Chapter-I

Introduction

At the very outset, I must make it clear about a very needed and practical aspect of this thesis apart from the conceptual and theoretical aspect that I am going to present. Islam had been existing in India perhaps from the very beginning of the religion Islam itself. Islam had long become an Indian religion through its long days of existence in India. This is also true of Christianity as well; the main two religions that came to India from outside.

Let me make this point little more explicit. Every religion may be said to have two aspects; the cultural aspect and the aspect of faith involving rituals, theology and philosophy. When religion travels from one society to another society, it definitely carries its faith, rituals, theology and philosophy, but shuns the cultural aspects. The people in the new place while accepting the faith; do not accept the culture of an unknown land which is not possible also. Religion in the new society amalgamates the local culture; and may even modify rituals, theology and philosophy according to the new stage settings. But the faith often remains as it is, letting evolutions in all other aspects. And this is what makes Islam in India unique and Indian.
Such had been the case with other religions as well. Budhism, which is basically an Indian religion, had undergone such changes when it travelled to distant lands. In China it had become Chinese religion and in Japan, Japanese religion. It eschewed its erstwhile culture and amalgamated the culture of the land, wherever it went. Even the features of Budha’s statues changed according to the lands. This character of evolution had long before made Islam an Indian religion, and in India, if one speaks of Islamic culture, then what one speaks of is Indian culture itself; whether in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh and to a good extent, in many other places also.

Unfortunately, this reality had been ignored by some “learned” people. Right from the period of 1857’s first independence struggle some of the “learned” Muslim leaders started making the way for Hindu-Muslim rifts and separatism. The British colonial rulers encouraged the rift; they actually provoked both Hindus and Muslims to draw swords at one another; and from this, they used the technique to divide and rule and later became masters of it.

People like John Bright, Schawen Blunt, Theodore Beck, Theodore Morrison, etc are some of the British in India, who added fuel to fire. People like Sir.Syed Ahamed Khan, Jamaluddin Afghani (who is really not Afghani but Iranian Shia) Muharram Chisti etc are some of the Muslim Scholars who thought, wrote and gave speeches all over, that Muslims are a separate nation and they cannot share the same soil with the Hindus. The objections raised to this thought structure by people
like Tayyabji of Bombay met with deaf ears. This separatist phenomena went on for more than a hundred years, through different stages, it had divided Bengal in 1905, and finally ended up in creating a Pakistan out of India. I do not believe that creation of Pakistan benefited any common Muslim; on the contrary it only increased their hardships and created further separatism within Pakistan on linguistic and sectarian lines. Obviously the British were too happy to create a Pakistan and today, it is America, who takes advantage of this separated Indians.

It is almost one hundred and fifty years since the first call of separation, and a creation of Pakistan had not ended it. Today, Islam in India is facing the same threat; not from inside India but from outside. Interestingly, it is from non-Muslim nations; who do not want India to be strong internally. This, after all, is a part of world politics and power game and we have to see it seriously and address it carefully. Creating Hindu-Muslim differences in India shall make the Nation extremely weak; and then the world police people can intervene and take all kinds of advantage.

And precisely this is what prompts me to think and show, how much Indian is Islam, and how baseless and foolish is the thought of Islamic separation from India. I would like to demonstrate that every Muslim of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is culturally an Indian. And hence this thesis.
I.1 Understanding Religion

The word religion is derived from Latin ‘religio’, meaning obligation, bond or reverence. Religion is the belief in a supernatural controlling power especially in a personal God (as in the case of Semitic religions) or gods entitled to obedience and worship.

"Religion may be the expression of this worship with the emotion and morality connected therewith; rites or worship; any system of such belief or worship; devoted fidelity or monastic life.” 1

According to Swami Vivekanda ‘religion is a realization; not talk, nor doctrine nor theories——it is being and becoming, not hearing and acknowledging, it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.’ 2 Many others also spoke of religion in the following manner:

"Religion is not physics or chemistry seeking an explanation of nature in terms of causation, it really aims at interpreting a totally different region of human experience —— religious experience—— the data of which cannot be reduced to the data of any other science”. 3

"Religion is a process, which has two sides; from one point of view it is a state of belief and feeling; and in a word spiritual disposition; from another point of view it is an expression of the subjective disposition in appropriate acts. Both aspects are essential to the nature of religion and they act and react on one another in the process of spiritual experience” 4.

"God is not based on abstract arguments or scholastic proofs, but is derived from the specifically religious experience which alone gives peculiar significance to the word God. Man becomes aware of God through experience. Religion for the Hindu is experience or attitude}
of mind. It is not an idea but a power, not an intellectual proposition but a live conviction. Religion is consciousness of ultimate reality, not a theory about God. The religious genius is a not a pedant or pundit, not a sufist or a dialectician, but a Prophet, Sage or Rśi who embodies in himself the spiritual vision. From Moses to Isaiah, from Jesus and Paul onto Augustine, Luther and Wesley, from Socrates and Plato to Plotims and Philo, from Zoroaster to Buddha, from Confucius to Mohammad, the men who initiated new currents of life, the creative personalities are those who have known God by acquaintance and not by hearing".⁵

"The truth is that' God is the force. He is the essence of life. He is pure and undefiled consciousness. He is eternal and yet strangely enough all are not able to derive either benefit from or shelter in the all-pervading living presence. Electricity is a powerful force. All cannot benefit from it. It can only be produced by following certain laws. It is a lifeless force. Men can utilize it if he labours hard to acquire the knowledge of its laws. The living force, which we call God, can similarly be found if we know and follow His laws leading to the discovery of Him in us. But it is self evident that to find out Gods law requires far harder labour".⁶

Every religion deals with the principle or the nature of God, cosmology of the science of creation, the soul of man or his real nature and eschatology or the science of life after death. Every Religion recognises that it should make its followers better and nobler. The moral and ethical code of all religions contain such universal moral sentiments and ethical precepts as truthfulness, purity, temperance, justice, kindness to men and animals, patience, love, charity etc. It teaches men to strive after moral excellence. The Tamil saying is that “Dharmam Talai kakum”. Religion inculcates the Golden Rule to ‘do unto others as we would
have others do unto us’. Every religion consists of four parts namely mythology, rituals, philosophy and higher spiritual disciplines. It may be asked ‘what does the practice of religion lead us to? The answer to this is furnished by all religions. They all tell us that as a result of worship; prayer and other forms of spiritual disciplines, man reaches a plane beyond this world, beyond his mind or intellect and comes face to face, as it were, with certain facts or truths, which he would never have grasped with the senses, nor perceived with the mind or intellect. In other words, he attains what may be called transcendence. What has been called revelation or inspiration or God teaching man or speaking to him as to a beloved son, is possible only when man elevates himself to that exalted plane. The phenomenon of transcendence is called ‘Mōkṣa’ by the Hindus, ‘Nirvāṇa’ by the Budhist, ‘Kaivalya’ by the Jains, ‘Atonement’ by the Jews, ‘Salvation’ by the Christians and ‘Marḥamt’ by the Muslims. One could also find many other different names for this concept in principle from every form of religion, be it archaic, primitive, ancient or modern.

It is obvious that the Prophet or Teacher of every script had attained super consciousness in an abundance and to a degree undreamt by ordinary mortals and had high spiritual truths revealed to them. These were taught by them and preserved by their followers, being transmitted by word of mouth or set down in writing. Thus came the scriptures of every religion, which are reverently studied by its adherents and forms its great authority. All religions consider the realization of God; the
Summum bonum of life and the culmination of mans’ endeavors. Every religion preaches that mans life should be so ordered and lived that he may ultimately reach the divine goal. This has contributed to the growth and development of cultures and civilisations, which have been influenced or moulded by the spirit of religious teachings to a greater extent. Poetry, painting, music, sculpture and architecture… all these have been employed by religion as handmaids to serve a spiritual end.

Modern psychology admits that the higher achievements of men depend in the last analysis on process that are beyond and deeper than the limits of the normal consciousness. Socrates speaks of the ‘daimon’, which acts as the censor and speaks through him. Plato regards inspiration as an act of a goddess. Ideas are showered on Philo from above, though he is oblivious of everything around him. George Eliot tells us that she wrote her best work in a kind of frenzy almost without knowing that she was writing. According to Emerson, all poetry is first written in the heavens. It is concerned by a self, deeper than it appears in normal life. The Prophet, when he begins his message “thus says the Lord”, is giving utterance to his consciousness that the message is not his own, that it comes from a wider and deeper level of life and from a source outside his limited self. Since we cannot compel these exceptional moments to occur, all inspiration has something of revelation in it.

The first Sūtra of Śivajñānabodhā contain the argument that the universe which is diversified as ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’ and is subject to the states of origination, sustenance and destruction should have a cause
which is eternally free and intelligent. That cause is Hara, i.e., Siva. The analogy of the potter is used to explain God’s causality in relation to the world. Mere clay will not transform itself into a pot but for the operation of an active agent namely a potter. Māya is the material cause of the world as clay is of Pot; God is the efficient or operative cause and is analogous to the potter. His Śakti is the instrumental cause, the potter’s wheel. The analogy of the potter however, should not be pressed too far. God has no purpose of his own to be fulfilled through his creation. He is satyasāṅkalpa and āptakāma. His resolves are all true and desires eternally accomplished. He causes the world to evolve in order that the souls may be given opportunities for the riddance of their impurities. Of the five functions of Śiva, tirōdhāna, sriṣṭi, stiti, saṁhāra and anugraha, the first four have the last as the goal. And even when evolution takes place Śiva remains unaffected. Just as the wind causes disturbances only to a part of the Sea, evolution relates to a part of God’s parigrahaśakti. The sun is impartial and the same to all things, but because of it diverse phenomenon occur; the lotus blooms, the burning glass emits heat and water evaporates. We should understand the nature of Śiva in relation to the world to a similar way.

The Vēdas, the treasure trove of Hindu religious tradition and culture containing codes of righteous conduct, it is believed, were taught by God himself thousands of years ago, and have been preserved carefully and handed over to generations. They are essential for building moral integrity and being eternal, the norms are applicable to all per-
sons, even to this day. The Vedas disclose the presence of the Almighty, the soul and virtue. When man realizes that he is but the servant of the Almighty, he will never retain arrogance born of his pelf and possession. Servitude to God is the antidote of egoism. ‘Dāsatva’ increases man’s faith in God and provides him strength and eradicates his chief disease-arrogance. Righteous conduct alone can keep society in a disciplined manner. Mankind has to stand by a principle other than mere physical strength to govern the world and Dharma will sustain it. Nothing is greater than spiritual wisdom.

Upaniṣads reveal that the mind is man’s intimate friend or inveterate foe and hence according to circumstances, he can swim or sink in the ocean of life. To guard against getting involved in worldly enjoyment, it should be reined with great effort and chained to the intellect. A royal road has been laid by God himself for the aspirant to reach him, but man misguided by the mind seeks to go through the by-lanes and incidentally gets lost. Ādi Śaṅkara, defines the Upaniṣads as those which reveal the Truth to enable a person to get rid of his grief. They describe God as all pervading, radiant, transcendental and compassionate. They are the cream of ancient wisdom, categorically proclaiming the omnipresence of God. Ignorant person often raises the question whether God can be seen and if not why? Gold, gems and precious metals are hidden in the earth. They can be located only with certain aids. So too, God’s resplendent vision can be seen through ‘devotion’. Those who have cultivated this assiduously will certainly experience the presence of God.
Ramakrishna Paramahamsa said ‘pure devotion and pure knowledge were not distinct’. The Bhagavad Gīta affirms that the two paths are like the left and right eyes. Both are needed for proper vision.

Swami Vivekananda says that every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man and the same God is the inspirer of all of them, why, then are there so many contradictions? The contradictions come from the same truth adopting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures. It is the same light coming through glasses of different colors. The Lord has declared to the Hindus in his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa:

> “I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls, where thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there” ⁸.

Holy Quran says:

> “Every one of them believes in God and His angels and His scriptures and we make no distinction at all between the Apostles…and they say: we hear and we obey (grant us) Thy forgiveness our Lord! Unto Thee is the journeying” ⁹.

While religion is adorned in such doctrines of spirituality, Swami Vivekananda deplores:

> “Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendant fanaticism have long passed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nation to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it
According to Zarathushtra, the great prophet of Iran, God is the infinite source of all good. He made this universe all good and fair, but into it an evil spirit of pride and jealousy brought sin and pain. God created man to work and fight as His colleague in the age long war to overcome this evil and to set up the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth. Man’s duty here is to make his final choice for good, to dedicate himself all he is and has and does to God, to fight against all evil, darkness, ignorance and suffering and help the world to its perfection. A kindly courtesy to his fellows, protective care to the weak, ceaseless resistance to sin, reverent regard for the sacredness of God’s creation and living devotion to all perfect God—this is the path to be tread. The Lord whose very being is the Law of righteousness and Love, gives His devotee the grace and preserving strength to labor in His world until the end of earthly life, together with a clear insight into the duty he should do. His Angels and the holy spirits who live with Him in Heaven can and will help the devotee in his daily struggle for the right. The human soul has existed since creation dawn, but can only reach perfection and win immortality by the faithful fight for God on earth. For him the day of death is blessed. Comforted by the memory of the good thoughts and words and deeds which have adorned his life down here, the freed soul is swiftly led through the Individual judgment into Gods blissful presence, there to reign forever in his kingdom.
Thomas Aquinas (born in 1225) explicitly acknowledging his intellectual borrowings from Avicenna, Al Ghazali, Averroes, Isac, Israeli, Ibn Gabirol, Maimonides and Aristotle argues that the human intellect can prove God’s existence but can never rise to knowledge of his attributes. Knowledge is a divine light infused into man by God. The very limitation of knowledge indicates the existence of a supernatural world. Just as it would be folly for the peasant to consider the theories of a philosopher false because he cannot understand, so it is foolish for man to reject God’s revelation on the ground that it seems at some points to contradict man’s natural knowledge. It is desirable to distinguish what we understand through reason and what we believed by faith; the fields of philosophy and ideology are distinct. It is permissible for scholars to discuss among themselves, objections to the faith, but it is not expedient for simple people to hear what unbelievers have to say against the faith for simple minds are not equipped to answer. God, not man is the centre and theme of Thomas’s philosophy. “The highest knowledge we can have of God in this life” he writes “is to know that He is above all that we can think concerning Him, God is Being itself, I am who am”.

In his address to the Aryan section of the International Congress of Orientalists assembled in London in September 1874, Professor Max Muller said: -

“We have learned already one lesson that behind the helpless expression which language has devised, whether in the East or the West, for uttering the unutterable ***there is the same intention, the same driving, the same stammering, the same faith. Other lessons
will follow, till in the end we shall be able to restore that ancient word which unites not only the East with the West, but with all the members of the human family and may learn to understand what a Persian Poet meant when he wrote many centuries ago, ‘diversity of worship has divided the human race into seventy two nations. From all their dogmas I have selected one—the love of God’.

Religion besides thinking about what ought to be done is also concerned with what is and why it is with the nature of the universe, the great mysteries and the man’s place in it. Religion is more than mere austerity. It includes the control of emotions and the senses. Nowadays, people ridicule any practice that is considered ‘religious’ and display lack of faith in the supremacy of God. The Bhagavad Gītā says that the pleasures enjoyed by man may be like ‘nectar’ in the initial stage but will turn as ‘poison’ after some time. Religious exercise may appear painful in the beginning but will be like Elixir in the end, so too discipline will be hard to relish but will enable a person to keep physically and mentally alert.

“Worship or prayer is an essential aspect of religion. Prayer, whether individual or in association is an expression of man’s inner yearning for a response in the awful silence of the Universe. It is a unique process of discovery whereby the searching ego affirms itself in the very moment of self negation and thus discovers its own worth and justification as a dynamic factor in the life of the Universe” 12.

The Holy Quran says:

“To every people have we appointed ways of worship, which they observe. Therefore let them not dispute this matter with thee but bid
them to thy Lord for thou art on the right way; but if they debate with thee, then say, God best knoweth what you do. He will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection to the matters wherein you differ” 13.

Mahatma Gandhi says:

“We are all sparks of Truth, the sum total of these sparks is the indestructible as yet Unknown Truth which is God. I am being daily led nearer to it by constant prayer. God demands nothing less than complete self surrender as the price for the only real freedom that is worth having. And when a man thus looses himself, he immediately finds himself in the service of all that lives. It becomes his delight and his recreation. He is a new man never weary of spending himself in the service of God’s creation” 14.

“God may be worshiped and realized in five Bhāvās or attitudes. ‘Śānta’—the peaceful attitude cultivated by some rishis, a type of Advaita (non-dualism) is one Bhāvā by which God is realized. ‘Dāṣya’—the relationship of servant to master is another attitude. The devotion of Hanumān to Rāma is example of this. ‘Sakhya’ or friendship is another Bhāvā, which could be observed in the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. ‘Vātsalya’— is another attitude where God is loved as a parent to his child. The behavior of Kṛṣṇa’s parents, Vasudēva and Dēvaki contribute this relationship. Another attitude is ‘Madhura’— depicting the relationship between lovers as that of Kṛṣṇa and the Gōvikas or milkmaids of Vṛndāvan” 15.

Why do we need religion? Will not man survive without it? It is possible for men to survive without religion. In that case a person will be taking a trip down an endless road. It is very important for a traveller to use a map or a guide while undertaking a journey. Religion serves this role. When a human being during his brief existence will require
such a help, religion fill the gap as a map or guide to travel on the vast unknown road of life and reach the destination safely. Otherwise he will be lost in wilderness. Religion strengthens man’s character and provides him with a code of conduct for his safe voyage in life. Religion need not be blind faith or zealous. Religion refers to continuous process of gathering knowledge and updating it periodically. The power exercised by men of religion can be felt in the world. However there appears to be some confusion among people as to which religion is the best. A religion does not flourish merely on account of the truth it proclaims. The key to the growth of a religion lies in the cause of its subsequent decay. While the initial impetus to any religion is given by its high-souled founder, its subsequent strength and popularity depends on the fervor, devotion, discipline and purity of succeeding religious heads and the fidelity and character of its followers. If a religion is to be popular and powerful, its followers should observe its tenets faithfully and well. It is not in number or in demonstration that the vitality of a religion lies. Instead of quarrelling over the supremacy of one’s religion, each one should try to practice respective religion in the best way possible. The goal of all religions is one though the path may be different. All creations of God without discrimination of caste, creed or color have the privilege to say His praise and adopt methods to realize Him. Religion, which is eternal, is the property of all people. Any attempt to remove its influence from the mass will be only an exercise in futility. Whether one likes it or not it is soaked in every individual and
cannot be removed from him. The world cannot thrive even for a second without religious activity in some way or the other. The common factor in all religions is the belief that there exists in it transcendental truth acceptable by all and applicable to all. This idea will continue to be entertained for all times to come. To those who believe in the existence of a superior force guiding their destiny, there is no necessity to convince about God's presence. To those who refuse to believe in God, any amount of explanation will be of no avail.  

"Of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of the human race, none certainly is more potent than that the manifestation of which we call by the name of religion."  

In any aspect religion is the most interesting of man's ways, for it is his ultimate commentary and his only defense against death. Above all, the world needed a creed that would balance tribulation with hope, soften bereavement with solace, redeem the prose of toil with the poetry of belief, cancel life's brevity with continuance and give an inspiring and ennobling significance to a cosmic drama that might else be meaningless and intolerable procession of souls, species and stars stumbling one by one into an inescapable extinction.

The phenomenology of religion studied under the leadership of the German philosopher Husserl aims at describing and analyzing the contents of consciousness phenomena without making any assumption about corresponding realities existing in a world independent of consciousness. Husserl believed that such analysis would lead to the dis-
covery of universal concepts or essence. According to Kristensen, phe-
nomenology of religion is concerned with the elements common to dif-
ferent religions such as prayer, sacrifice and priesthood, in order to dis-
cover similarities, differences and the human needs from which they
spring. The traditional comparative religious approach, in contrast to
the phenomenology of religion compares one religion as a whole with
others in order to evaluate them as ‘higher’ and ‘lower’. Theological,
historical, philosophical, literary, anthropological, sociological, psycho-
logical and phenomenological study of religion was a matter of schol-
arly concern from the time of the ancient Greeks until the present gain-
ing increasing importance 19.

In contemporary academic world, the study of Religion assumes
a different role. Students of religion found the previous studies very
partial and inadequate. Originally, it was the philosophers who found
religion interesting, but later, the social scientists also became inter-
ested in the study of religion and both could not do justice to ‘religion’.
The philosophers try to universalize religion and ended up in creating
“a philosophy of religion”, namely it happened to be that of Christian-
ity. There are many religions and each one is unique in itself; be it ar-
chaic, primitive, ancient or modern. What we need are philosophies of
religions and not a philosophy of religion. For instance let us examine
the concept they chose to philosophize. They are concept of God, Sal-
vation, Suffering and the like. This is peculiar to Christianity.
Later as the social scientists became interested in the phenomenon of the religion, they started collecting datas. They did this amazing work of collecting datas, they codified, edited and published them. But they in effect did the reductionism, by reducing religion to religious data and thereby completely missing the very spirit of religion. It remains another point of debate; is social knowledge any science? And can we legitimately call social studies, social science etc.?

This prompted many to think in terms of separate lines and methodology to approach religion. Some Universities like Amsterdam, Chicago, Harward, etc., started off separate departments of religion. This produced more or less a balanced approach towards the phenomenon of religion. Many started contributing the new study of religion and Rudolf Otto, Mircia Elliad, Kitagawa Cassian R Agera are only some few such names, among many.

Cassian R Agera says that he does not want to go for defining religion as many have done so and also complicated it already. The phenomenon of religion is such that no comprehensive definition is possible. Agera in his book “A Critique of Religious Culture” says that: ‘Religion is the fundamental intentionality of human consciousness towards the sacred’. This indeed puts religion at a level that transcends all cultural and civilisational barriers. “Fundamental intentionality of human consciousness” is that longing, longing towards transcendence that human consciousness experiences from time immemo-
rial. This longing found expression in various ways from time to time, depending on the knowledge structure of human society in varying existential situations. Depending on such varying existential situations and depending on the different time and space and knowledge structure, the transcendental longing of man gave birth to different Religions. It is interesting to note that this attitude towards religion comes very close to the Ancient Indian attitude towards religion- “Ekam Sat, Vipra Bahudhā Vadaññī” (The truth is only one; Scholars describe it differently depending on different space and time.)

This attitude towards religion makes all religions equal in spirit; whether or not it is archaic, primitive, ancient or modern ones. The differences, sophistication, theological and philosophical richness, etc., are nothing but the results of given knowledge structure through which man’s transcendental longing gets expressed. But then, the transcendental longing had always been the same with all men, in fact of past; of present and also of future. Thus all religions of past, present and also of future are ultimately and fundamentally the same, and, indeed, it is wrong to think in terms of one religion as better or superior and another as not.

I.2. Understanding Islam

Islam means ‘Submission to the will of God’. Those who choose to do so are ‘Muslims’ or the disciplined ones. The word for God in Islam is ‘Allah’, al- ism jalalah, the Name of Majesty and al- ism al
azam, the Supreme Name. Allah is the name of Essence or Absolute. It is possibly, a contraction of al-ilah ‘the Divinity’. The word Allah has neither feminine nor plural form. The name was known and used even before the Quran was revealed, for example, the name of the Prophet’s father was Abd Allah or the Servant of God. The name Allah is not confined to Islam alone, it is also the name by which Arabic speaking Christians of the Oriental churches call upon God. When written the name ‘Allah’ is usually followed by, ‘azzawajal’, Great and Majestic. There is no equivalent word for Allah in any other language. To describe God is better to quote His own words conveyed to Prophet through the Holy Quran,

“Qul Hu-wallaahu ‘Ahad; ‘Allaahus-Ṣamad; Lam yalid, wa lam yuulad; Walam Yakul-la-Huu kufuwan ‘ahad”. “Say; He is God (Allah), the one and only, God, the Eternal, Absolute. He bigetteth not nor is He begotten and there is none like unto Him”²².

The nature of God is indicated in a few words. Firstly His nature is so sublime, so far beyond our limited conception, the best way by which we can realize Him is to feel that He is a personality. ‘He’ is not a mere abstract concept of philosophy. He is near us; He cares for us; we owe our existence to Him. Secondly, He is Aḥad, the one and only God, the only one to whom worship is due. All other things or beings that we can think of are His creations and in no way comparable to Him. Thirdly, he is eternal, without beginning or end, Ṣamad, Absolute, not limited by time or place or circumstances. Fourthly, we must not think of Him As having a son or father, for that would be to import animal
qualities into our conception of Him. Finally, He is not like any other person or thing that we know or can imagine. His qualities and nature are unique. All Surahs (chapters) of Quran begin with the verse Bismillahi Rahmanirraheem, shortly called ‘bismi’, meaning, in the name of Allah who is Al-Raḥman (most gracious) and Al-Raḥeeem (most merciful) 23.

In Islam ‘Allah’ is known also by ninety nine other names collectively called ‘al asma-ul ḥusna’, the most beautiful Names. These are divided into asma adh-dhat, names of essence, asma ul-sifat, jalal and jamal meaning Names of Qualities, Majesty and Beauty. His attributes are mentioned in Ayat-ul-kurzi, ‘the verse of the throne’ (2: 255). Reading:

Allaahu laa 'illaaha 'illaa Huu. 'Al-Ḥayyuul Qayyuum. Laa ta'-khuţuhuu sina-tuńw-wa laa nawm. Lahuu maa fissamaawaati wamaa fil-'arţ. Maň-zallaţii yashfa-‘u 'iîndahuuu 'illaal bi‘iznih? Ya’-lamu maa bayna ‘aydiihim wa maa khalfahum. Wa laa yu-hiituna bi-shay-‘immin ‘il-mihii ‘illaal bimaashaa. Wa-si‘-a Kursiyyu-hus-Samaawaa-ti wal-‘arţ; wa laa ya‘-uudu-huu hifzuhumaa wa Huwal-‘Aliyyul-'Aţîm.- "Allah, there is no God save him, Hayyum, the Alive and Quayyum, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakeeth Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and what so ever in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth and He is never weary of Preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous."

The glorious meaning of the ‘verse of the Throne’ can not be
reproduced even in the Arabic language, other than in the rhythm of its well chosen and comprehensive Quranic words. The attributes of Allah are so different from anything we know in our present world that we have to be content with understanding that He is ‘Qayyuum’ not only self subsisting but also ‘keeping up and maintaining all life”. He is the source and constant support of all derived forms of life. He is perfect life and with perfect activity not subject to death and He has no need for rest or sleep.

According to Quran Allah was alone, around Him was the void. The Holy Quran says in Surah Aaraf, the Heights:

“Inna Rabba-kumullaahul lazii khalaqas-samaawaati walarqza fii sittati 'ayyaamiin-şum-mas-tawaa 'alal-'arsh. Yung-shillay- lan-nahaara yat-l;ubuu hasiliwa-wash-shamsa walqamara wannujuuma musakh-kharaatim-bi-'amrih. 'Alaa lahul-Khalqu wal-'Amr. Tabaa-rakallaahu Rabbul-'Aalamiin! 24. “Lo! Your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days. Then he mounted on Arsh, the Throne. He covered the night with the day which is in haste follow it. He hath made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His Amr, command. Blessed be Allah Rabbul Alameen, the Lord of the Worlds.”

This is a sublime verse comparable to the verse of the Throne. The mention of the creation in Six Days is of course metaphorical for the Quran elsewhere says “a Day with Allah is thousand years of what you reckon” 25 and in another verse, it is said: “(Whereby) the angels and spirit ascend unto Him in a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years”26. According to Commentator on Holy Quran Abdullah Yusuf
Ali ‘in the history of material earth we may reckon six days as six great epochs of evolution. *Arsh*, the Throne, too is metaphorical, a symbol of authority, power and vigilance while ‘*kurzi*’ refers to Majesty. Allah prides that His creations are the most good.

‘*Allaţii āḥsana kulla shay’in khalaqahuu wa bada-‘a khalqal-‘iñsaani miñ-ţiin; Śummaja-‘ala naslahuu miñ sulalatim-mim-maasta-‘im-mahiin.* “He who has made everything which He has created most good: He began the creation of man from clay. Then made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised”27.

The foundation of Islam is based on five pillars of faith, the first being Shahadah, the testification of faith that “there is no God but Allah and Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is the messenger of Allah”. Allah, the God whose existence, Divinity, Lordship and Oneness are to be acknowledged along with the truth that Muhammad is His messenger. Second, performing Salah- the prayers, third giving out zakat, fourth observing Saum- the fasting in the month of Ramadan and fifth Haj- the pilgrimage by those who can afford. Islam also encompasses belief in Angels, the Holy Scriptures, the apostles from Adam to Muhammad who include Nooh, Looth, Ibrahim, Musa, Yusuf, Sulaiman, Dhil-kifl and Esa. It also envisages belief in the hereafter.

Al Quran, the Book of Allah, sent down to Muhammad is the guide for mankind. Holy Quran says:

“*Yaaa-‘ayyu-hannaasu qad jaa-‘at-kum-maw-‘izatum-mir-Rabbi-kum wa shifaa-‘ul-limaa fiṣṣu-duuri wa Hu-dañwwwa Rahmatul-
"lil-Mu’-miniin." “O, mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and shifah- a healing for the diseases in your hearts and for those believe, ‘Hudanwwa Rahmatul-lil-Mu’-miniin’ a Guidance and mercy”.28

The words of the Prophet (hadith), and his deeds (sunnah) regulate the ‘discipline’ for men to attain perfection.

Islam is a perfect and practical religion of equality, liberty and fraternity. “Innadeena Indallahil Islam”29- “Surely, the true religion with Allah is Islam”. Islam also insists upon the fundamental unity of all revealed religions in origin, includes them all collectively in itself and enjoins all Muslims to acknowledge them.30

Islam gives due importance to Ilm- knowledge and Amal- action based on knowledge. The revelation to the prophet, ‘Quran’ began with the word ‘Iqra’ meaning ‘read’. Knowledge is pre requisite to know the Supreme Being and his laws. The highest and purest source of knowledge is revelation or ‘wahiyy’. ‘Fiqr’ (self thinking), ‘khaws (vain discourse) and ‘Zan’ (conjecture) are in their natural descending order. Intuition and inspiration which come more or less within the experience of all at the odd moments of their life, might just give an idea of revelation as good as faint ray tends to represent the bright sun. But revelation as such is extremely spontaneous, natural, brilliant, sure and supreme, far above the effort of mind. Says the Quran “and it is not for any man that Allah should speak to him except by ‘Wahiyy’ Revelation or from behind ‘Hijab’-a veil or by sending a Rasool- messenger, re-
vealing by His permission what He pleases- surely He is Aliyun- High, Hakim -Wise.31

Next to ‘Wahiyy’ comes ‘Fikr’ or self-thinking, which is highly commended and even urged by the Quran. But the sphere of thinking is distinctly confined to Nature and its working- the basis of all our sciences.

“Do they not think within themselves that Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them, but with truth (to serve a serious purpose), and for a fixed term? But most people believe not in the meeting of their Lord (Bi likhaai Rabbihim)”.32

“Most surely in the creations of the heavens and earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding-those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and think about the creation of the heavens and the earth (till they admit),

“Rabbanaa maa khalaqta haazaa baatilaa! Sub-ŋaanaka faqinaa azaaban-Naar” Our Lord! Thou have not created all this in vain. Glory be to Thee, preserve us from the doom of fire”.33

It would appear from this passage that religious mentality is not at all averse to a scientific outlook; in fact the latter follows the former as a natural sequence. Ignorance is the source of all pain and misery amounting to fire. So revelation and thinking are recognized as two reliable sources of knowledge in their respective spheres. But when thought sets out to explore the remote regions of revelation, it loses its
moorings and wanders off ‘to Khawz’ or vain discourse which in the language of the Quran is no better than mere play.34 Lastly, ‘Zan’ is a mere guess or conjecture, right or wrong as the case may be. It is a common tendency of the human mind and a source of misjudgment so it has been expressly deprecated in the Quran.

“And, most of those (unbelievers) do not follow any truth but Zan-conjecture; surely conjecture will not avail them aught against the Haq- the Truth; surely Allah knoweth what they do”35

‘Iman’ or belief is the shortest and surest way to attain revealed knowledge. Belief is equally essential for our acquired knowledge. Our individual personal knowledge even of the daily life is of significance when compared to the sum total of human knowledge. Every advance of science and civilization tends to multiply our beliefs in the knowledge and action of others. Therefore, belief is by no means confined to the spiritual sphere; it pervades the whole of our temporal life as well.

The knowledge received through revelation and the accompanying belief is by no means a blind acceptance, rather it carries its own light, which is limitless and ever fresh, and it is termed ‘Sharthe-sadar’ or expansion of breast, a special gift for prophets and their followers.37 According to Quran, ‘ilm’ (knowledge) is ‘noor’ (light) and ‘hayath’ (life); ‘jahiliyat’ (ignorance) is ‘zulumath’ (darkness) and ‘mawt’ (death).38 It is not a mere simile, but a scientific truth. ‘Hikmat’ or wisdom, which is the cream of knowledge, is the source of all good and a great gift of Allah specially awarded to Prophets and their followers.
Next to ‘ilm’ comes ‘amal’, that is action. Right knowledge should be transferred into right action to produce the right result. Again and again, no less than fifty times the Quran insists that knowledge should be followed by ‘amila saalihan’- right action. Every action however insignificant produces a lasting effect, ‘Wa izal-suḥufu nushirat’ which is somehow recorded somewhere.

“Famañy-ya’mal-misqaala ẓarratin khayrany-yarah!, Wamañy-ya’mal- miṣqaala ẓarratin sharrañy-yarah”. “So, who has done an atom’s weight of good will see it, and who has done an atom’s weight of evil will see it.”

Due allowance is also given for human weakness.

“Laa yukalli-fullaahu naf-san illaa wus-‘ahaa” “Allah does not impose upon any soul, duties and responsibilities beyond its ability to bear them.”

Islam aims to prepare man for a life of manifold association and deprecates the life of seclusion and isolation. Islam envisages an ideal community free from corruption and aiming at social good. Allah commands:

“Wal-takum-miṅkum ’Ummatuñy-yad-‘unna ’ilal-khayri wa ya’-muruuna bil-ma’-ruufi wa yanhawna ’anil-muṅkar.wa ’ulaa-’ika humul-muﬄi-ḥuun.”- “Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity.” (Surah: Ale-Imran III:104)

Islam calls upon man not only to do his duty, but enjoy his rights as well, to live a social life, both responsible and enjoyable. Islamic life
is not idealistic at the expense of realism, nor is it realistic to the detriment of idealism, but a harmonious blending of both, so as to correspond to all the grades of human nature and provide full scope for self-expression. With due regard to his extreme limitation, it chalks out the path of eternal progress, from knowledge to action that involves hardship, out of that man is relieved to satisfaction.\textsuperscript{43} Broadly speaking, the association of man are four fold: with the supreme Being, with Nature, with Spirits and with mankind. The Quran lays down definite code of guidance for each sphere of life. Human association with the Supreme Being is to be realized in actual life and not merely to be perceived in a world of contemplation. The association should be as realistic as that with our parents,

\begin{quote}
“He gives me to eat and gives me to drink and when I am sick then He restores me to health”.\textsuperscript{44}

“And whoever turns away from my ‘Dikir’ that is remembrance, his shall surely be a straightened life”.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

This is a deep psychological hint to all thinkers regarding the present paradox, dissatisfaction and dejection prevailing in the very midst of riches and prosperity in the modern world. The solution is provided by constant association with the Almighty. We may also be attracted to Him through our inner perception, which is either a gift or an acquisition.\textsuperscript{46} Spiritual association with the Supreme Being has to be realized both inside the self and in the world outside.\textsuperscript{47} The Supreme Being is a permanent companion and a sure help in emergency if approached aright.
But, men often mistake His help for apparent causes “*He is with you, wherever you may be; and Allah sees what you do*”.\(^{48}\) There is a living relation of love and liking between man and The Supreme Being

“Allah loves those who turn much to Him, Allah loves those who are careful of cleanliness”.\(^{49}\)

“Say (O Muhammad), if you love Allah, then follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your faults and Allah is ‘Gafoor’- forgiving and ‘Rahim’ merciful”.\(^{50}\)

It would appear from this that Islam; despite its strict discipline is really a religion of love and mercy.

The Quran points out fundamental truths about Nature so as to enable man to start his own detailed study and make use of his enquiry as best as he can.

“Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth. Lo! Therein is indeed a portent for believers”.\(^{51}\)

“And We created not the heavens and earth and all that is between them in play”.\(^{52}\)

So the whole universe is based on Truth, which pervades it through and through, and there is a purpose behind it everywhere.

“And He hath constrained the ‘Layl’- night and ‘Nahar’-the day and ‘Shams’-the sun and ‘Qamar’- the moon to be of service unto you and ‘Najum’- the stars are made subservient by his ‘Amr’ - command. Lo! Herein indeed are ‘Ayaath’-portents for people who have sense.\(^{53}\)

“And We have created above you seven paths and We are never
All the celestial bodies are bound by some law in their behavior. The whole universe is guarded with knowledge and there is nothing like unnoticed accidents in its operations, be it the most insignificant. The whole universe and everything therein has its own equilibrium, which keeps it in position. No two things in the universe are identical; all have their own identities, determined, distinct though it may not be always easy to detect the difference. The whole universe is endowed with life, knowledge and expression.

“There is not a thing, but hymns its praise of Him, but you understand not their praise”.

Solomon said, “we have been taught the language of birds”.

The whole universe adores Allah by instinct but man adores Him by option, being gifted with a will by origin and hence responsible for his conduct. At any rate, there is Life, knowledge and expression in all the objects of Nature, so much so that they have their own pairs and live a communal life. Every object of nature has got its own significance, none, not even a gnat, is unworthy of attention. It is quite sufficient to reveal truth to those who cared to gain knowledge. The Quran thus invites man to study Nature and to cultivate a living interest and sympathy with his natural surroundings, living a life of aim and purpose.

Man is paramount in creation- this is a Truth persistently urged by the Quran, so as to declare Man His ‘Khalifa’ - Vicegerent on earth,
totally subject to God and exercising wide powers in the universe bestowed on this frail creature by his mighty Creator, Rabb (God). It would appear from Quran that man is superior to Angels\textsuperscript{62} and Geni\textsuperscript{63} being most advanced by nature in knowledge, sense, descension, ascension and manifestation. Love, devotion and obedience put him in a position inaccessible to others. But, if man begins to fall in the physical and moral grades of creation, he may fall to the lowest level in his deed, indeed lower than the animals do by Nature. For instance says the Quran,

“We have indeed created man, ‘fi ahsani taqweem’ - in the best of moulds, then We reduced him to ‘asfala safileen’ - the lowest of the low, save those who believe and do good works and there is a reward unfailing”\textsuperscript{64}

Man is a combination of soul and body. Soul springs from the sphere of ‘Amr’ (command) and Body grows in the sphere of ‘Khalq’ (creation), both belonging to ‘Rabb’, as says the Quran.

“Verily, your Rabb is God who created the heaven and earth in six days - all governed by laws under His command. Are not both for Him, Khalq and Amr?”\textsuperscript{65}

As to the sphere of ‘Amr’ it is instantaneous and Absolute, force from the chain of causation as pointed out in the Quran.

“Verily, His ‘Amr’ is (this) When He intends a thing He says for it ‘Kun’ or Be and there it is”.\textsuperscript{66}

As to soul we are told by the Quran

“They ask thee concerning ‘Rooh’ - the soul, Say, the soul is by the
‘Amr’ of my ‘Rabb’ and of knowledge it is only a little that is allowed to you”.67

Though man is admitted to be a weak creature liable to sink to the animal level, still he is capable of rising to the highest grade in creation, according to his righteousness, a proper combination of knowledge and action.

“Inna ’akra-makum iñdallaahi Atqaakum’- “Surely, the most honorable of you with Allah is the most righteous among you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware”.68

Islam while insisting upon the inherent equality of mankind recognizes ranks and superiority on the basis of personal accomplishments. In the code of the Quran, ‘Taqwa’ or righteousness is the best criterion of status. ‘Mutaquoon’ or the righteous possesses three qualities, belief in the revealed truth, association with the Supreme Being and beneficence for mankind.

The Quran clearly and definitely lays down rules of conduct for preachers, how they should equip themselves and how they should carry on their mission among the people of scriptures, among the followers as well as non-believers.

“Say, (O Mohammad), This is my way, I do invite people unto God on evidence clear as the seeing with ones eyes. I and whoever follows me. Glory to God! And never will I join gods with God”.69

The mode of preaching should be polite and considerate, based on ‘Hikmah’- wisdom70, but the iniquity of the opposite party may be
duly requited. On the whole there should be no compulsion in religion.

“Laa-ikraaha Fid-Diin- Let there be no compulsion in religion”.71

The prophet Muhammad seemed to be extremely anxious to call utmost people to Allah, to reconcile them with truth. So he has been told

“not to grieve and overstrain himself so as to cause his soul expire in sighings for them, God leaves to stray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills”.72

In social relations Islam is always for amicability, charity and forgiveness. But at the same time it keeps in view the variety of human nature and allows just the necessary latitude for individual temperaments. Islam believes in regulation, not suppression or annihilation,73 it would appear how it gently and effectively Islam persuades man to be generous and forgiving

“Was-bir wa maa sabruka 'illaa billaah – Endure thou patiently, thine endurance is only by the help of Allah.”74

If man is not at all of that virtue, he has still to exercise full control keeping his revenge restrained- by no means an easy task in anger.

“But fear God and know that God is with those who restrain themselves”.75

Restrain should not be confused with timidity and helpless resignation. At any rate, man should keep himself fit for self-defense.
Islam is essentially a religion of beneficence urging the spending of one’s subsistence for his kins, orphans, the needy, the wayfarer, those who ask and to free men from bondage to others. Good things that we have honorably earned should be offered as presents or charity and not worthless shift, which we would decline to accept.

Islam enjoins upon its followers love, sympathy and service for all they associate with, from parents and relations to friends and companions, so as to preserve peace and goodwill in society. It is to be noted that love and respect to parents come next to the worship of Allah in Islamic culture.

“Be grateful to me and to both of your parents”.

Religion in general is supposed to be averse, if not hostile to material progress and the followers have to make a clear choice between piety and prosperity. Islam on the other hand makes this worldly life the very opportunity to attain religious culture and to make spiritual progress, so much so, that marriage, which is the real tie with the world, has been strictly enjoined upon all Muslims. But ‘marriage’ is not dealt lightly by Islam. Marriage requires some sort of dower (mahar) for the wife. The holy Quran says:

“Let those who find not the wherewithal for marriage keep themselves chaste until God gives them means out of His grace.”

If the man cannot afford, he must wait and keep himself chaste. There is a misconception that Islam encourages polygamy. The fact is
otherwise. Marrying up to four women, rendered orphans, was permitted in the context of the war of ‘Uḥhad’, when the Muslim community was left with many orphans and widows and captives and their maintenance became a challenge. The treatment of those women was to be governed by principles of the greatest humanity and equity. It was enjoined in the Quran that if one fears that he shall not be able to do justly with the wives then he could marry only one. Further it is declared, “you are never able to be fair and just as between women, even if it is your ardent desire.” This is a clear indication that Islam is in favour of monogamy and polygamy is not the rule of Islam. So also divorce, even if permitted is the most hatred act before God. The attitude of Islam towards the world is not shy and reluctant, but bold and receptive. Islam calls upon man to make the fullest and best use of the objects of nature and make life worth living. Moreover Islam aims at many amenities of higher life, which for lack of knowledge or courage many neglect to acquire. Its vista of aspiration and effort is longer than many can imagine.

“Say; who hath forbidden the beautiful gifts of God which He hath produced for his servants and the things clean and pure which he hath provided for sustenance?”

Islam envisages a perpetual life of Hereafter, that is after death involving ‘Yawmul Qiyamat’- a day in which the whole creations are destroyed, ‘Yawmul Hashr’, a day of return of all people, who will be produced before God, the trial before God on the basis of the Record of
man’s actions and the judicial verdict of God as per which the Heaven or Hell, as the case may be, is awarded.

The human state is distinguished from all others precisely because it is characterized by his capacity to know the Absolute. Islam has no pre-concept of the human creation as ‘Sinned’ bound to suffering. There is nothing like Cardinal sin. On the contrary man is considered to be ‘Khalifatuñ fil-arz, God’s viceroy on Earth, occupying a position of nobility. Islam simplifies as man’s own choice, the two paths as consequences of being human, either that of becoming sanctified or reduced to the subhuman. Damnation is the forfeit or ultimate loss of the human state because of revolt, disbelief or indifference. Hell is the place of torment where the damned undergo suffering, most often described as fire, a fire whose fuel is stones and men. Names of hell used in Quran are An-nar, Jahannam, Al-Jahim (burning), As-sair (raging flame), As-saqar (scorching fire), Al-hawiyah (abyss), Al-hutamah (crushing pressure) and so on. The physical suffering of hell are the concretization of the state of inner contradictions which ensues from the denial of God. The Quran says:

“Balil-laзиina kafaruу fii таكاъib! Wallaahu minw-warаaa-’ihiμ-Muъiит! Nay, but those who disbelieve, live in denial. And, Allah, all unseen surroundeth them”

Hell is the manifestation of that denial. The soul undergoing the sufferings is in fact attached to them, that is, enjoys the sufferings in certain way, just as the cruel or self destructive enjoy the result of their
cruelty in this life. Those who are or remain in hell do so because they
cannot detach themselves from the errors that brought them there in the
first place. If they did, they will, by the very fact be liberated; but in the
place of true joy they put a false one and the habit of ego centrism that
prevented them from surrendering to God in life also prevents them
from recognizing the truth of their state in hell. The consequences of
the state of contradiction may be suspended in life, but are inevitable
when the protective modalities, time and space, which contain the world
are removed at death.

Jannah, the Garden is the paradise intended for the righteous as
reward for obedience to God. The word suggests, that which is veiled,
covered or surrounded, hence an enclosed garden luxuriant with foli-
age of tall, shadowing trees and sheltered from storm or tempest. The
delights prepared therein for the blessed are concealed and hardly imag-
inable in man’s present state of existence. The Quran often speaks of
‘Garden of Paradise underneath which rivers flow”. Quran also men-
tion in several places the everlasting luxuries and exuberance to be de-
rived out of the provisions made for the inmates of the paradise.

The Quran also speaks of the ‘Beautifíc vision’ – man’s meeting
with their Lord, who rewards salvation.

"Faman kaana yarjuu Liqaaa-'a Rabbihii fal-ya'-mal 'amalan
saalihañwwa laa yushrik bi-'ibaadati Rabbihii 'aḥadaa. And who-
soever hopeth for the meeting with his Lord let him do righteous work,
and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord” 83.
Again there are references in the Quran to God’s ‘Face’ as in the Sura of ‘Lyī’ - The Night.

“Even he who gives his wealth to purify himself and confers no favour on any one for recompense only seeking the Face of his Lord the Most High and he shall surely be satisfied” 84

The importance of the Beautific vision is not a question of sight, but awareness or knowledge. St. Thomas Aquinas also emphasized the importance of the contemplation of God, the intellectual ‘vision’ of God even though God is invisible in Paradise.

Theologians made the distinction that both hell and paradise last for perpetuity (Khuld) and not for eternity (abad), that is that they have no limit or end, in the sense that they are indefinite temporally. However, most of the theologians believe that if the person who entered the hell was not a ‘mushrik’ who associated another with God, but a ‘Mu’-min’ believer, and then God could forgive his sins or non-conformities. This could take place immediately, aided perhaps by the intercession of the Divine Messengers whom the believer followed, despite his sins or the forgiveness could take place after a sojourn in hell in which the non-conformities had been burned away. There is a Hadith which refers to this “He shall make men come out of hell after they have been burned and reduced to cinders. God can forgive any sin but one; denial of His Reality and His essential Unity: that nothing is absolutely real, except Him”.

38
I.3. The Prophet of Islam

‘Muhammad’ means ‘the praised one’ or he who is glorified, and the name ‘Ahmed’ by which the Prophet is also known, is a superlative form meaning the most laudable, both from the verb ‘hamda’, to praise, laud, glorify. The Holy Quran commands

>Wa 'atii-'ullaaha wa 'atii'ur-Rasuula wah-zaruw - obey Allah and obey the Messenger and beware of evil”

In the matter of the ‘discipline’ required of a Muslim in Islam, Allah has thus raised the Prophet on par with Him. It is further enjoined.

>“Laqad kaana lakum fii Rasuulil-lahi 'uswatun Ḥasanatul-liman kaana yarjullaaha wal-Yawmal-'Aakhira wa za-karallaaha kaṣīraa - You have indeed in the Apostle of God an excellent model of conduct for any one whose hope is in God and Final Day and who engages much in the praise of God”

In order to understand the said ‘Excellent Conduct’ of the Prophet, it is essential that one should be familiar with the life of the Prophet in close association of which the revelation of the Holy Quran came into being, over a period of twenty three years.

Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttalib of the tribe of Qureysh was born at Mecca in 570 AD. His father died before he was born and he was protected first by his grand father Abdul Muttalib and after his grand father’s death, by his uncle Abu Talib. As a young boy, he travelled with his uncle in the merchant’s caravan to Syria and some
years later made the same journey in the service of a wealthy widow named Khadija. So faithfully did he transact the widow’s business and so excellent was the report of his behavior, which she received from her old servant who had accompanied him that she soon afterwards married her young agent and the marriage proved to be a very happy one though she was 15 years older than him. Throughout the 26 years of their life together he remained devoted to her and after her death when he took other wives he always mentioned her with greatest love and reverence. This marriage gave him rank among the nobles of Mecca while his conduct earned for him the surname, Al-Ameen, ‘the trustworthy’.

The Meccans claimed descent from Prophet Abraham, through Ismail and tradition stated that their temple, the Kabah had been built by Abraham for the worship of the one God. It was still called the house of Allah, but as objects of worship, there were a number of idols. The few who felt disgust at the idolatry longed for the religion of Abraham and tried to find out what has been its teaching. Such seekers of the truth were known as ‘ḥunafaah’ meaning ‘upright’. Muhammad was one of them. It was his practice to retire with his family for a month of every year to a cave in the desert for meditation. His place of retreat was Hira, a desert hill not far from Mecca and his chosen month was Ramazaan, the month of heat. It was there one night towards the end of the quiet month that the first revelation came to him when he was forty years old. He was asleep or in a trans when he heard the voice say;
“Read”! He said, “I cannot read”. The voice again said ‘Read’! He repeated, “I cannot read”. A third time the voice, more terrible commanded; ‘Read’! He said, “What can I read”? The voice said:

*Iqra Bismi Rabbikallazii khalaq*- Read; in the name of thy Lord, who createth, createth man from Alaq a clot. Read; And it is thy Lord, Akram- the most bountiful who teacheth by Qalam- pen, teacheth man that which he knew not.*

When he awoke the words remained ‘as if inscribed upon his heart’. When he went out of the cave on to the hillside he heard the same awe-inspiring voice say; “O Muhammad! Thou art Allah’s messenger and I am Gabriel”. Then he raised his eyes and saw the angel in the likeness of a man standing in the sky above the horizon. And again the dreadful voice said “O Muhammad! Thou art Allah’s messenger and I am Gabriel”. Muhammad (God bless and keep him) stood quiet still turning away his face from the brightness of the vision but whithersoever he might turn his face there always stood the angel confronting him. He remained thus a long while till at length the angel vanished, then he returned in great distress of mind to his wife Khadija. She did her best to reassure him saying that his conduct had been such that, Allah would not let harmful spirit come to him and that it was her hope that he was to become the Prophet of his people. She took him to her cousin, Waraqah ibn Noufal, a very old man who knew the scriptures of the Jews and Christians who declared his belief that the heavenly messenger who came to Moses of old had come to Muhammad and that he was chosen
as the Prophet of his people.

Recognition of the Divine message he had received involved a change in his whole mental outlook sufficiently disturbing to a sensitive and honest mind also the forsaking of his quite honored way of life. With continuance of the revelations and the conviction that they brought, he, at length, accepted the tremendous task imposed on him becoming filled with an enthusiasm of obedience, which justifies his proud title of the ‘slave of Allah’. Wahiyy, the verse from Allah, which came to him when in a state of trance are held sacred and are never confounded with those which he uttered when no physical change was apparent in him. The former are the Sacred Book; the latter the Hadith or the words of the prophet. Because the angel on mount Hira bade him Iqra, Read- insisted on his ‘reading’ though he was illiterate, the sacred book is called Quran- ‘the Reading’.

For the first three years or rather less of his mission, the prophet preached Islam only to his family and his intimate friends, while the people of Mecca as a whole regarded him as one who has become a little mad. The first of all who embraced Islam was his wife Khadija, second his first cousin Ali, third his servant Zeyed, a former slave. His old friend Abu-baker and his servants and dependants were also among those who joined his mission early. At the end of the third year the prophet received the command to ‘arise and warn’ whereupon he began to preach in public on the sovereignty of Allah and his manifest
power and folly of idolatry. When he began to speak against their small gods, the qureysh became actively hostile and started persecuting his poorer disciples, mocking and insulting him. The one consideration that prevented them from killing him was the fear of blood-revenge of the clan to which his family belonged. The converts of the first four years were mostly humble folk unable to defend themselves against oppression. So cruel was the persecution they endured that Prophet advised all who could possibly contrive to do so to immigrate to a Christian country Abyssinia. And still in spite of persecution and emigration the little company of Muslims grew in number. Qureysh were seriously alarmed. They tried to bring the Prophet to a compromise offering to accept his religion if he would so modify it as to make room for their gods as intercessors with Allah offering to make him their king if he would give up attacking idolatry. When their efforts at negotiation failed they went to his uncle Abu-Talib offering to give him the best of their young men in place of Muhammad, to give him all that he desired, if only he would let them kill Muhammad. Abu-Talib refused. Their exasperation was increased by the conversion of Umar, one of their stalwarts. They grew more and more embittered and became rigid. At the time of the annual pilgrimage, a small group of men from Yathribe, a city more than 200 miles away which has since become world famous as Al-Madinah, ‘the city par excellence’, heard him gladly. They recognized him as the prophet whom the Jewish Rabbis had foretold. On their return to Yathribe, they told what they had seen and heard, with the result that at the next season of pilgrimage, a deputation came to the prophet from
Yathribe. They swore allegiance to him. They then returned to Yathribe with a Muslim teacher in their company and soon ‘there was not a house in Yathribe wherin there was not mention of the messenger of Allah’. In the following year at the time of pilgrimage 73 Muslims from Yathribe came to Mecca to vow allegiance to the prophet and invite him to their city. At Al-Aqabah by night they swore to defend him as they would defend their own wives and children. It was then that the Hijrah-the flight to Yathribe was decided.

Qureysh had wind of what was going on. They hated Muhammad but dreaded what he might become if he escaped from them. The death of Abu-Talib had removed his chief protector but still they had to reckon with the vengeance of his clan upon the murderer. They cast lots and chose a slayer out of every clan. All those were to attack the prophet simultaneously and strike together as one man. Thus his blood would be on all Qureysh. It was at this time that the prophet received the first revelation ordering him to make war upon his persecutors until ‘persecution is no more and religion is Allah’s only’. The prophet only waited for God’s command. It came at length. It was the night appointed by the Qureysh for his murder. He left his house when it is said a blindness fell upon his would be murderers so that he put dust on their heads as he passed by without their knowing it. He took Abu-Bakr in his company and went to a cavern in the desert hills and hid there till the hue and cry was passed. A search party came quite near them in their hiding place and Abu-Bakr was afraid; but the prophet said, “Fear not, Allah is with
us”. At night they started journey to Yathribe by camel. After travelling for many days by unfrequented paths, the fugitives reached their suburb of Yathribe, whither for weeks passed, the people of the city had been going on every morning watching for the prophet till heat drove them for shelter. The travellers arrived in the heat of the day, after the watchers had returned. It was a Jew who called out to the Muslims in derisive tones that he whom they expected had at last arrived. That was the Hijrah—the flight from Mecca to Yathribe (medina), which counts as the beginning of the Muslim era.

The thirteen years of humiliation of persecution, of seeming failure of prophecy still unfilled were over. The ten years of success, the fullest that has ever crowned one man’s endeavor had begun. The Hijrah makes a clear division in the story of the prophet’s mission. Till then he was a preacher only. Thenceforth he was the ruler of a state, at first a very small one, which grew in ten years to be the empire of Arabia. In the first year of his reign at Yathribe, the prophet made a solemn treaty with the Jewish tribes which secured to them equal rights of citizenship and full religious liberty in return for their support of the new state. Till then the Qiblah, (the place toward which the Muslims turn their faces in prayer) had been Jerusalem where Masjidul Aqsa stood. He received command from God to change the Qiblah to Ka’bah at Mecca. The prophets first concern, as a ruler was to establish public worship and to lay down the constitution of the state. Several small expeditions went out led either by the prophet himself or the fugitives from Mecca, for the
purpose of reconnoitering and of dissuading other tribes from siding with the Quresh who had sworn to make avenge of his religion. For thirteen years the prophet and his companions had suffered humiliation and persecution, but he hated the idea of fighting even in self-defence. Now he had received command to fight against them till they stopped persecution.

In the second year of the Hijrah, the Muslims met the army of Quresh under the leadership of Abu Sufyan at Badre, a place not far off from Madinah. The prophet gave leave to all the Ansars (natives of Yathribe), to return to their homes unreproached, since their oath did not include the duty of fighting in the field, that the Ansars were only hurt by the suggestion that they could possibly desert the prophet in a time of danger. The Qureysh armed force was three times in number than the Muslims. The battle went at first against the Muslims but ended in a signal victory for them. The victory of Badr gave the prophet new prestige among the Arab tribe, but thenceforth there was the feud of blood between Quresh and the Islamic state in addition to the old religious hatred.

In the following year an army of three thousand came from Mecca to destroy Yathribe. The prophet’s first idea was merely to defend the city. But the men who had fought at Badr and believed that God would help them against any odds thought it a shame that they should linger behind walls. The prophet approving of their faith and zeal gave way to
them and set out with an army of one thousand men to Mt. Uhud where the enemies were encamped. The battle of Mt. Uhud would have been an even greater victory than at Badr for the Muslims, but for the disobedience of a band of fifty archers whom the prophet set to guard a pass against the enemy cavalry. Seeing their comrades victorious, these men left their post fearing to lose the share of the spoils. The cavalry of Quresh rode through the gap and fell on the exultant Muslims. The prophet himself was wounded and many Muslims killed. On the following day, the prophet again sallied for with what remained of the army, that Quresh might hear that he was in the field and so might perhaps be deterred from attacking the city. The stratagem succeeded. Abu Sufyan’s army decided to return to Mecca. The reverse, which they suffered on Mt. Uhud, harmed the prestige of Muslims with the Arab tribes and also with the Jews of Yathribe. The prophet’s followers were attacked and murdered when they went abroad in little companies. The Jews, despite their treaty, now hardly concealed their hostility. They even went so far in flattery of Quresh as to declare the religion of the pagan Arabs superior to Al-Islam.

In the fifth year of the Hijrah, the Quresh made a great effort to destroy Al-Islam in the war of the clans or war of the Khandak (trench) as it is variously called. The Quresh with all their clans and tribes consisting of an army of ten thousand men rode against Al-Medina. The prophet caused a deep trench to be dug before the city and led himself the work of digging it. The army of the clans was stopped by the trench,
a novelty in Arab warfare. It seemed impassable for cavalry, which formed their strength. The delay caused by the trench had damped the ardor of the clans, distress spread between Quresh and their Jewish allies so that both hesitated to act. Then came a bitter wind from the sea which blew for three days and nights so terribly that not a tent could be kept standing, not a fire lighted, not a pot boiled. The tribesmen were in utter misery. At length, one night the leader of Quresh decided that the torment would be borne no longer and gave the order to retire.

Early in the sixth year of Hijrah, the prophet led a campaign against a Banu-e-Mustaliq who were trained to attack the Muslims. In the same year the prophet had a vision in which he found himself entering the holy place of Mecca unopposed. Attired as pilgrims, a company of fourteen hundred led by the prophet journeyed to Mecca. As they drew near the holy valley they were met by a friend from the city who warned the prophet that the Quresh had put on their leopard skins (the badge of valor) and had sworn to prevent his entering the sanctuary: Their cavalry was on the road before him. On that the prophet ordered a detour through mountain Gorges and the Muslims were tired. They came down at last into the valley of Mecca and encamped at a spot called Al-Hudaibiyah from hence the Prophet tried to open negotiations with Qureysh explaining that he came only as a pilgrim.

The first envoy sent to the Quresh was maltreated and his counsel hamstrung whereas a messenger from the Quresh side was so impressed that on his return to the city he said: “I have seen Caesar and
Chosros in their pomp, but never have I seen a man honoured as Muhammad is honoured by his comrades”. From Prophet’s side Uthman (who later became Caliph) was finally chosen as envoy because of his kinship with the powerful Umayyad family. After a lot of confusion and hesitation on the part of Quresh, negotiations found way and the truce of Al Hudeybiyah was signed. For ten years there were to be no hostilities between the parties. The prophet was to return to Al-Medina without visiting the Kaba, but in the following year he might perform the pilgrimage with his comrades; Quresh promising to evacuate Mecca for three days to allow of him doing so. Deserters from Quresh to the Muslims during the period of the truce to be returned; not so deserters from the Muslims to Quresh. There was dismay among the Muslims at these terms. However this truce proved, in fact, to be greatest victory that the Muslims had till then achieved. War had been a barrier between both the parties but now they talked together and the new religion spread more rapidly.

Two years later, when the Meccans broke the truce, the prophet marched against them with an army of ten thousand. In the seventh year of the Hijrah, the Prophet led a campaign against Khybar, the stronghold of the Jewish tribes in North Arabia, which had become a hornet’s nest of his enemies. The forts of Khybar were reduced one by one. On the day when the last fort surrendered, Jafar, son of Abu Talib, arrived with all who remained of the Muslims, who had fled to Abyssinia to escapes from persecution of the Quresh in early days. It was at Khybar
that a Jewess prepared for the prophet poisoned meat; of which he only
tasted a morsel without swallowing it, then warned his comrades that it
was poisonous.

One Muslim, who had already swallowed a mouthful died immedi-
dately. The prophet himself from the mere taste of it, derived illness,
which eventually caused his death. The woman who cooked the meat
was brought before the prophet. When she said that she had done it on
account of humiliation of her people, he forgave her. In the same year,
the Prophet’s vision was fulfilled; he visited the holy place of Mecca
unopposed. In accordance with the terms of the truce idolaters evacu-
ated the city and from the surrounding heights watched the procedure
of the Muslims. At the end of the stipulated three days the chiefs of the
Quresh sent word to remind the prophet that the time was up. He then
withdrew and the idolaters reoccupied the city.

In the 8th year of Hijrah, hearing that Byzantine emperor was gath-
ering a force in Syria for the destruction of Al-Islam, the Prophet sent
three thousand men to Syria under the command of his freed man, zyed.
The campaign was unsuccessful except that it impressed the Syrians of
the reckless valour of the Muslims. The three thousand did not hesitate
to battle with a hundred thousand. When all the leaders appointed by
the prophet had been killed, the courageous Khalid Ibn-al-Walid, stra-
tegically managed to preserve the remnant and return to Medina. In the
same year the Quresh broke the truce by attacking a tribe that was in
alliance with the Prophet and massacring them even in the sanctuary at
Mecca. Then the Prophet summoned all the Muslims capable of bearing arms and marched to Mecca. Quresh were over awed. Their cavalry put up a show of defense before the town but were routed without bloodshed; and the Prophet entered his native city as conqueror. The inhabitants expected vengeance for their past misdeeds. However the Prophet proclaimed a general amnesty. In their relief and surprise, the whole population of Mecca hastened to swear allegiance. The Prophet caused all the idols which were in the sanctuary to be destroyed saying “truth has come, darkness has vanished away” and adhan, the Muslim call to prayer was heard in Kaba.

At Huneyn, in a deep ravine, his troops were ambushed by the enemy and almost put to flight, but with his faithful comrades the Prophet could defeat the enemy. The city of Taif was besieged and was relieved of the enemies. Then the Prophet appointed a Governor for Mecca and himself returned to Al-Medina to the boundless joy of Ansar, who had feared lest, now that he had regained his native city, he might forsake them and make Mecca his capital. Even though Mecca had been conquered and its people were now Muslims, the manner of performing pilgrimage of the pagan Arabs and the Muslims in their own ways remained. As per the ‘Declaration of immunity’ issued by the Prophet, only Muslims were to make the pilgrimage thereafter exception being made for such of the idolaters as had a treaty with the Muslims and had never broken their treaty. Such were to enjoy the privilege only to the term of expiry of the treaty. That proclamation marks the end of idol
worship in Arabia.

The 9th year of Hijrah is called the year of Deputations because from all part of Arabia deputations came to Al-Madina to swear allegiance to the Prophet and hear the Quran. The Prophet had become, in fact, the emperor of Arabia, but his way of life remained as simple as before. The Prophet himself led or directed all the campaigns and expeditions that fulfilled the holy mission. He personally controlled every detail of every organization, judged every case and was accessible to every suppliant. In those ten years he destroyed idolatry in Arabia, raised women from the status of chattel to complete equality with men, effectively stopped drunkenness and immorality which had till then disgraced the Arabs, made men to live with faith, sincerity and honest dealing; transformed tribes who had been for centuries content with ignorance into a people with greatest thirst for knowledge and for the first time in history made universal brotherhood, a fact and principle of common law. His support and guide in all that work was the Quran.

In the tenth year of the Hijrah the Prophet went to Mecca as a pilgrim for the last time- his “pilgrimage of farewell”, Hajatul Wida, it is called, when from Mount Arafah he preached to an enormous throng of pilgrims. He reminded them of all the duties Al-Islam enjoined upon them and that they would one day have to meet their Lord, who would judge each one of them according to his deeds. At the end of the discourse he asked: “have I not conveyed the message? And from that great
assembly of men the shout went up”. “O Allah! Yes! The Prophet said: “O Allah, Be Thou witness”.

It was during that last pilgrimage that the Surah ‘Succor’ (Soorath Nasar) was revealed which he received as an announcement of his approaching death. Soon after his return to Al-Madina he fell ill. The tidings of his illness caused dismay throughout Arabia and anguish to the folk of Al-Madina, Mecca and Taif. At early dawn on the last day of his earthly life he came out from his room beside the mosque at Al-Madina and joined the public prayer which Abu Bakar had been leading since his illness. And there was a great relief among the people who supposed him well again. When later in the day the rumour grew that the Prophet was dead, Umar threatened those who spread the rumour with dire punishment declaring it a crime to think that the messenger of God could die. Abu Backer went to the chamber of his daughter and Prophet’s wife Ayisha where the Prophet lay dead. Having ascertained the fact, he went to the crowd. After praising Allah he said: “O people! Lo! As for him who used to worship Muhammad, Muhammad is dead, but as for him who used to worship Allah, Allah is alive and dieth not. He then recited the words of the Quran:

“Muhammad is but a messenger, the like of whom have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dieth or is slain, ye will turn back on your heels? He who turneth back doth no hurt to Allah and Allah will reward the thankful” 91.

Muhammad is the seal of the Prophets ‘Khaatamān-Nabiyyin’ – the last Prophet on whom the line of Prophets is closed92. Muhammad is
the harbinger of Mercy from God for all worlds. He is full of concern for the believers, ‘Bashiir’, bearer of good tidings, ‘Nadeer’ – a warner and who bring you forth from ‘Zulumat’, (darkness) unto ‘Noor’, (light)\textsuperscript{93}. He confirms all prophets and their Scriptures \textsuperscript{94}. Tradition assigns two hundred names to Mohammad including \textit{Habib Allah} (Beloved of God), \textit{an-Nabi} (the Prophet) \textit{ar-Rasul} (the Messenger), \textit{Taha}, \textit{Yasin} (names of Surahs of the Quran), \textit{Dikr-Llaah} (remembrance of God), \textit{Miftah-ur-Rahmaan} (the key of mercy), \textit{Miftah-ul-jaan-nah} (the key of paradise), \textit{Sayd-al-kawnayn} (Lord of the two worlds), \textit{Ruh-ul-Haq} (the spirit of truth), \textit{Khatam-ul-Ambiya} (seal of the Prophets), \textit{Khatum-ar-Rasul} (seal of the Messengers) and so on. He was blessed by God with a number of sincere and capable followers, Aishah, his wife, Fathima, his daughter and wife of Ali, grand children Hassan and Hussain and companions like Abu Bakar, Umar, Utman and Ali, the first four caliphs of Islam and several others, all of whom took up the cause of Islam with unparallel devotion and success. His was an excellent mode of conduct. He has been raised high above all creation, for the Quran says:

\textit{“Innallaaha wa Malaaa-`ikatahuu yasalluuna `alan-Nabiyy: Yaaaa-`ayyuhallaziina `aamanuu `alluu `alayhi wa sallimuu tasliimaa.”}

Verily Allah and his Angels shower 'salath', blessings on the Prophet. Oh you believe! Invoke blessings on him and offer your salutations to him with all respect\textsuperscript{95}.

On the passing away of Prophet Mohammed difference arose as to who should succeed him to the caliphate. Some were of the view that the election of the caliph should be unanimous or through consensus.
The people who shared this view came to be known as Sunnis. The first Four Caliphs Hazrat Abu Bakar, Umar, Uthman and Ali were thus elected by consensus. The Sunnis follow the trodden path of the Prophet and his companions and do not deviate from the beliefs and practices of the catholic Muslim community. According to the dissidents, Hazrat Ali should have succeeded to the caliphate after Muhammad and as such those people, later known as Shia, meaning a community, do not recognize the first three caliphs. They regard Ali and his descendents as the only legitimate leaders (Imams) of the Muslim community. The majority of the Shias called Ithna ashiriyaa accept a line of twelve Imams ending with Muhammad Al-Muntazar (the awaited) who, it is believed went into occultation but who will reappear at a pre-ordained time to fill the earth with justice.

Islam is not limited by time or space and according to its doctrine all truth from God revealed anywhere at any time is Islam, Mohammad being the final recipient in its most perfect form. In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that in order to achieve full self consciousness man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kinship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and history as source of human knowledge, all are different aspects of the same idea of finality. The idea however does not mean that mystic experience,
which qualitatively does not differ from the experience of the Prophet, has now ceased to exist. God reveals his signs in inner as well as outer experience and it is the duty of man to judge the knowledge yielding capacity of all aspects of experience. The idea of finality therefore should not be taken to suggest that the ultimate fate of life is complete displacement of emotion by reason. Such a thing is neither possible nor desirable. The intellectual value of the idea is that it tends to create an independent critical attitude towards mystic experience by generating the belief that all personal authority claiming a supernatural origin, has come to an end in the history of man ⁹⁶.

I.4. The Holy Quran

All the Surahs (Chapters) of the Quran had been recorded in writing before the Prophet’s death and many Muslims had memorized the whole of Quran. Nonetheless, written Surahs were also available to many believers. Within two years of the Prophet’s death there was a battle during the caliphate of Abu Baker and many who memorized the whole of Quran were killed. At that time, a collection of the entire Quran was made and the whole thing was put in writing. In the Caliphate of Uthman all existing copies of Surahs were brought in and an authoritative version based on Abu Bakar’s collection and with the testimony of those who had known the whole Quran by heart, was compiled exactly in the present form and order. This is regarded as traditional based on the arrangement of Prophet himself. The Caliph, Uthman and his helpers were
Comrades of the Prophet and the most devout students of the revelation. This is how the Quran gets preserved.

The Quran reveals:

“The Inna Nahnu nazzal-naz-Zikra wa ‘innaa laḥuu la-Haafizuun- we have, without doubt sent down the message and we will assuredly guard it from corruption”97.

“Zaalikal-Kitaabu laa rayba fiih Hudal-lil Muttaqiin’- ‘This is the Book, in it is guidance sure without doubt to those who fear God” 98.

“Verily we have brought them a book based on knowledge which we explain in detail: “Hudanw-wa rahmal-liqawminy-yu’-minuun”- a guidance and mercy for a people who believe” 99.

“The Quran is not such as can be produced by other than Allah, but it is a confirmation of revelation that went before it and a fuller explanation of the book which is decreed for mankind- there is no doubt from the Lord of the worlds” 100.

“Wa ‘in-kuntum fii ray-bim-mimmaa nazzal-naa ‘alaa ‘Abdinaa fa’- tuu bi-Suuratimmimis-lih; wad-‘uu shuhadaa-‘akum-min- duunillaahi ‘in-kuntum saadi-qiin – And if you are in doubt as to what we have revealed from time to time to our Servant. (Muhammed, the Prophet), then produce a surah like thereunto and call your witness and helpers, if there any, besides God, if your doubts are true” 101.

“Allaahu nazzala aḥsanal Hadiisi Kitaabam-mutashaabi-ham- masaaniya taq-sha-‘irru minhu juluudullaziina yakhshawna Rabbahum ẓumma taliinu juluuduhum wa quluu-buhum ‘ilaa ẓikril-laah. Zaalika hudallaahi yahdii bihii manu-yashaaa’: wa many-yuẓli lillaahu famaa laḥuu min haad. - God has revealed from time to time the most beautiful message in the form of a Book
consistent with itself, yet repeating its teachings in various aspects; the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat, then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of God’s praises. Such is the guidance of God: He guides those with whom he pleases, but such as God leaves to stray can have none to guide. 102.

The Quran is treated with unbounded reverence by the Muslims. It can safely be said that Quran is the most widely read book ever written, for, besides its use in worship it is the text book from which practically every Muslim child learns to read Arabic. The book is not only the heart of a religion, the guide to a kingdom of heaven, but a compendium of science and a political document, embodying a code of laws for the Kingdom on earth.

The Parallels between the old Testament and the Quran are many and striking. Allmost all the historical narratives of the Quran have their Biblical counter parts. Among the old testament characters, Adam, Noah, Abraham (mentioned about seventy times), Ismail, Lot, Joseph, Moses (whose name occurs in thirty four chapters), Saul, David, Solomon, Elyah, Job and Jonah figure prominently. The story of the creation and fall of Adam is cited four times, the flood eight and Sodom eight. Of the New Testament characters Zacharia, John the Baptist, Jesus and Mary are the only ones emphasized. But many old Semitic proverbs and saying common to both Hebrew and Arab are found in New or Old Testaments and in the Quran, for example, as those dealing with “an eye for an eye”. “The house built upon sand”, “the camel and needle’s eye” and “the taste of death for every man”. Certain miraculous acts attributed to
Jesus in the Quran, such as new born baby speaking out in the cradle and his creating birds out of clay, recall similar acts recorded in the Apocryphal Gospels. Indeed, Semitic tradition claim all the three religions; the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims, it is only natural that their theology has parallels. In fact, all the three religion are fondly called as “People of the Book”.

This book, a strong living voice, is meant for oral recitation and should be heard in the original to be appreciated. The recitation of Quran has developed into a Science called ‘Ilmul Tajvid’ and the recitation is called ‘Tilawah’. No small measure of its force lies in its rhyme and rhetoric and its cadence and sweep, which cannot be reproduced when the Book is translated. The religious influence it exercises as the basis of Islam and the final authority in matters spiritual and ethical is only part of the story. Theology, Jurisprudence and science being considered by Muslims as different aspects of one and the same thing, the Quran becomes the scientific manual, the text book, for acquiring a liberal education. In such an institution as Al-Azhar, the largest Muslim University in the world, this book still holds its own as the basis of the whole curriculum. Its literary influence may be appreciated when we realize that it was due to it alone that the various dialects of the Arabic speaking peoples have not developed into distinct languages, as have the Roman languages. While today an Iraqi may find it a little difficult to fully understand the speech of a Moroccan, he would have no difficulty in understanding his written language, since both in Iraq and
Morocco as well as in Syria, Arabia, Egypt and anywhere the classical language modelled by the Quran is closely followed. 103

To write about the Quran in its manifold excellence is to dare One’s candle to the noon day sun. A verse of the Quran says:

"Wa law 'anna maa fil-'arżi min-shajaratin 'aqlaamun wal-baḥru yamudduhu mimba'-dihii sab-'atu 'abhurim- maa nafidat Kalimaatullaah" And if all the trees in the earth were pens and the sea with seven more seas were ink, the words of Allah could not be exhausted104.

In the last fourteen hundred years, men and women have offered the best of their minds and hearts to the subject discovering fresh depth and dimension and produced profound interpretation of the text and tenet. The momentum of research and scholarship accelerates from generation to generation with newer planets of philosophy and meaning swimming into our ken. The fundamental truths of the Quran have stayed in bloom because of their relevance to every age and their unique assimilating capability to the dynamics of changing existence.

The Quran has been of perennial interest to the world at large since its philosophy touches on the widest spectrum of life. This interest is as much a concern of the spirit as of the intellect, of religion as of creative thought and reform, if not revolution in the area of human aspiration and endeavour. We can visualize a mystic quest for guidance from the book as also a scientist’s probe into the natural phenomena and mysteries still elusive to rationalisation. The Quranic message embraces
in its universal sweep the physical and cosmic world, seen and unseen as are inter linked in a unified existence. The spirit of the Creator permeates all. The Quran is uncompromising on the Unity of God, but this is no jealous, passionate god of Classical myth and legend. The Quran starts with His Quality of compassion and his justice seasoned with mercy. In it there is no dichotomy between declaration and deed, between belief and righteous action; idea and the reality, the existence and the essence and the command. “Amanoo Wa Amilussalihathi”, “believe and act rightly” sums it up.

I.5. The Hadith

Hadith, literally means, ‘the speech’, ‘report’, ‘account’ specifically ‘Traditions’ relating to the deeds and utterances of the Prophet as accounted by his companions.

The need for an explanation of the verses of the Quran arose quite early. Even before the whole of the Quran was revealed, people used to ask the Apostle all sorts of Questions as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or of their bearing on problems as they arose, or details of certain historical or spiritual matter on which they sought more light. The Prophet’s answers were carefully stored in the memory of the companions (Ashab) and afterwards written down. In the next generation, the ‘Tab’aiin’ were those who had not personally conversed with the Apostle like the companions, but had conversed with companions and learned from them. Subsequent generations always went back
to establish a chain of evidence through the Tabiin and the Ashabs. Through them grew up the science of Hadith or traditions. As this literature grew it became necessary to establish strict rules by which the evidence could be examined and tested so as to separate that which was considered to be established from that which was doubtful or weak and that which was to be rejected as unproved. In this evolution it became clear that even among the companions certain persons had better memories than others or better opportunities of becoming really acquainted with the Apostle’s true meaning or in other words, a better title to be called true expositors and the number of such persons came to be limited to ten only. Similarly the claims of the Tabiin came to be examined and graded and so on. Thus arose a new science in which the names and position of persons in Hadith literature were examined biographically and in other ways. Hadith are read by Muslims in close relationship with the Quran.

Hadith are divided into two groups, Hadit qudsi, ‘sacred hadith’, hadit shariif, ‘Noble Hadit’. The ‘Musannaf’ are collections classified by subject. The most respected collection of all is Jami-as-sahih of Muhammad-ibn-Ismail-al-Bukhari (d-870 AD). This had 7397 Hadith under 3450 subject headings (bab, abwab). Next is the Sahih, Abu-I-Husayn Muslim ibn-al-Hajjaj (d-875 AD) usually simply called ‘Muslim’. These two Sahihs or Sahiahyn are the foremost collections. The ‘six Musannaf’ the principal canonic collections also known as al-kutub as-sittah are also accepted as authoritative. The collections of Bukhari
and Muslim were scrupulously compiled in the first two and half centuries of Islam. Their authority was assured by the criterion of an authoritative ‘isnad’, chain of transmission, found to be most valid.

The faithful, views the actions of a Divine Messenger as providential and unlimited in their inner nature. It is with the authority of Quran, which states “you have a noble example in God’s messenger”, that Islam bases its Sunnah upon the Hadith in addition to the Quran. If the Hadith come to play such an important role in the development of an entire civilization, their scope must undoubtedly be vast. Throughout the centuries, as Islam evolved, it searches out the traditions of the Prophet’s life to guide the faithful in situations not touched upon by the Quran. Thus the literature based on Hadith grew and developed in abundance side by side with that of the Quran.

The Hadith literature dealt with all sorts of matters including theology, Ethics and Exegesis (explanation of the Quran). Exegesis soon became an independent science by itself and was called Tafsir. Then came Philosophy and the mystic doctrine of the sufi schools. The development of the science of Kalam, built on formal logic and its further offshoot, the Ilmul Aqid (the philosophical exposition of the grounds of belief) introduced further elements on the intellectual side while Tauwil that is esoteric exposition of the hidden or inner meaning, introduced elements on the spiritual side based on a sort of transcendental intuition of the exposition.
I.6. Shariah

Shariah literally means way to water the source of all life and signifies the way to God as given by Him. It is the way, which encompasses the totality of man’s life. The impulse to fashion a divinely guided way of life led to the development of Shariah or Muslim law.

Man’s quest for justice and failure to secure it is the most persistent and tragic theme of human history. Justice, an ideal deeply cherished ardently desired and ceaselessly pursued by mankind from the very first of its existence on this planet can never be truly conceptualized nor practiced without reference to divine help that is the belief in God. God, the infinitely merciful and Absolutely just has created everything with a purpose and in perfect harmony and balance. Justice for man, therefore, as for everything else in creation, lies in obeying God by doing what He has laid down as right and avoiding what he has mentioned as wrong. It is only God who can establish the intricate network of interrelationships and roles, mutual rights and duties and consequent rewards and punishments on the basis of absolute standards of justice. That is the reason divine justice is frequently called the Balance (Meezan) in the Quran. The Holy Quran says:

“Was-Samaaa-’a rafa-‘ahaa wa ważza-’al-Miizaan. Allaa tat-gaw fil-miizaan. Wa’aqimul-wazna bil-qisti wa laa tukh-sirul-miizaan.” And the Firmament has He raised high and He has set up the Balance of Justice, in order that you may not transgress Balance; so establish weight with justice and fall not short in the Balance”\(^{105}\).
Justice is the Supreme purpose and ruling spirit of the Shariah. It provides the frame work for the entire corpus of Islam. The paramount purpose for which the Prophets were sent obliging to struggle all their lives was to guide man to meet justice.

“We sent our messages with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that man may conduct themselves with justice”106.

“Wa kazaalika ja-'alnaakum 'Ummatanw-Wasatal-litakuunuu shuhad-daaa-'a 'alannaas. Thus we made you a just community, that you be witness to mankind” 107.

And again:

“Oh believers, be you upholders of justice, witnessing for God alone”108.

The Quran repeatedly emphasizes that Zulm-wrong doing has absolutely no place in Islam. Shariah was not strictly speaking the revealed word of God but it was widely taken by Muslims to be a divinely inspired extension of the teachings of the Quran and the Hadith. Beginning with actual practice in familial, commercial and criminal law, administrative regulations, Sasanian, Byzantine and Hellenic popular maxims, the canon law of the orthodox church, Talmudic, Rabbinic and old Babylonian law, the scholars sought to bring everything into conformity with God’s will. Their solemn endevour did not result in the generation of cold statute law, but a dynamic body of rules and practices laced with ethical, moral and theological precepts.
Muslim law was divided into three substantive categories: (1) Ibadat, ritual regulation (2) Muamalat, rules of social relations and (3) Imamah, theories of Collective organization. Under these categories, the law dealt with prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage, matters of marriage, divorce, bondage, partnership, debts, wills and other legal and social concerns in peace and war. In all these matters non Islamic law and customs were reconciled to Islamic religious principles. The final corpus of shariah thus represents customs and traditions transformed by Islamic ethical conviction. The task of reform was not the work of any single group but was carried out in Basra, Kufa, Syria, Medina and Mecca by men who formed in each place a “scholar of law”. The four accepted schools of law are “Hanafi” founded by Abu Hanifa in Iraq (767 AD), ‘Maliki’ founded by Malik Ibn Anas in Medina (795 AD), ‘Shafi’ founded by Al-Shafi in Egypt (820 AD) and ‘Hambali’ founded by Ibn Hmbal in Iraq (855 AD). The Hanafi School lays emphasis on qiyas (analogy) and istihsan (equity) and is the most popular of the four schools. Maliki school gives equal importance to “masalahatal mursalah” or public interest, qiyas and istihsan. Shafi School strikes a balance between reason and authority and consequently promotes a system of jurisprudence, which combines dogmatism with practical requirement. The Muslim scholars and jurists rever Shafi for his wisdom and adherence to rules of the Shariah. Al-Azhar has been under the influence of this school for centuries. Hambali school stresses the puritanical aspects of Islam and is uncompromising in its adherence to ortho-
doxy. Its followers go by the letter of Quran and assert that theological truths cannot be reached by aql or reasoning.

Revolutionary changes in the arena of knowledge, progress in the standard of living, advancement in technology and science all have generated genuine pressure for change or avoidance of Shariah, the God given law, but what has really changed? Human nature, his emotions, motives, desires and ambitions remain unchanged throughout the ages. No new definition for concepts like sympathy, antipathy, cruelty, reason, intention, equity, equality and the like have emerged to command universal adherence. Man’s lusts and fears, hopes and anxieties, love and hate, aspirations, yearnings and longings remain what they have always been. There is no rule that something which evolves later in time is superior to that preceded it. The absolute criterion for justice could be found only in the Almighty. The individual is the corner stone in the scheme of the Shariah and his status and achievement is not dependent on any group or society.

"Every one of them will come to Him on the day of Resurrection, all alone." 109.

and "now you have come to Us alone, just as We created you the first time."110.

Individual has been given a free will, a moral sense and a choice of right or wrong. His life, person, freedom, possession and honour are sacrosanct and inviolable; no human being, not even the ruler has the right, privilege or authority to harm him or take his life unless acting in
accordance with the law of God. Likewise, Shariah recognizes the importance of family, society, woman, marriage and other entities laying down enforceable code of conduct and discipline, prescribing severe penalty for their violation and at the same time envisaging ample scope for mercy, leniency and pardon at the instance of the wronged party.

1.7. Islamic Concepts of the State, Ruler and Nationalism and the Policy in Peace and War

Sovereignty as defined by the Prophet of Islam and the Khalifas is a perfected concept of democratic equality and it could take shape only with the whole nation’s will, unity, suffrage and election. This is why the sovereign or a president of a Republic is like a designated Khalifa. Khalifa literally means neither more nor less than a representative, so that the authority a Khalifa possess, consist in his representation and he has no powers beyond the will of whom he represent. The Quran points out the character of a leader and of a ruler who can guarantee the happiness and prosperity of mankind. The description is marvellous for its apparent simplicity and deep significance.

"Thus by the Mercy of Allah, (oh Muhammad) that you gently deal with them, and had you been stern and hard hearted, they would have dispersed from around you, So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs"111.

A ruler must cultivate high morals, govern by consent and follow the policy of beneficence. As to the head of Government, he should not
be hereditary, not rich in wealth but in health and strength and above all in knowledge and of sound mind in a sound body.

“Their Prophet said to them: God hath appointed Tabut (Saul) as king over you; they said: how can he exercise authority over us when we are more deserving of the kingdom than he is since he has not been given wealth enough? He said: lo Allah hath chosen him above you and hath gifted him abundantly with knowledge and stature. Allah bestoweth sovereignty on whom He will. Allah is all embracing, all knowing.”112.

One need not renounce the kingdom on the earth to gain the kingdom of heaven. The more one serves humanity in the hardship of life, the greater one’s spiritual achievements. The only point is to feel responsible to the Supreme being.

“And it was said unto him. Oh David! Lo! We have set thee as a viceroy in the earth; therefore, judge aright between mankind and follow not desire that it beguile thee from the way of God” 113.

Peace and Order depends on the sense of Security provided by the administration rendering firm justice and Islam is definite and very strict about it. No consideration of love and sympathy, of fear or favour, of pity and compassion are permitted to interfere with adjudication. Again evidence must be given and given true.

“And do not conceal evidence” 114.

“Let not the hatred on any people incite you to deal unjustly with them”115.

“Be maintainers of justice-though it be against your parents or against your near relations, whether he (any party) be rich or poor” 116.
The source of all trouble is dishonesty and mischief, both of which are forbidden to the believers in order that peace and order is maintained.

“Do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order, but call on Him with fear and longing (in your hearts) for the mercy of God is always near to those who do good”117.

Along with peace there is always a possibility of war and Islam being essentially a realistic and positive religion, could not overlook the contingency. So it has also laid down a code of military discipline for its followers. The Quran calls upon Muslims to preach and propagate Islam and to defend themselves in case of attack or oppression manfully like soldiers, taking effective action if possible, but only just to the necessary extent, and to guard against excess.

“And fight in the way of Allah, with those who fight with you and do not transgress the limits; drive them out from where they drove you out; for persecution is severe than slaughter and fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevail justice and faith in God. But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.”118

Islam prescribes it a duty of Muslim to refuse to acknowledge the moral justification and even of an Islamic Government, if full play is not granted in it to the will and franchise of the people. It is then obvious as to what respect Islam would give to a foreign rule?

An old woman declared to Khalifa Omar in his open court. “If
you fail to do justice, your hair would be pulled out”. The Khalifa was obliged to thank her for the dare exercise of her right of expression. The Prophet did not show interest in theorizing on politics. One of his companions is said to have requested him that he be appointed Governor of the conquered territories”. No, said the Prophet, if you wish to rule, then you are unfit”. According to another report recorded by both Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet said:

“Do not ask for rulership, for if you are given power as a result of asking for it, you will be left to deal with it on your own, if you are given it without asking then you will be helped in exercising it.”

The central issue in Islam has not been whether the state can be separated from religion but whether society can be separated form religion. Some Muslim scholars have questioned the validity of the concept of ‘Islamic State’ as distinct from ‘Muslim State’, the former being an ideological proposition, which has never materialized in Muslim history because no Muslim State has ever been theocratic and the latter being a fact of history of the last 1400 years. The possibility and desirability of an Islamic State, that is a state based on Quran and the Hadith had become a major issue of worldwide debate consequent on the triumph of the Mulla led revolution in Iran in the year 1979.

The nation concept is the product of developments over centuries in Europe. The nation is a new god (nothing short of it) which feels entitled to demand and has succeeded in extracting from the people the kind of sacrifices no religion has ever demanded; millions upon mil-
lions have been killed and maimed in the name of nation god. Maulana Muhammad Ali says: “We are not nationalists, but super nationalists and I as a Muslim says that God made man and the devil made the nation. Nationalism divides; our religion binds”

The confusion over the concept of Islamic State were well explained in the words of Chief Justice Mohammad Munir of Pakistan, who chaired the Commission set up to inquire into the causes of the riot against the Ahmadiyya Sect in 1953.

“We asked the Ulama whether the conception of State was acceptable to them and every one of them replied in an unhesitating negative. None of the Ulamas can tolerate a State which is based on nationalism and all that it implies with the Millat (religious community) and all that it connotes can alone be the determining factor in State activity”. Opposing the idea of the politicians who were harping upon legislation to enforce certain Islamic injunctions of their convenience in the then existing uncertainties, he declared “the sublime faith called Islam will live even if our leaders are not there to enforce it. It lives in the individual, in his soul and outlook in all his relations with God and men from the cradle to grave and our politicians should understand that if divine commands cannot make or keep a man Musalman, their statutes will not ”.

**1.8. Jihad**

The world ‘Jihad’ simply means ‘to exert’. Ijtihad is exertion of the intellect and is a recognized source of Islamic law, Shariah. Majid Khadduri an Iraqi jurist who won academic fame in the United States, states that Muslim jurists have distinguished four different ways in which
the believer may fulfill his Jihad obligation; by his heart, his tongue, his hands and his sword. Citing this dicta Dr. Holand E. Miller, an Islamist who worked as an ordained Lutheran Missionary in India from 1953 to 1976 writes. “The ordinary distinction today is between the spiritual and physical form of striving. Spiritually it means engaging in a battle against sin and Satan in one’s own life. This is called the greater Jihad. Applied to the physical realm the exertion means righteous warfare. This is called the “lesser Jihad”. The highest form of Jihad is “to speak the truth in the face of an unjust ruler” reads an impeccably authentic saying of the Prophet. In a brilliant exposition of the concept of Jihad, a Beirut academician Yousuf Ibish wrote: “The greatest Jihad is firstly against one’s animal tendencies. It is internal rather than external, striving in the path of God to overcome one’s animal side (Jihad al nafs). The lesser jihad-fighting on behalf of the community in its defense is a duty incumbent on a Muslim provided he is attacked (Jihad bi al Saif). A man has the right to defend his life, his property and he has to organize himself along these lines.

The wars launched by the imperial Muslim dynasties, the Umayyads, the Abbasides, the Fatimides and the Ottoman were not exercise in Jihad, still less the crimes which Muslim extremists advocate or commit in the name of Islam.

Jihad has now become a pejorative code word used for random protest against regime in power. But properly understood, jihad has a relevance in modern society provided it is shorn of the connotation of
violence and is informed by a moral purpose, justice for the under privileged. Jihad in a larger sense has come to mean the advocacy of social justice in a widening circle that also includes economic participation and prosperity not only of Muslims but also others in a modern contest. Prophet Mohammad said: He is not a Muslim who eats his full when his neighbour goes hungry. In the above writer’s opinion, it enjoins clearly a commitment to Muslims of India to join the struggle for the economic uplift of India’s under privileged cutting across the religious division. The Quran says:

“Innal-laaha laa yugay-yiru maa bi-qawmin ḥattaa yugay-yiruu maa bi-’aṅfusihim.- verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves”\(^{121}\).

A jihad is yet to be fought against ignorance, economic deprivation, social injustice, constitutional abuse and political wrongs.

### I.9. Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism

Fundamentalism is a malice of the twentieth Century. It has afflicted almost every major religious tradition, Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Muslim no matter how ancient. Fundamentalism banishes reasons from religion and compassion from faith. Its main traits are revivalism, hostility towards minority, anti intellectualism, intolerance, arrogance, insularity, intellectual bankruptcy and moral blindness. They are reflected in rejection of rational discourse, pluralism, free speech, democratic
governance and secularism and in recourse to violence.

"Not one of the fundamentalist movements have progress of social uplift and equality or economic progress" 122.

Scholars demur to the use of the term fundamentalism. Webster’s tenth New collegiate dictionary defines it as a movement in the 20th century Protestantism emphasizing the literary interpreted Bible as fundamental to Christian life and teaching. These literalists in all faiths seek to replicate the past thereby maintained or liberal Christians regard the term as pejorative and scholars shy away from its original connotation 123.

Karen Armostrong says that being a reaction to modernity fundamentalism reared its head first in the U.S, the show case of modernity. Of the three monotheistic religions, Islam was the last to develop a fundamental strain when modern culture began to take root in the Muslim world in the late 1960s and 1970s. By this date, fundamentalism was quite well established among Christians and Jews, who had a longer exposure to the modern experience. They are all, even in the United States, highly critical of democracy and Secularism 124.

Two themes inspire the so called Islamic fundamentalist- the ideal of the Islamic state and the use of Jihad as a weapon for its realization. More than any others, three personalities shaped the ideology. Hasmal Banna (1909-49) who founded the Al-Ikhwan-al-Muslimin or the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt, Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) who succeeded Banna
after his assassination in 1949 and Abul Ala Maududi (1903-70) who founded the Jamat-e-Islami in Lahore on August 26, 1941. Armstrong regards Qutb as the real founder of Islamic fundamentalism in the Sunni world. To Ayatollah Ruhulla Khomeni goes the honour of its leadership in the Shiite world.

Terrorism has been defined in many different ways and little can be said about it with certainty except that it is the use of violence by a group for political ends, usually directed against a government but at times also against another ethnic group, class, race, religion or political movement. While the historical traditional terrorist movements consisted of hundreds or thousands of members, the new terrorist group can be very small consisting of a few people or sometimes even one individual. The smaller the group the more radical it is likely to be. State sponsored terrorism is another form. The U.S. Department of Defense in 1990 described terrorism as the “unlawful use or threatened use, of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce and intimidate governments or societies often to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives”. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries terrorism came predominantly from the left, from anarchists and social revolutionaries as well as from nationalist separatists (as in Ireland). But during the inter war years the main perpetrators of terrorism were on the extreme right and frequently had fascist sympathies. Recent years have witnessed a growth of radical groups on the fringe of several religions. Drugs and guns had been intimate associates of the terrorists,
followed by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Cyber terrorism
is the latest.

The current resurgence of religious terrorism is largely identified
with trends in the Muslim and Arab world. Popular western perception
equates radical Islam with terrorism. It is interpreted that the radicals
find approval for their action in Jihad bi al Saif.

Islam is inclusive, it recognizes the validity of all rightly guided
religions and praises all the great Prophets of the past. The holy Quran
says:

“And unto thee have we revealed the scriptures with the truth con-
firming whatever scripture was before it and whatever over it. So judge
between them by that which Allah hath revealed and follow not their
desires away from the truth which hath come unto thee. For each we
have appointed a divine law and a traced out way. Had Allah willed
He could have made you one community. But that he may try you by
that which he hath given you. (He hath made you as you are) So vie
one with another in good works. Unto Allah you will all return and He
will then inform you of that wherein you differ”125.

Prophet Mohammed did not claim infallibility as a mortal still
less superiority over the earlier Prophets. Islam envisions a pluralist
society based on religious tolerance and harmonious co-existence and a
peaceful world. The Quran declares.

“Lo! Those who believe and those who are Jews and Sabeans and
Christians, whosoever believe in Allah and the last day and doth right,
there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve”126.
Islam condemns all warfare as abhorrent and permits only a war of self-defense. Islam is adamantly opposed to the use of force for religious matters. The Holy Quran says:

“Yaaa-‘ayyu-hallažiina’aama-nušbiruu wa šaabiruu wa raabiṭuu: wattaqullaaha la’allakum tuflihuun -Oh ye who believe! Endure, outdo all others in endurance, be ready and observe your duty to Allah, in order that you may succeed”

Hence the radicals or terrorists are not entitled to claim religious sanction for their violence. Prefixing ‘Islam’, therefore, to any sort of terrorism, is perse, sacrilegious.
References:

5. Dr. Radhakrishnan on ‘Hinduism’ at P.61-64. “Cultural History of India”. Edited by A..L. Bahsan.
6. M.K.Gandhi’s Collected Works, Life as a search for God or Truth- Success of Indian Tradition.
7. Ibid
14. M.K. Gandhi’s Collected Works, Life as a search for God or Truth- Success of Indian Tradition.


19. The New Encyclopedia Britannica VIII. Helen Hemingway Benton, Publisher 1973-74. Printed in USA.


21. In the dictionary of Quran entitled ‘Moghrab’ Islam is expressed as ‘entering into peace (Salaam) with another” alluding the fact that he who embraces Islam becomes free from all disabilities.

22. Surah Ikhlas. 112. The Unity or Purity of Faith.

23. The only exception Surah At Taubah –9 – Repentance.


27. Surah: Sajda - Postration, 32:7,8.
28. Surah: Yunus or Johna – 10: 57
31. Surah: Shoora- Counsel, 42:51
32. Surah: Ar Room-The Romans, 30:8
34. Surah: Zukhroof-Ornaments of gold, 43:83.
35. Surah: Yunus – Johna, 10:36
37. Surah: Thaha , 20:25
38. Surah: Ibrahim – Abraham, 14:1
39. Surah: Nahl- The Bee, 16:97
40. Surah: Thakwir – The Overthrowing, 81:10
41. Surah: Salsala – The Earthquake, 99:7
42. Surah: Al Bakarah- The Cow, 2:286.
44. Surah: Shura’- The poets, 26: 79,80
45. Surah: Thaha, 20:124
47. Surah: Fusilat, 41:53.
52. Surah: Dukaan- Smoke, 44:38.
53. Surah: Nahl – The Bee, 16:12
60. Surah: Hajj- The Pilgrimage, 22:18
61. Dariyat- The winnowing winds, 51:49.
62. Angels have their Own Shapes usually carrying wings but being formed of light they are capable of easy transformation and can assume human features when necessary. The usual abode of angel is heaven where they keep praising God and pray for mankind. Ref: Fatir- The Creator, 35:1.
63. Next to angels come Genni who are formed of fire; the well
known Iblis or Satan being the head of this creation. They are invisible and capable of transfer or transformation.

64. Surah: Theen- The Fig, 95: 4 to 6.
66. Surah: Yasin. 36:82.
67. Surah: Israh 17:85
72. Surah: Fatr- The Creator, 35:8
73. Surah: Shoora – Counsel, 42:39 to 43
75. Surah: Al Bakarah- The Cow 2, 194.
76. Surah: Al Bakarah- The Cow, 2: 177
78. Surah: Luqman, 31;14.
80. Surah: Nisa- Woman, 4:3.
a. Surah Nisa-Woman 4:129.
81. Surah: Aaraf- The Heights, 7:32
84. Surah: Lyl- Night, 92:18 to 20.
87. He was called by the people ‘Al-Amin’, the faithful.
88. Surah: Alaq- The Clot, 96:1
89. Surah: Muddahir- Cloaked One, 74:2.
90. Surah: Anfal- Spoils of war, 8:39.
92. Surah: Ahzab – The Clans, 33:40
95. Surah: Ahzab- The clans, 33:56.
96. Moulana Iqbal
97. Surah: Al Hijr- Hijrah. 15:9
99. Surah: Aaraf- The Heights 7:52
100. Surah: Yunus –Johna, 10:37


104. Surah: Luqman, 31:27.

105. Surah: Ar Rahman- The beneficent, 55:7-9


110. Surah: Al-Anam-Cattle, 6:94.

111. Surah: Ale Imran- The Family of Imran, 3:159.


117. Surah: Araf- The Heights, 7:56.


119. Muhammad Ali in the plenary conference between British and
Indian leaders at London in 1930.


