Muslim couples are in accord regarding the terms of their agreement, and a verbal arrangement is sufficient, although for purposes of civil law, ratified by a notary.

Catholicism: A clergyman is required for the performance of the marriage ceremony and the ratification of the marriage vows.

COMPARISON: WOMEN

Islam: Sexual satisfaction, in Islam, is confined to the marital status. Sexual provocation is not permitted in a social context.

European or Occidental Culture: Sexual provocation in social and professional relationships is considered appropriate.

Islam: Sexual attraction (and pleasure) are considered to be marital values of the utmost intimacy, and should never be treated as social, commercial or professional values.

European or Occidental Culture: Sexual attraction (and/or pleasure) is considered to be equally valid in a matrimonial, social, commercial or professional context.

Islam: The Muslim woman covers herself when she leaves her home in order to avoid provoking attention or attraction, in consideration of the same values as Holy Mary (P).

European or Occidental Culture: Many, though not all women, are accustomed to provoking sexual allure, in a social context, by means of their garments or fashion.

Islam: The use of sex as a commercial product in society is considered to be an insult to women's dignity, and is therefore prohibited.

European or Occidental Culture: The use of feminine sexuality for the promotion of commercial products is commonplace and is freely permitted, even encouraged.

Islam: The Muslim woman does not provoke or seek a physical response in a social relationship, nor does she use her feminine mystique for commercial purposes.

European or Occidental Culture: Physical allure is valued in a social and commercial context.

Islam: The Muslim woman wears make-up and enjoys sensuality in the intimate relationship with her husband, but removes her make-up if she is to leave her home.

European or Occidental Culture: Many, though not all, Occidental women wear make-up and behave in a provocative or sensual manner outside their home.

Islam: Prostitution is prohibited in Islam.

European or Occidental Culture: Prostitution is tolerated and is considered to be remunerative labor.

Islam: Both male and female homosexualities are prohibited by Islam and are considered to be unnatural. Anyone born a hermaphrodite, however, has the right to surgery and may chose to become either a man or a woman, providing the person is an adult.

European or Occidental Culture: Both male and female homosexualities are tolerated and have become legitimized in the definition of human rights. In some countries a homosexual couple may marry and even adopt children.

If Western culture tolerates homosexuality on the basis of “consenting adults” it is conceivable that incest, by virtue of the same definition, could be “tolerated”, and equally considered within the rights of “consenting adults”.

COMPARISON: ENTERING INTO THE FAITH

Islam: In order to enter into the Islamic faith it is sufficient to repeat two phrases, uttered in good conscience and with absolute conviction.

“In the name of God, the clement and the merciful, I bear witness that there is no God but God, (One God alone). I bear witness that Muhammad (PBD) is the Prophet of God and is His messenger.”

For admittance into the Shi’ite School, which its members consider to represent the original faith, it is only necessary to add: *“I bear witness that the Imam Alí is the successor of the Prophet”*.

According to Islam, God forgives all prior sin of anyone who enters into the faith.

The Prophet (PBD) said:

“He who performs good acts after having embraced Islam will not be punished for anything that he did in his pre-Islamic state, whilst he who continues to commit bad after having embraced Islam will be taken to account for everything from beginning to end.”

Catholicism: In order to enter into the Catholic faith it is necessary to accept baptism by a priest who acts as God’s intermediary. Faith alone does not suffice.

Judaism: Only a blood descendant of a Jewish mother, strictly speaking, may be considered a Jew. Faith is not involved.

COMPARISON: DUTIES REGARDING THE PROPHETS

God demanded that Mankind hear and attend the message of the Prophets, since they have spoken in God's name. If we were to ignore these messages we would have to account to God for our failing.

Judaism: According to the Old Testament (God speaking to Moses):

*"I will give them a prophet from among themselves, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will say to them whatever I give him orders to say. **And whoever does not give ear to my words which he will say in my name, will be responsible to me.**"* (The Bible, Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

Catholicism: The new Bible Testament affirms that Jesus was, in effect, the Prophet promised in these verses. And said that who does not give attention to that Prophet, will be cut off from among the people.

*"So then, (...) Who is to be kept in heaven till the time when all things are put right, of which God has given word by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been from the earliest times. For Moses said, The Lord will give you a prophet from among your people, like me; you will give ear to everything which he will say to you. **And every soul who does not give attention to that Prophet, will be cut off from among the people.**"* (The Bible, Acts 3:19-23)

And God said in The Qur'an:

"And when God took the covenant of the prophets: 'that I have given you of the book and wisdom. then there shall come to you a messenger (Muhammad) confirming what is with you, you shall believe in him and you shall support him to be victorious, do you agree and take my load on this? 'They answered: 'we do agree. 'God said: 'then bear witness, and I will be with you among the witnesses. 'Whosoever turns back after that, they are the transgressors. Are they seeking a religion other than that of God?, and to him whosoever is in the heavens and the earth has submitted willingly and unwillingly. To him they shall be returned? say: 'we believe in God and in what is sent down to us and in that which was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to (prophets) Moses and Jesus, and the prophets from their lord. We do not differentiate between any of them. To him we are submitters (Muslims). He who chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the everlasting life he will be among the losers. How shall God guide a people who lapse into disbelief after they believed and bore witness that the messenger is true, and after receiving clear proofs! God does not guide the harm doers. Those, their recompense shall be the curse of God, the angels, and all the people there they shall live for ever. Their punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be given respite. Except those who afterwards repent and mend their ways, God is forgiving and the most merciful. Indeed those who disbelieve after they have believed and increase in disbelief, their repentance shall not be accepted. These are those who are astray.'" (The Qur'an, 3:81- 90)

ANNEX III

KNOWLEDGE IN ISLAM

Refer to:

www.hadith.net

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THE QUR'AN AND KNOWLEDGE

- *“He gives wisdom to whomever He wishes, and He who is given wisdom, is certainly given an abundant good. But none takes admonition except those who possess intellect.” (The Qur’an 2:269)*
- *“And they will say, ‘Had we listened or applied reason, we would not have been among the inmates of the Blaze.” (The Qur’an 67:10)*
- *“Say, ‘Are those who know equal to those who do not know?’ Only those who possess intellect take admonition.” (The Qur’an 39:9)*
- *“God will raise those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge in rank and God is well aware of what you do.” (The Qur’an 58:11)*

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBD) SAID ABOUT KNOWLEDGE

- *When God wants good for a community, He increases their scholars and decreases their ignorant ones, so when the scholar speaks, he finds supporters, but when the ignorant one speaks, he is defeated.*²
- *Knowledge is a treasury, the key to which is the question, so ask and God will have mercy on you for verily four people are rewarded [for that question]: the questioner, the speaker, the listener, and the one that admires them.*³
- *The very basis of man is his intellect, and the man devoid of intellect has no religion.*⁴
- *Knowledge is too great to be encompassed, so take the best from each thing.*⁵

THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECT IN CHASTISEMENT AND REWARD

- *Verily all good is grasped through the intellect, and the man devoid of intellect has no religion.*⁶
- *The Prophet (PBD) asked a group of people who were praising a man, 'How is the man's intellect?' to which they replied, 'O Prophet of God, we are telling you about his endeavours at worship and other good acts, and you are asking us about his intellect?!' So he replied, 'Verily the stupid person suffers as a*

² *Kanz al-ÝUmmÁl*, no. 28692

³ *TuÁaf al-ÝUqÙl*, no. 41

⁴ *RawÁat al-WÁÝiÙÐn*, p. 9

⁵ *Kanz al-Fawa'id*, v. 2, p. 31

⁶ *TuÁaf al-ÝUqÙl*, no. 54

result of his stupidity worse than the licentiousness of an immoral person. The servants will rise up in rank in the Hereafter and will receive great rewards from their Lord in proportion to their intellects.⁷

THE VIRTUE OF KNOWLEDGE

- *When committing a sin, the knowledgeable man is guilty of the one sin whereas the ignorant man is guilty of two [i.e. the sin itself and the sin of ignorance].⁸*
- *Knowledge is the root of all good whereas ignorance is the root of all evil.⁹*
- *The quest for knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim... Knowledge leads to action and action follows it...¹⁰*
- *The worthiest of people are those who have the most knowledge, and the least of them in worth are those with the least knowledge.¹¹*
- *The people who are closest to the rank of prophet hood are the people of knowledge and striving.¹²*
- *On the Day of Resurrection, the ink of the scholars will be weighed up against the blood of the martyrs, and the ink of the scholars will preponderate over the blood of the martyrs.¹³*

⁷ *Majma' al-Bay'An*, v. 1, p. 487

⁸ *Kanz al-ÝUmmÁl*, no. 28784

⁹ *Bi'Ár al-AnwÁr*, v. 77, p. 175, no. 9

¹⁰ *AmÁlÐ al-ÓÛsÐ*, p. 488, no. 1069

¹¹ *AmÁlÐ al-ÑadÛq*, p. 27, no. 4

¹² *al-Ma'ajjat al-Bay'ÁÁ'*, v. 1, p. 14

¹³ *TafsÐr al-Durr al-ManthÛr*, v. 3, no. 423

THE SUPERIORITY OF KNOWLEDGE TO ACTS OF WORSHIP

- *A little knowledge is better than a lot of worship.*¹⁴
- *To sleep having knowledge is better than to pray in ignorance.*¹⁵
- *Verily the knowledgeable man is superior to the [mere] worshipper as the sun is to the stars, and the worshipper is superior to the one who does not worship as the superiority of the moon to the stars.*¹⁶
- *An hour spent by a knowledgeable man lying on his bed thinking about his deeds is better than seventy years spent by the worshipper performing acts of worship.*¹⁷
- *The knowledgeable man is superior to the [mere] worshipper by seventy degrees, the distance between two degrees spanning the gallop of a horse for seventy years; and this is because Satan plants an innovation amongst people which the knowledgeable man notices and prohibits, whilst the worshipper attends to his worship neither taking any notice of it nor recognizing it.*¹⁸
- *By the One Who holds Muḥammad's soul in His Grasp! Verily one knowledgeable man is more difficult for Satan to bear than seventy worshippers, for the worshipper serves himself whilst the knowledgeable man serves others.*¹⁹

¹⁴ *al-Maʿajjat al-BayʿĀʿ*, v. 1, p. 22

¹⁵ *Munyat al-MurḌd*, p. 104

¹⁶ *BiĀr al-Anwār*, v. 2, p. 19, no. 49

¹⁷ *Rawāat al-WāʿiʾūḌn*, no. 16

¹⁸ *Ibid.* no. 17

¹⁹ *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl*, no. 28908

THE DEATH OF A SCHOLAR

- *The death of a scholar is an affliction that cannot be compensated and a void that cannot be filled, for he is a star that has been obliterated. The death of a whole tribe is easier to bear than the death of a scholar.*²⁰

ENJOINMENT OF SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

- *Seek knowledge even in China, for verily to seek knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim.*²¹
- *Seeking knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim. Indeed how God loves those who strive in their quest for knowledge.*²²
- *He who cannot endure the submissiveness entailed in learning for an hour will remain submissive to ignorance forever.*²³
- *There are two insatiable types of people who are never satisfied by their quest: the seeker of knowledge and the seeker after this world.*²⁴

THE SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE

- *The seeker of knowledge among ignorant people is as the living one among the dead.*²⁵
- *When death comes to the seeker of knowledge whilst he is in that state [of seeking knowledge], he dies as a martyr.*²⁶

²⁰ *Kanz al-ÝUmmÁl*, no. 28858

²¹ *Kanz al-ÝUmmÁl*, no. 28697

²² *al-KÁfÐ*, v. 1, p. 30, no. 1

²³ *ÝAwÁlÐ al-La'ÁlÐ*, v. 1, p. 285, no. 135

²⁴ *Kanz al-ÝUmmÁl*, no. 28726

²⁵ *Kanz al-ÝUmmÁl*, no. 28726

- *He who goes out to seek knowledge is indeed on the path of God until he returns.*²⁷
- *He who seeks knowledge is as one who spends his day fasting and his night praying. Verily a chapter of knowledge that a man learns is better for him than for him to have as much gold as a mountain and give it all away in the way of God.*²⁸
- *He who goes out to seek knowledge, God guarantees his sustenance for him.*²⁹
- *The seeker of knowledge is the seeker of mercy; the seeker of knowledge is the pillar of Islam and is given his recompense with the prophets.*³⁰
- *Verily the angels spread their wings over the seeker of knowledge and seek forgiveness on his behalf.*³¹
- *He who traverses a path in order to gain knowledge thereupon, God makes him traverse the path to Paradise.*³²
- *He who goes out to seek knowledge is himself sought after by Paradise.*³³
- *Verily everything seeks forgiveness for the seeker of knowledge, including the fishes in the sea, the reptiles on the land, and the predators and livestock of the earth.*³⁴

²⁶ *al-TarghĀb wa al-TarhĀb*, v. 1, p. 97, no. 16

²⁷ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 28702

²⁸ *Munyat al-MurĀd*, p. 100

²⁹ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 28701

³⁰ *Ibid.* no. 28729

³¹ *Ibid.* no. 28745

³² *AmĀlĀ al-ŶadŪq*, p. 58, no. 9

³³ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 28842

³⁴ *AmĀlĀ al-MufĀd*, p. 29, no. 1

TEACHING

- *He who has knowledge, acts upon what he knows and teaches it to others is regarded as great in the greatest Kingdom [of the heavens].³⁵*
- *The best form of charity is for a man to gain knowledge and then teach it to his fellow brother.³⁶*

THE VIRTUE OF THE TEACHER

- *It is narrated in TanbĐh al-KhawÁÔir: God, most High, revealed to Prophet Moses (P) saying, O Moses, learn good and teach it to people, for verily I enlighten the graves of the teachers and the learners of good, so that they never feel afraid in their resting place.³⁷*
- *The most generous from amongst you all...is the man who has been taught knowledge and subsequently spreads his knowledge to others. He will be raised on the Day of Resurrection as a community in himself and after him is the man who is generous in giving up his life for God, Mighty and Exalted, and is killed for Him.³⁸*

GAINING KNOWLEDGE FOR GOD AND FOR OTHER THAN GOD

- *He who seeks knowledge for God, no sooner does he learn even a chapter of it than it increases him in humility within himself, in*

³⁵ *TanbĐh al-KhawÁÔir*, v. 1, p. 82

³⁶ *Munyat al-MurĐd*, p. 105

³⁷ *TanbĐh al-KhawÁÔir*, v. 2, p. 212

³⁸ *al-TarghĐb wa al-TarhĐb*, v. 1, p. 119, no. 5

humbleness in front of people, it increases his fear of God and his striving in religion, and that is the one who benefits from the knowledge that he gains. And he who seeks knowledge for this world and for status amongst people and for a favoured position with the ruler, no sooner does he learn even a chapter of it than it only increases his arrogance within himself, his presumptuousness with people, his self-delusion about God and his estrangement from religion. That is the one who does not benefit from his knowledge, and must subsequently refrain from it and stop furnishing proof for the case against himself in order not to feel regret and shame on the Day of Resurrection.³⁹

- *He who desires knowledge in order that he may beguile people will never even smell the fragrance of Paradise.⁴⁰*

CHOOSING A TEACHER

- *Take the truth even if it be from wrongdoers, but do not take falsehood even if it be from the righteous – be critics of speech.⁴¹*
- *Knowledge is a part of religion [just as] prayer is a part of religion...⁴²*

THE RIGHTS OF THE STUDENT TO BE WATCHED BY THE TEACHER

- *Be gentle towards those whom you teach as well to those whom you learn from.⁴³*

³⁹ *RawĀat al-WĀYiŪḌn*, p. 16

⁴⁰ *MakĀrim al-AkhlĀq*, v. 2, p. 364, no. 2661

⁴¹ *al-MaĀsin*, v. 1, p. 359, no. 769

⁴² *Kanz al-ŪmmĀl*, no. 28666

⁴³ *Munyat al-MurḌd*, p. 193

THE RIGHTS OF THE TEACHER TO BE WATCHED BY THE STUDENT

- *There are three types of people whose right none will deem lightly apart from the hypocrite who manifests his hypocrisy: the old person in Islam, the just leader, and the teacher of good.*⁴⁴

HONOURING THE SCHOLAR

- *He who goes forth to meet the scholars has indeed come forth to meet me, and he who visits the scholars has indeed visited me, and he who sits in the company of the scholars has indeed sat in my company, and whoever sits in my company is as if he has sat in the company of my Lord.*⁴⁵

DUTIES INCUMBENT ON THE STUDENT

- *Al-KhiĀr (P) said to Prophet Moses (P), 'Oh Moses, devote yourself exclusively to knowledge if you want it, for verily knowledge is for the one who devotes himself exclusively to it.'*⁴⁶
- *Man's intellect is incomplete until ten qualities come together in him ... that he must never tire of seeking knowledge his whole life.*⁴⁷

THE VIRTUE OF THE SCHOLARS

- *The scholars are God's trustees over His creation.*⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 43811

⁴⁵ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 28883

⁴⁶ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 44176

⁴⁷ *TanbĀh al-KhawĀĪr*, v. 2, p. 112

⁴⁸ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 28675

- *The superiority of the scholar over others is as the superiority of the prophet over his community.*⁴⁹
- *Whoever says: 'I am a knowledgeable man' is indeed ignorant.*⁵⁰

THE DUTIES INCUMBENT UPON A KNOWLEDGEABLE MAN

- *He who acts contrary to what he knows, his immoral acts supersede his righteous acts.*⁵¹
- *The one who worships without any knowledge [of his actions] is as a donkey in a windmill.*⁵²

ENJOINMENT OF ACTING UPON ONE'S KNOWLEDGE

- *Advise each other with knowledge, for verily your betrayal of someone in their knowledge is worse than your betraying him in their wealth, and very God will question you on the Day of Resurrection.*⁵³
- *The ambition of knowledgeable people is greater awareness, whereas the ambition of fools is telling stories.*⁵⁴

THE SEVERITY OF THE CHASTISEMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGEABLE MAN

- *Verily the inmates of the Fire will be tormented by the stench of the knowledgeable man who had abandoned his knowledge.*⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Ibid. no. 28798

⁵⁰ *Munyat al-Murðd*, no. 137

⁵¹ *al-MaĀĀsin*, v. 1, p. 314, no. 621

⁵² *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 28709

⁵³ *AmĀĀÐ al-ŌŪsÐ*, p. 126, no. 198

⁵⁴ *Kanz al-ŶUmmĀl*, no. 29337

THE VARIOUS TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

- *The best type of knowledge is that which benefits.*⁵⁶

THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE OF PEOPLE

- *The most knowledgeable of people is he who adds other people's knowledge to his own.*⁵⁷

SAYINGS OF IMAM ALI (P)

- *Knowledge and wisdom are really the privilege of a faithful Muslim. If you have lost them, get them back even though you may have to get them from the apostates.*
- *Value of each man depends upon the art and skill which he has attained.*
- *I want to teach you five of those things which deserve your greatest anxiety to acquire them: Have hope only in Allah. Be afraid of nothing but sins. If you do not know a thing, never feel ashamed to admit ignorance. If you do not know a thing, never hesitate or feel ashamed to learn it. Acquire patience and endurance because their relation with true faith is that of a head to a body, a body is of no use without a head, similarly true faith can be of no use without attributes of resignation, endurance and patience.*

⁵⁵ *BiĀr al-Anwār*, v. 2, p. 34, no. 30

⁵⁶ *AmĀl al-ÑadŪq*, p. 394, no. 1

⁵⁷ *AmĀl al-ÑadŪq*, p. 27, no. 4

- *Like your body your mind also gets tired so refresh it by wise sayings.*
- *That knowledge which remains only on your tongue is very superficial. The intrinsic value of knowledge is that you act upon it.*
- *A man can be valued through his sayings.*
- *There is enough light for one who wants to see.*
- *When you feel afraid or nervous to do a thing then do it because the real harm which you may thus receive is less poignant than its expectation and fear. 175. Your supremacy over others is in proportion to the extent of your knowledge and wisdom.*
- *Minds get tired like bodies. When you feel that your; mind is tired, then invigorate it with sober advice.*
- *A wise man first thinks and then speaks and a fool speaks first and then thinks.*
- *There is no greater wealth than wisdom, no greater poverty than ignorance; no greater heritage than culture and no greater support than consultation.*
- *One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.*

IMÁM SHI'TTE ÝALÐ (P) SAID:

- *Whoever increases his thinking in whatever he learns, his knowledge will become proficient, and he will come to understand whatever he did not understand before.⁵⁸*
- *Even if you are not an articulate scholar, at least be an attentive listener.⁵⁹*

⁵⁸ *Ghurar al-Íkam*, no. 8917

ANNEX IV

QUOTATIONS FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE

HANS KUNG

The following is an excerpt taken from “Christianity and World Religions: Dialogue with Islam”, in Leonard Swidler (ed.), *Muslims in Dialogue: The Evolution of A Dialogue*, vol. 3 (The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) by the Christian philosopher Hans Kung who conveys a Christian opinion on Prophet Muhammad (P):

Of course many religions do not have prophets in the strictest sense. Hindus have their gurus and sadhus, the Chinese their sages, Buddhists their masters – but they do not have prophets, as do Jews, Christians, and Muslims. There is no doubt that if anyone in the whole of religious history is termed the prophet, because he claimed to be just that, but in no way more than that, it was Muhammad. But may a Christian assert that Muhammad was a prophet? Christians, if they pause to survey the situation, must admit the following (especially in light of the Hebrew Bible):

- *Like the prophets of Israel, Muhammad did not function by reason of an office assigned to him by the community (or its*

⁵⁹ *Ghurur al-Íikam*, no. 4090

authorities), but by reason of a special personal relationship with God.

- *Like the prophets of Israel, Muhammad was a person of strong will who felt himself fully imbued with a godly calling, fully consumed, exclusively appointed to his task.*
- *Like the prophets of Israel, Muhammad spoke to the heart of a religious and social crisis, and with his passionate piety and revolutionary proclamation he opposed the wealthy ruling class and the tradition it was trying to preserve.*
- *Like the prophets of Israel, Muhammad, who mostly called himself the “Warner”, sought to be nothing but the verbal instrument of God and to proclaim not his own, but God’s word.*
- *Like the prophets of Israel, Muhammad untiringly proclaimed the one God who tolerates no other gods and who is at the same time the good Creator and merciful Judge.*
- *Like the prophets of Israel, Muhammad required, as a response to this one God, unconditional obedience, devotion, submission, which is the literal meaning of word Islam: everything that includes gratitude to God and generosity toward fellow human beings.*
- *Like the prophets of Israel, Muhammad combined monotheism with humanism or human values, belief in the one God and God’s judgment with a call to social justice, and a threat to the unjust, who go to hell, with promises to the just, who are gathered into God’s paradise.*

Whoever reads the Bible – at least the Hebrew Bible – together with the Qur’an will be led to ponder whether the three Semitic religions of revelation-Judaism, Christianity, and Islam-and

especially the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an, could have the same foundation. Is it not one and the same God who speaks so clearly in both? Does not the "Thus says the Lord" of the Hebrew Bible correspond to the "Speak" of the Qur'an, and the "Go and proclaim" of the Hebrew Bible to the "Stand up and warn" of the Qur'an? In truth, even the millions of Arab-speaking Christians have no other word for God than "Allah".

Might it not therefore be purely dogmatic prejudice that recognizes Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah, as prophets, but not Muhammad? Whatever one may have against Muhammad from the standpoint of Western Christian morality (armed violence, polygamy, a sensual lifestyle for males), the following facts are indisputable:

- *Today there are almost hundreds of million persons in the huge area between Morocco to the west and Bangladesh to the east, between the steppes of central Asia to the North and the Island world of Indonesia to the south, who are stamped with the compelling power of a faith that, like virtually no other faith, has molded into a universal type those who confess it.*
- *All those persons are linked by a simple confession of faith (There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet), linked by five basic obligations, and linked by thorough submission to the will of God, whose unchangeable decision, even when it brings suffering, is to be accepted.*
- *Among all the Islamic peoples there has remained a sense of fundamental equality before God of an international solidarity that is basically capable of overcoming race (Arabs and non-Arabs) and even the castes of India.*

I am convinced that, despite all the renewed fears of Islam, there is a growing conviction among Christians that, in the light of Muhammad's place in world history, we must correct our attitude toward Islam. The "scourge of exclusiveness", arising from Christian dogmatic impatience and intolerance, condemned by the British historian Arnold Toynbee, must be abandoned. Regarding the figure of the prophet, I believe the following must be admitted:

- *Arabians in the seventh century rightly listened to and followed the voice of Muhammad.*
- *In comparison to the very worldly polytheism of the old Arabian tribal religions before Muhammad, the religion of the people was raised to a completely new level, that of a purified monotheism.*
- *The first Muslims received from Muhammad – or, better still, from the Qur'an – endless inspiration, courage, and strength for a new religious start: a start toward greater truth and deeper understanding, toward a breakthrough in the revitalizing and renewal of traditional religion.*

In truth, Muhammad was and is for persons in the Arabian world, and for many others, the religious reformer, lawgiver, and leader; the prophet per se. Basically Muhammad, who never claimed to be anything more than a human being, is more to those who follow him than a prophet is to us: he is a model for the mode of life that Islam strives to be. If the Catholic Church, according to the Vatican II "Declaration on Non-Christian Religions", "regards with esteem the Muslims", then the same church must also respect the one whose name is embarrassingly absent from the same declaration, although he and he alone led the Muslims to pray to this one God, for through him this God "has spoken to humanity": Muhammad the prophet.

But does not such an acknowledgment have very grave consequences, especially for the message he proclaimed, the teachings set down in the Qur'an?

I think for the peoples of Arabia Muhammad's prophecy led to tremendous progress. Whatever we Christians do with this fact, we must affirm that he acted as a prophet and that he was a prophet. I do not see how we can avoid the conclusion that on their way of salvation, Muslims follow a prophet who is decisive for them. (Hans

Kung On "Is Muhammad A Prophet"?)

MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi (2 October 1869–30 January 1948) was the pre-eminent political and spiritual leader of India during the Indian independence movement.

"I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life."

Gandhi also advocated his views on Islam, another great world religion. Islam is a religion of strict monotheism and rigorous ethical discipline. Gandhi had a very high esteem for this religion and regarded it as a religion of peace, love, kindness and brotherhood of all men. It may be true that sometimes the followers of Islam often took to sword for the spread of their religion, but this was not in accordance with the teachings of Koran. As Gandhi himself said in this connection:

"I do regard Islam to be a religion of peace" The charges of fanaticism against Islam cannot be justified, according to Gandhi as there are several passages in the Koran which speak of religious toleration. Of course, there is a place for Jihad in Islam and this Jihad is generally interpreted as a holy war against those who are not the followers of Islam. But Gandhi justifies the true meaning of Jihad by saying that the conditions laid down for the Jihad are so strict that they are not capable of being fulfilled by everybody. To quote Gandhi, "where is the unerring general to order Jihad? Where are the suffering and love and purification that much precede the very idea of drawing the sword? We are too imperfect and impure and selfish to resort to an armed conflict in the name of God." (Mahatma Gandhi, statement published in 'Young India,' 1924.)

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

George Bernard Shaw (26 July 1856 – 2 November 1950) Born in Dublin, Ireland. He is the only person to have been awarded both a Nobel Prize for Literature (1925) and an Oscar

(1938), for his contributions to literature and for his work on the film *Pygmalion* (adaption of his play of the same name), respectively.

"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam."

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity."

"I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

"I have prophesized about the faith of Muhammad [peace be upon him] that it would be acceptable tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today." (Sir George Bernard Shaw in 'The Genuine Islam,'

Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.)

BERTRAND RUSSELL

"Our use of the phrase 'The Dark Ages' to cover the period from 699 to 1000 marks our undue concentration on Western Europe ... From India to Spain, the brilliant civilisation of Islam flourished. What was lost to Christendom at this time was not lost to civilisation, but quite the contrary ... To us it seems that West-European civilisation is civilisation, but this is a narrow view". (Bertrand Russell in *History of Western*

Philosophy, London, 1948)

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Napoleon I (1769-1821), went into history as a military genius and statesman.

The existence and unity of Allah, which Musa, had announced to his own people and Isa to his own, was announced by Muhammad to the entire world. Arabia had become totally a country of idolaters. Six centuries after Isa, Muhammad initiated the Arabs into an awareness of Allah, whose existence prophets previous to him, such as Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail, Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus), had announced. Peace in the east had been disturbed by the Arians, [i.e. Christians who followed Arius], who had somehow developed a degree of friendship with the Arabs, and by heretics, who had defiled the true religion of Isa and were striving to spread in the name of religion a totally unintelligible credo which is based on trinity, i.e. God, Son of

God, and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad guided the Arabs to the right way, taught them that Allah is one, that He does not have a father or a son, and that worshiping several gods is an absurd custom which is the continuation of idolatry."

At another place in his book he quotes Napoleon as having said, "I hope that in the near future I will have the chance to gather together the wise and cultured people of the world and establish a government that I will operate [in accordance with the principles written in Qur'an.]"

"Moses has revealed the existence of God to his nation, Jesus Christ to the Roman world, Muhammad [PBD] to the old continent..."

Arabia was idolatrous when, six centuries after Jesus, Muhammad [PBD] introduced the worship of the God of Abraham, of Ishmael, of Moses and of Jesus [P]. The ayrians and some other sects had disturbed the tranquility of the East by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad [PBD] declared that there was none but One God Who had no father, no son, and that the Trinity imported the idea of idolatry..."

I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Qur'an which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness"

"I read the Bible; Moses was an able man, the Jews are villains, cowardly and cruel. Is there anything more horrible than the story of Lot and his daughters?"

"The science which proves to us that the earth is not the centre of the celestial movements has struck a great blow at religion. Joshua stops the sun! One shall see the stars falling into the sea... I say that of all the suns and planets..."

"Religions are always based on miracles, on such things than nobody listens to like Trinity. Jesus called himself the son of God and he was a descendant of David. I prefer the religion of Muhammad. It has less ridiculous things than ours; the Turks also call us idolaters."

"Surely, I have told you on different occasions and I have intimated to you by various discourses that I am a Unitarian Moslem and I glorify the prophet Muhammad and that I love the Muslims."

(Bonaparte et l'islam, by Cherfils, Paris: France, pp.105-125)

ANNIE BESANT

ANNIE BESANT (1 October 1847–20 September 1933 in Adyar, India) was a prominent Theosophist, women's rights activist, writer and orator and supporter of Irish and Indian self rule. Annie became speaker for the Fabian Society and the (Marxist) Social Democratic Federation in London. In 1908 Annie Besant became President of the Theosophical Society.

"It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knew how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself

feel, whenever I reread them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.

"I often think that woman is more free in Islam than in Christianity. Woman is more protected by Islam than by the faith which preaches monogamy. In Al Qur'an the law about woman is more just and liberal. It is only in the last twenty years that Christian England has recognized the right of woman to property, while Islam has allowed this right from all times. It is slander to say that Islam preaches that women have no souls". (The Life and Teachings of Muhammad, 1932)."

LAMARTINE

Alphonse Marie Louis De Prat De Lamartine was a French writer, poet and politician (21 October 1790 - 28 February 1869). He is considered to be the first French romantic poet (though Charles-Julien Lioult de Chênédollé was working on similar innovations at the same time), and was acknowledged by Paul Verlaine and the Symbolists as an important influence.

"Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman; to subvert superstitions which had been imposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he (Muhammad) had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design, no other instrument than himself and no other

aid except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert. Finally, never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam, in faith and in arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia, and conquered, in God's name, Persia Khorasan, Transoxania, Western India, Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, all the known continent of Northern Africa, numerous islands of the Mediterranean Sea, Spain, and part of Gaul".

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astonishing results are the three criteria of a human genius, who could dare compare any great man in history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples, dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls.

"On the basis of a Book, every letter which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blend together peoples of every tongue and race. He has left the indelible characteristic of this Muslim nationality the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and Immaterial God. This avenging patriotism against the profanation of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammad; the conquest of one-third the earth to the dogma was his miracle; or rather it was not the miracle of man but that of reason.

"The idea of the unity of God, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of the fabulous theogonies, was in itself such a miracle that upon it's utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols

and set on fire one-third of the world. His life, his meditations, his heroic revelings against the superstitions of his country, and his boldness in defying the furies of idolatry, his firmness in enduring them for fifteen years in Mecca, his acceptance of the role of public scorn and almost of being a victim of his fellow countrymen: all these and finally, his flight his incessant preaching, his wars against odds, his faith in his success and his superhuman security in misfortune, his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold the unity of God and the immateriality of God: the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with words.

"Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Conqueror of Ideas, Restorer of Rational beliefs.... The founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?" (Alphonse de LaMartaine in 'Historie de la Turquie,' Paris, 1854.)

THOMAS CARLYLE

Thomas Carlyle (4 December 1795 – 5 February 1881) was a Scottish satirical writer, essayist, historian and teacher during the Victorian era.

"... These Arabs, the man Muhammad and that one century, - is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand, but lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven high from Delhi to Grenada: I said: the Great Man was always as lightening out of heaven; the rest of the men waited on him like fuel, and then they too would flame ... How one man single-handedly could weld warring tribes and wandering boudoirs into a most powerful and civilized nation in less then two decades". (Thomas Carlyle in 'Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History,' 1840)

ARTHUR STANLEY TRITTON, D. LITT

He was a British historian and scholar of Islam (February 25, 1881 – November 8, 1973).

"The picture of the Muslim soldier advancing with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other is quite false." (A. S. Tritton in 'Islam,' 1951)

DE LACY O'LEARY

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

EDWARD GIBBON

He was an English historian and Member of Parliament. (April 27, 1737 – January 16, 1794)

"The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty. The Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire; swept the floor; milked the ewes; and mended with his own hands his shoes and garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed without effort of vanity the abstemious diet of an Arab". (Gibbon in 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' 1823)

STANLEY LANE-POOLE

He was a British orientalist and archaeologist. (18 December 1854 - 29 December 1931).

"He (Muhammad) was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came near him loved him; they who described him would say, "I have never seen his like either before or after." He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said..." (Lane-Poole in 'Speeches and Table Talk of the Prophet Muhammad')

"He (Muhammad) was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life spring. He was the messenger of One God, and never to his life's end did he forget who he was or the message which was the marrow of his being. He

brought his tidings to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility." (Stanley Lane-Poole in 'Studies in a Mosque')

EDWARD MONTET

"Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically....the teachings of the Prophet, the Qur'an has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam....A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men." (Edward Montet, 'La Propagande Chretienne et ses Adversaries

Musulmans,' Paris 1890. (Also in T.W. Arnold in 'The Preaching of Islam,' London 1913.)

GUSTAV WEIL

Being destined for the rabbinate, he was taught Hebrew, as well as German and French; and he received instruction in Latin from the minister of his native town. Weil's great work was "Mohammed, der Prophet" (Stuttgart, 1843), a life of Mohammed.

"Muhammad was a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His house, his dress, his food - they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do for himself. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity as also was his anxious care for the welfare of the community." (Dr. Gustav Weil in 'History of the Islamic Peoples')

MICHAEL HART

MICHAEL HART (born 1956) has been Fellow in Politics at Exeter College, Oxford since 1982. Hart has been a Liberal Party Councillor on Oxford City Council. Philosophically, he is a liberal, but combines this with a belief in the need for a strong state.

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the secular and religious level. ...It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. ...It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history." (Michael Hart in 'The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons In History,' New York, 1978.)

JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER

JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER (May 5, 1811 – January 4, 1882) was an American (English-born) scientist, philosopher, physician, chemist, and historian.

"Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born in Mecca, in Arabia, the man who, of all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race... To be the religious head of many empires, to guide the daily life of one-third of the human race, may perhaps justify the title of a Messenger of God." (Dr. William Draper in

'History of Intellectual Development of Europe')

J.W.H. STAB

"Judged by the smallness of the means at his disposal, and the extent and permanence of the work that he accomplished, his name in world's history shines with a more specious lustre than that of the Prophet of Mekka. To the impulse which he gave numberless dynasties have owed their existence, fair cities and stately palaces and temples have arisen, and wide provinces became obedient to the Faith. And beyond all this, his words have governed the belief of generations, been accepted as their rule of life, and their certain guide to the world to come. At a thousand shrines the voices of the faithful invoke blessings on him, whom they esteem the very Prophet of God, the seal of the Apostles.... Judged by the standards to human renown, the glory of what mortal can compare with his?" (J.W.H. STAB in *'Islam and its*

Founder')

WASHINGTON IRVING

Washington Irving (April 3, 1783 – November 28, 1859) was an American author, essayist, biographer and historian of the early 19th century. His historical works include biographies of George Washington, Oliver Goldsmith and Muhammad, and several histories of 15th-century Spain dealing with subjects such as Christopher Columbus, the Moors, and the Alhambra.

"He was sober and abstemious in his diet and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected but a result of real disregard for distinction from so trivial a source. "

"In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints. "

"His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vain glory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting a regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonials of respect were shown to him. If he aimed at a universal dominion, it was the dominion of faith; as to the temporal rule which grew up in his hands, as he used it without ostentation, so he took no step to perpetuate it in his family." (Washington Irving 'Mahomet

and His Successors')

ARTHUR GLYN LEONARD

"It was the genius of Muhammad, the spirit that he breathed into the Arabs through the soul of Islam that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation up to the high watermark of national unity and empire. It was in the sublimity of Muhammad's deism, the simplicity, the sobriety and purity it inculcated the fidelity of its founder to his own tenets, which acted on their moral and intellectual fiber with all the magnetism of true inspiration." (Arthur Glyn Leonard in 'Islam, Her Moral and Spiritual Values')

CHARLES MILLS

Charles Mills, an English historian, born (1788 -1825). His principal works are: "History of Mohammedanism" (8vo, London, 1817); "History of the Crusades" (2 vols. 8vo, 1820); and "History of Chivalry" (2 vols. 8vo, 1825).

"Deeply read in the volume of nature, though extremely ignorant of letters, his mind could expand into controversy with the wisest of his enemies or contract itself to the apprehension of meanest of his disciples. His simple eloquence was rendered impressive by a manner of mixed dignity and elegance, by the expression of a countenance where the awfulness of his majesty was so well tempered by an amiable sweetness, that it exerted emotions of veneration and love. He was gifted with that authoritative air or genius which alike influences the learned and commands the illiterate." (Charles Stuart Mills in

'History of Mohammadanism')

PHILIP KHURI HITTI

Philip Khuri Hitti (1886 - 1978). He was of Maronite Christian religion. He created the discipline of Arabic Studies in the United States.

"Within a brief span of mortal life, Muhammad called forth of unpromising material, a nation, never welded before; in a country that was hitherto but a geographical expression he established a religion which in vast areas suppressed Christianity and Judaism, and laid the basis of an empire that was soon to embrace within its far flung boundaries the fairest provinces the then civilized world."
(Philip K. Hitti in 'History of the Arabs')

JOHN MEDOWS RODWELL

John Medows Rodwell, 1808–1900. Clergyman and orientalist. Rector of St Peter's, Saffron Hill, London, 1836–43; rector of St Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, 1843–1900. Commenced oriental studies as a young man. Published an English version of the Qur'an in 1861.

"Mohammad's career is a wonderful instance of the force and life that resides in him who possesses an intense faith in God and in the unseen world. He will always be regarded as one of those who have had that influence over the faith, morals and whole earthly life of their fellow men, which none but a really great man ever did, or can exercise; and whose efforts to propagate a great verity will prosper."

(Rodwell in the Preface to his translation of the Holy Qur'an)

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY WATT

William Montgomery Watt, Orientalist and priest (1909 –2006). He was probably the foremost non-Muslim interpreter of Islam in the West, was an enormously influential scholar in the field of Islamic studies and a much-revered name for many Muslims all over the world.

"His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.... Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must not forget the conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty." (W. Montgomery Watt in 'Muhammad at Mecca,' Oxford, 1953.)

DAVID GEORGE HOGARTH

David George Hogarth (1862 -1927) was a British archaeologist and scholar. Works: A Wandering Scholar (1896), The Penetration of Arabia: a Record of Western Knowledge Concerning the Arabian Peninsula (1905), The Archaic Artemisia of Ephesus (1908), Arabia (1922), Kings of the Hittites (1926).

"Serious or trivial, his daily behavior has instituted a canon which millions observe this day with conscious memory. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has ever been imitated so minutely. The conduct of the founder of Christianity has not governed the ordinary life of his followers. Moreover, no founder of a religion has left on so solitary an eminence as the Muslim apostle." (D. G. Hogarth in 'Arabia')

JAMES ALBERT MICHENER

James Albert Michener (1907 -1997) was an American author of more than 40 titles, the majority of which are novels of sweeping sagas, covering the lives of many generations in a particular geographic locale and incorporating historical facts into the story as well. Michener was known for the meticulous research behind his work.

"No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam. The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts this idea, and the Qur'an is explicit in the support of the freedom of conscience."

"Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about A.D. 570 into an Arabian tribe that worshiped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five his employer recognizing his merit, proposed marriage. Even though

she was fifteen years older, he married her and as long as she lived remained a devoted husband."

"Like almost every major prophet before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the transmitter of God's word sensing his own inadequacy. But the Angel commanded 'Read'. So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth: "There is one God"."

"In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred and rumors of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, 'An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human being'."

"At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: 'If there are any among you who worshiped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshiped, He lives for ever'." (James Michener in 'Islam: The Misunderstood Religion,' Reader's Digest, May 1955, pp. 68-70.)

WEB SITES

The Quran

www.quran.net	www.igqa.ir
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Shi'ite site:

www.ahl-ul-bait.org	www.wiki.ahlolbait.ir
www.shiasearch.com	www.hadith.net
www.balaghah.net	www.hawzah.net
www.aqrazavi.org	www.mahdawiat.com
www.islamicfeqh.com	www.taghrib.org

Leader sites

www.imam-khomeini.com	www.leader.ir
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Cultural sites

www.en.icro.ir	www.nlai.ir
www.iranmiras.ir	www.kanoonintl.com
www.tebyan.net	www.noorsoft.org
www.english.aviny.com	www.itf.org.ir/index_pe.aspx

Universities

www.almostafaou.com	www.urd.ac.ir
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Women sites

www.iwna.ir	www.womennews.ir
www.itf.org.ir/mahjubah_home.aspx	

News sites

www.presstv.ir	www.irna.ir
www.abna.ir	www.tehrantimes.com
www.english.farsnews.com	www.mehrnews.com/en

Magazine

www.itf.org.ir/echo	www.itf.org.ir/zamzam
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